

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

North Paddington
18-25s
Employment support needs



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Foreword by Karen Buck MP:

What we usually talk about when we talk about employment is numbers. How many vacancies are there? How many jobseekers? Who is on benefits and how quickly can we move them off?

What this study reminds me of is what we should be talking about: the individuals behind the numbers.

For each person who may be struggling to find their path will have their own characteristics, vulnerabilities and experiences and will need tailored support to get them back on track. Some may have had a specific obstacle to overcome - a health issue, a youthful brush with the criminal justice system. For others the system is simply too difficult to navigate without trusted advice. Many simply cannot call on the family and neighbourhood networks which come easily to those born with more advantages, so everything from form filling to finding work experience to choosing the right course is more challenging and full of risk. And structural inequalities do still exist, as research consistently demonstrates, so Black and minority ethnic communities, people from working class backgrounds and those with disabilities, amongst others, do find it harder to clear the hurdles to a good job.

Whatever the specific circumstances, the voices we hear in this report deserve to be listened to. They are a powerful and poignant reminder of how easy it is for people to lose their way, to fear that they have blown their chances.

Yet our city, our economy, our community, needs these young adults' contribution. It is not just for their benefit that we need to invest in them - it is our own. I love the idea of a 'no wrong door' partnership model, because where and how people access advice and help shouldn't matter. Lacking confidence, so many are deterred by the fear of getting it wrong, asking the wrong question, going to the wrong place. Even without huge additional resources, a local, integrated support system should be able to say to everyone 'Come in. We are pleased to see you. It's not too late. We can help'.



the voices we hear in this report deserve to be listened to. They are a powerful reminder of how easy it is for people to lose their way.

Foreword by Cllr Geoff Barraclough

Westminster City Council, Cabinet Member for
Planning and Economic Development:

“Young adult unemployment within the North Paddington area has long been higher than anywhere else in Westminster, despite the myriad job opportunities of central London on our doorstep.



We are clear about the goal: delivering more support for those who need it most.

Far too many young adults in our area lack confidence about their futures, and many feel they don't have the right skills, opportunities, or access to high quality careers. The pandemic has amplified these barriers and put the hopes and dreams of many of our young adults on hold. The most disadvantaged have fallen through the cracks. We have let them down.

However, despite the challenges, we are working with our partners to reverse the trend and bring positive change. We need to get better at listening to young adults and acting on what they tell us. Leveraging our committed youth workers, experienced VCS partners, Council services and education/skills providers, we want to bring young people, employers, and policy makers closer together so we can deliver a better future for our young adults.

We are clear about the goal: delivering more support for those who need it most, and an end to a situation in which young people in North Paddington don't get the chance to access the well-paid jobs with career potential available to their counterparts elsewhere in the City”.

Author's Reflections

"This research is timely, not only because of the renewed focus on generational change in North Paddington through the North Paddington Partnership, but because the need is greater than ever.

This cohort of 18-25s have had their foundational experience of education undermined by Covid which has also robbed them of critical social interaction and the opportunity to build social capital.

Helping young adults from North Paddington to make up for these lost formative experiences and improve their chances of attaining meaningful and sustained employment should be one of the most urgent priorities for the North Paddington Programme.

Doing so successfully will achieve much needed generational change, and along with the other recommendations in this report, combine to ensure a brighter future for the whole community.

The report aims to give a voice to the young adults of North Paddington, to assist service providers and commissioners to co-design joined up, youth-centered employment support.

Without tailored and universally available support we can expect to see high levels of economic inactivity and unemployment continue to hamper the life chances of individuals and undermine community prosperity."

Fabian Sharp

Young Resident's Reflections

"I am very proud to have taken part in this research project that looks at employment disadvantage in an area I live in and in an age group bracket I fall under. All people involved in the project lived in North Paddington and were invested in making a real impact on our own doorstep.

The report captures the mood and key points that arose perfectly; in particular the barriers faced, the support young adults would like to see available to them, and their feelings and preferences surrounding the research objectives.

It was eye opening to see how many people fall through the net once they hit 18 years of age, with a lot of those receiving insufficient support pre-18. The sheer resilience and strength I observed throughout the research process really opened my eyes to the fact that the problem does not lie with the young adults who find themselves unable to obtain quality employment or employment support, but rather that the support is extremely lacking. Most, if not all, of the people who participated in the research process have dreams and aspirations that they still attempt to achieve and succeed in, despite many demotivating factors acting as hurdles.

On behalf of all participants and researchers involved in this research, I commend the report and the recommendations made to all stakeholders and challenge decision makers and service providers to implement the recommendations made in the report so that ultimately nobody is left behind.

B. Ahmed, 20yrs, London W2

Executive Summary

At the last count (census 2021) there were 3782 young adults aged 18-24 in North Paddington ([source: Census 2021](#)).

This cohort has known only austerity being aged between 3 and 10 at the time of the financial crash; they are the first inheritors of a labour market altered first by Brexit then by Covid 19.

Data isn't recorded at ward level for those not in education employment or training (NEET). However based on London and National rates by Labour Force Survey ([London Data Store](#)) and ONS respectively, the number of young adults not in work or education in North Paddington could be between 500 and 600.

Given the rates of disadvantage in the area, however, it is likely that the actual number is higher still.

To understand the support needs of 18-25s we need to consider the context in which they grow up and look beyond just those not working or studying, but consider also:

- the unspecified number of those in work but who lack job security ([ONS](#)),
- those stuck in entry level jobs unable to progress ([ONS](#)),
- and those who, if left unsupported, will not sustain employment ([UK Parliament](#)).

Combined, this picture likely accounts for more than one in four young adults in North Paddington who would benefit from personalised support to steer them to economic independence, a figure corroborated by an analysis of census 2021 data (see below). This far outstrips the number currently accessing support.

Work is urgently required to ensure more young adults receive the support they need if the future of North Paddington's workforce is to stand a chance of recovering from high levels of generational unemployment and economic inactivity.

With limited resources it is imperative that ALL contributors (across-sectors) be harnessed to maximum effect. This research recommends integrating services into a no-wrong-door partnership model based in and informed by the community.

The research in this report is based on findings arising from a survey, focus groups and interviews with 78 young adults aged 18-25 in and around North Paddington carried out in April and May 2023.

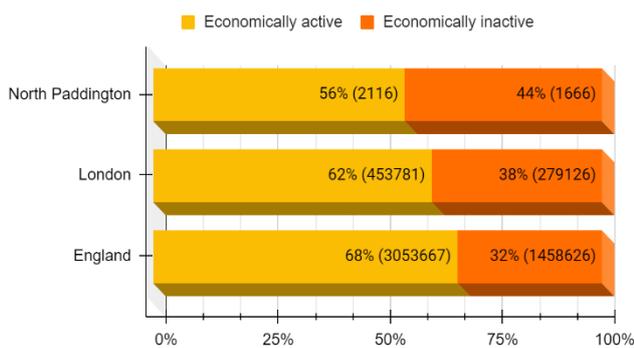
1 in 4

18-24-year-olds in North Paddington need personalised employment support

Latest Data from Census 2021

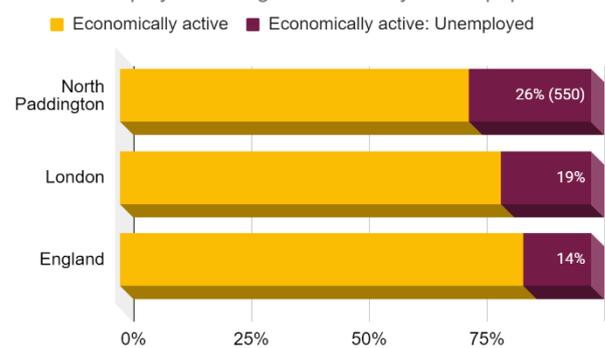
- **11% (3782)** is the proportion of **young adults aged 18-24** among the North Paddington population. This compares to 9% in London and 8% in all of England.
- **44% (1666)** of 18-24s in North Paddington are "**Economically Inactive**". 78% (1305) of these are full-time students. The remaining 22% (361) of Economically Inactive are either long term sick or disabled, looking after home or family or 'other'.
- **26% (550)** of Economically Active 18-24s in North Paddington are "**Unemployed**". This compares to unemployment rates in this age group of 19% in London and 14% in England.

18-24s Economically active vs inactive by location



Source: Census 2021

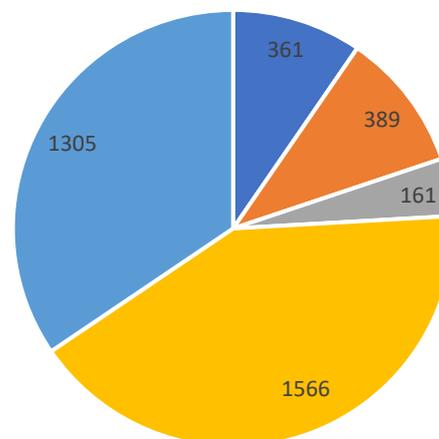
18-24s Unemployed among 'Economically active' population



Source: Census 2021

Profile of 18-24s in North Paddington

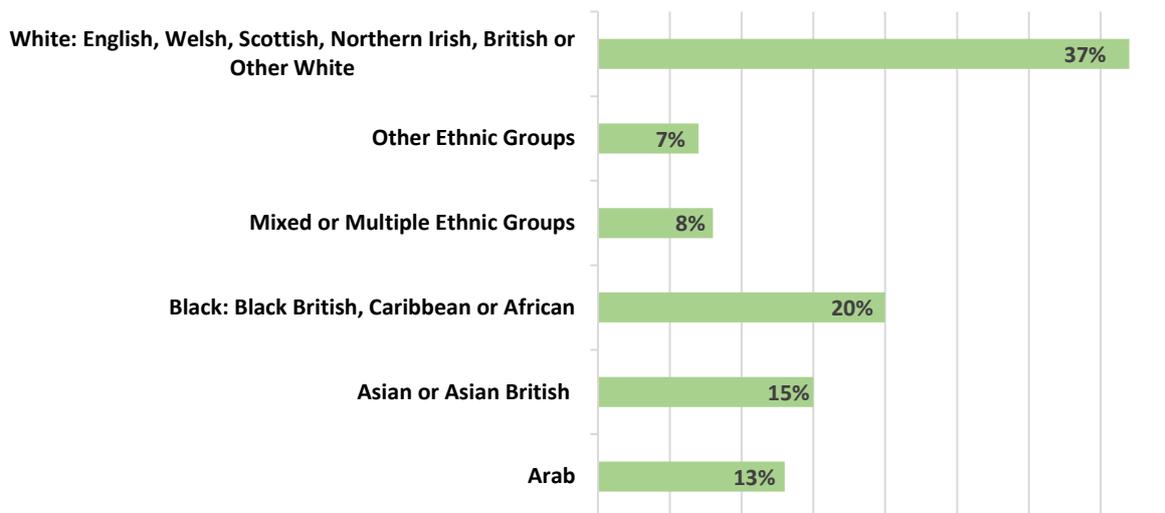
- Not working, not looking for work and not a student (9.5%)
- Unemployed and looking for work, excluding full time students (10%)
- Full time student looking for work (4%)
- Working (41.5%)
- Students not looking for work (34%)



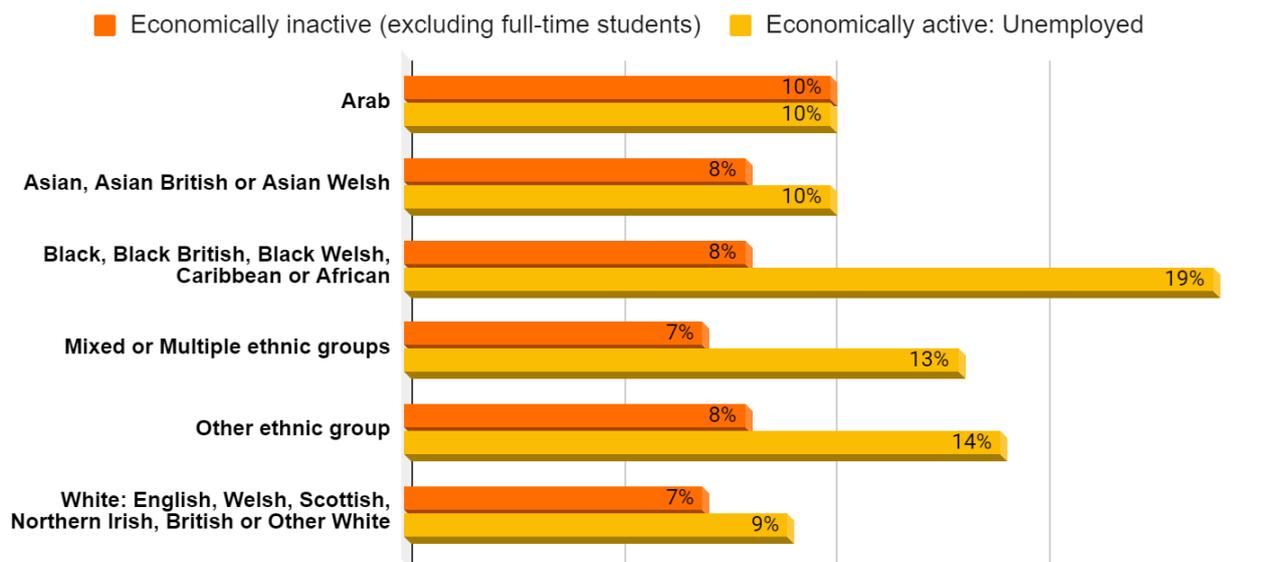
Source: Census 2021

- There were 8% (278) **economically inactive** 18-24 young adults (excluding full-time students) In North Paddington, at the time of the 2021 census. This compares to 8% in London and 9% in England.
- In North Paddington, 37% of the population aged 18-24 is White, followed by 20% who are Black, 15% who are Asian and 13% who are Arabic.

Ethnicity of 18-24s in North Paddington



Economically inactive & Unemployed 16-24s by ethnic group in North Paddington



Source: Census 2021. [Link to source data](#)

1) Introduction & Methodology:

1.1 On leaving school or college at around 18 years old, young adults experience a dramatic fall-off of support services. No longer required by the state to be in education, and no longer qualifying for specialist children's services such as CAMHS or youth clubs, many find they are ill equipped to navigate early adulthood and the realities of the world of work.

1.2 There is a wide body of evidence already published that sets out the global nature of the challenges faced by 18-25s. This ranges from post-Covid psychological and developmental scarring, (Hill, 29.01.23), to the growing mismatch between skills, jobs available and young adult's expectations (Jones, 2023) (OECD, 2023).

Add to this:

- impact of remote working culture on learning and development
- worsening mental health among this age group (Sam Fardghassemi, 2022),
- weakening belief in the democratic process to ensure prosperity, (Foa, 2020)
- the list of global uncertainties and injustices is too long to repeat here but include climate change, the impact of AI, racial and gender discrimination, globalisation and increased competition for jobs, (PwC and Youth Futures Foundation, 2022).

1.3 In the UK meanwhile, inflationary pressures mean wages aren't keeping up with the cost of living, and the right to work or study in the EU has been revoked by Brexit.

1.4 In London the young, who enjoy the least job security, (The Health Foundation, 2022), struggle to afford the basics let alone affordable rents, or the prospect of homeownership.

1.5 Less understood are the hyper-local realities and nuances that make the experience of young adults in North Paddington different to those experienced in Northumberland or even North Acton.

1.6 There is a lack of hyper-local data available for this age group. Understanding the unique context of North Paddington is essential, however, to tailoring the most effective support in an area of acute disadvantage. The wider determinants of success or failure need to be better understood because of the intersectional nature of layered and compounded disadvantage and marginalisation. While these fall outside the scope of this research, it is worth noting a few of those that particularly affect residents of North Paddington; these include:

- the fear and impact of serious youth violence (SYV),
- adverse childhood experiences (ACEs),
- the alternative 'labour market', from petty to organised crime,
- impact of extreme inequality on wellbeing (Pickett, 2010)
- cultural deracination and disorientation,
- the toll of discrimination,
- cost of transport.

1.7 Once young adults leave school or college the ability to track this cohort systematically is lost. Some groups will continue to be known; most notably: students, young offenders, care leavers and benefit claimants, but there is a sizeable number who do not fall into any of these categories.

1.8 Many young school and college leavers who do not go into full-time further education prefer to try to find work than to sign on at the Job Centre. These young adults are not locatable on any database, yet many are languishing in a state of limbo as they try to pull whatever levers they can to get the wheels of work turning. It is with this group, the so-called forgotten middle, that this report is primarily concerned.

Methodology:

1.9 The commissioners formed a working group to steer the research which takes a first pass at understanding the needs of 18-25s in North Paddington by listening to young adults directly.

1.10 The mixed-methods research involved 78 people aged 18-25 giving over 60 hours of their time. These young adults participated across 2 pilot groups, 4 focus groups and 2 in-depth interviews, plus a survey yielding 45 respondents.

1.11 The online survey (see [appendix 2](#)) was shared via SMS primarily with the mailing list of alumni of The Avenues Youth Project (AYP), the largest youth organisation serving North Paddington with an annual membership of more than 1000 8-18s. In addition, Young Westminster Foundation (YWF) ran a targeted social media campaign and Westminster Employment Service (WES) mailed it to their 38 current clients who matched the age and postcode profile. Based on the numbers targeted directly (AYP and WES) the survey achieved a healthy 32% response rate. Positive association with the originator was the most common reason given by participants for deciding to engage. Other supporting factors they cited include:

- a voucher for completion (offered by PDT)
- the relevance of the topic, and
- accessibility of the questions.

1.12 Despite doubts expressed during the pilot phase that SMS would be a popular means of delivering the link, the results were favourable. The pilot group was useful in ensuring the questions were relevant and easy to read and understand. Thanks are also due to Rocket Science and University of Westminster (UoW) for sense checking the survey and methodology.

1.13 The survey findings (see [appendix 2](#)) served as a conversation starter for the four ensuing focus groups. These sought to expand on the areas of greatest concern raised by survey respondents, namely:

- 1. Entry Level Jobs,**
- 2. Barriers to employment,**
- 3. Employment support needs.**

1.14 The University of Westminster acted as academic advisors on research design, methodology and analysis. Principal liaison was with [Alan Porter](#), Assistant Head of the School of Social Sciences at University of Westminster (UoW) and [Dr Thalia Magioglou](#), Senior Lecturer in Psychology, UoW. Alan has a background in social psychology and research methods, while among Thalia's interests are young adults' conceptions of future aspirations and challenges from a qualitative research perspective. Her work has been published in *Culture and Psychology*, *European Psychologist* and *Cahiers Internationaux de Psychologie Sociale*.

1.15 The research was further supported by Westminster University through a student work experience programme that saw four UoW students recruited and trained in research methodology and techniques. They were assisted by two staff from YWF in facilitating the focus groups, three of which were also attended by a WES employment advisor and Rebel Business School, whose venue for the sessions was particularly enjoyed by the participants. By way of example, the transcript of one of the focus groups is at [appendix 3](#).

1.16 Two subsequent in-depth, one-to-one 90-minute interviews were held. One arranged with the support of City of Westminster College with a 19-year-old British born Iraqi Kurdish male, the second, a 20 year old British born Lebanese female, selected from among the focus group participants.

1.17 Suggestions for areas of further enquiry are made in the '[Recommendations, Further research and Next Steps](#)' section.



2) Action Research Finding A - The Personal Network Gap:

2.1 Whether it is to find a first casual job, or to break into a field of choice, it seems that having a recommendation is the most valuable distinguisher for many in a highly competitive jobs market.

2.2 Participants overwhelmingly reported feeling helpless and confused by impersonal recruitment processes that are perceived as unfair, unkind, and unlikely to lead to a job offer. This is a phenomenon that is commonly reported by this age group, (Crowley, 2021). People spoke of being 'ghosted' by employers, describing the application process as a 'minefield' and 'stressful', and the experience of being 'rejected, over and over' which is 'like destroying their hope'. They also felt very alone and unsupported at this difficult time.

2.3 Participants described their work experience to date as largely having been organised through school and/or a family member or friend's connections.

2.4 Where a young adult doesn't have family networks to draw on, or has exhausted those they do have, they universally agreed that the single most useful thing support services could do to help level the playing field, is to work with them to develop relationships with and introductions to recruiters in the industry of their choice.

2.5 The need to facilitate introductions and nurture relationships with employers on behalf of young adults is especially important in helping them to find their first job when, typically, they are caught in the vicious cycle of not having enough experience.

"I don't have the experience, That's the whole point of it. It's just a loophole. You go back and forth, back and forth" Participant in focus group No3

2.6 Half of those who stated in the survey that they were 'looking for work', said they were looking for 'entry level jobs'.

80% of survey respondents looking for entry level jobs would accept as little as £5.28 per hour in order to get some experience.

57% were not confident they had the right **personal networks, experience or qualities** to gain an entry level job.

60% rated their **motivation** to find work highly.

These statistics are backed up by the findings of the focus groups which on the whole found the young adults to be anxious about their futures and their shortcomings but determined to succeed.

Assistance to develop personal networks was seen as critical to unlocking their success and go some way to levelling the playing field with those able, for example, to buy internships and unfair advantage.

2.7 Given the skew of ages of both survey and focus group participants towards the lower end of the age range, i.e. 18-20s accounted for 74% of participants, it is to be expected that there was considerable interest in how to access and retain entry level employment. This was largely categorised in two broad spheres:

- A) Casual work. This is described as requiring little or no particular previous experience and often local, low paid and geared towards shift work. The main areas favoured for this type of employment were:



“I see it as retail is something where you use to start yourself off ...” Participant in Focus Group No3.

- B) First big break. This is usually the first rung on a ladder in a career of choice. These ‘entry level’ jobs usually require candidates to have an interest in and possibly some qualification in a relevant field. However, as they do not require much previous experience, and offer opportunity for progression and future job satisfaction they are highly sought after, and competition is fierce. Participants observed that these opportunities were few and far between and practically inaccessible to those without an introduction or someone to help get their ‘foot in the door’.

“Like, if it's anything more specialised, then there's typically not those entry level opportunities there” Participant in Focus Group No4.

Recommendation A. Bridging the personal network gap.

Establish monthly ‘Rebel Network’ (peer-to-peer) & themed networking events designed with young people and young adults and supported by coaches, mentors, advisors, employers etc.

3) Action Research Finding B - Demotivating Factors

3.1 36% of survey respondents reported a negative experience of job hunting.

3.2 Participants in all stages of the research cited the dejection and mental toll that repeat rejection from job after job application had on them. Some defiantly said they 'just deal with it' because there was no alternative, others reported low self-esteem as a result.

3.3 The lack of feedback in the application process when unsuccessful left many unsure how or if they could really compete successfully for jobs in future. This lack of transparency and care in the recruitment process was made worse for some by widespread experiences of discrimination.

3.4 40% of survey respondents reported having faced discrimination when looking for work. 20% were not sure if they had. Of those who said they had, 60% had experienced racial discrimination, 30% age discrimination, and 20% on the basis of gender. 10% cited disability, sexual orientation and religion. No one felt they had been discriminated on because of their looks, accent or class.

"I was trying to apply for jobs since I was 17 and thinking I'm going to get rejected because my surname; and it's legit, it's a fact that it is a thing where if you don't have a white name, a white surname people won't even look at your CV"

Participant Focus Group No3

3.5 Most were not convinced that basic equal opportunities statements on employers' websites gave them any real advantage, and it wasn't always easy to know which employers actively promoted these values and which simply adopted a statement to look good or because they had to.

3.6 Ironically, there was also frustration leveled at the need for employers to remove characteristics of the people they are actually looking to hire from their job ads in order not to fall foul of equalities legislation. As one person put it "if a Greek restaurant wants a Greek waitress, why don't they say so in their ad? It would save a lot of people who are otherwise going to apply from wasting their time".

3.7 Distance and affordability of travel was another common barrier. The survey showed that of the 11 respondents looking for work, 8 (72%) rated 'close to home' as the thing that would most attract them to apply for a job. Among the 12 already in work 'close to home' was only cited by 2 (17%) as the most likely reason to stay in their current job.

3.8 The drop from 72% to 17% suggests that travel cost and time is a significant economic and psychological barrier to those looking for work. The prohibitive cost of travel was reported most by those closest to 18 in age who were still adjusting to

having to pay for transport after free and discounted travel on TFL services ended on turning 18. Most agreed that a half an hour commute was acceptable for a casual job, though they would prefer it closer. Jobs further afield would be considered subject to remuneration.

3.9 The research found that nearly all 18-25s who did not have access to college or university help, were unaware where to find professional employment or career support or who to ask beyond their friends and family. The three people in the focus groups who had received or knew of support available had mixed views. One individual spoke highly of support services, while the other two found they hadn't been so helpful.

3.10 One participant said privately that he distrusted his employment advisor who he thought was less interested in him and his individual needs and preferences, and more interested in ticking boxes, referring him for unsuitable roles.

3.11 The further the service from the client the greater this was felt to be the case. So while there was generally good awareness of the Job Centre and Universal Credit, this was seen by nearly three quarters of those looking for work as something to avoid if possible, rather than a helpful resource. There was overwhelming demand, however, for support services to be delivered 'on my terms and without strings' and within the local community.

Recommendation B. Building back confidence.

Working w. WCC Responsible Business Unit, WES, PDT and YWF develop a framework for identifying good employers, and jointly profile them. Build knowledge base of advisors and connect job seekers with good employers.



4) Action Research Finding C - Demand for Skills, Experience & Support

Demand for skills:

4.1 27% of survey respondents were either not confident or felt they *lacked the necessary skills* to get their career off to a good start.

“You want the skills, but you have no skills, then you don’t get hired further. How do you start working?” Participant in Focus Group No3

4.2 Participants, including those in further education and undergraduates, broadly agreed that they lack financial literacy and the necessary ICT skills (in Microsoft Office for example) and other industry standard software required by employers. This is a recognised limiting factor for this age group more widely, (Youth Employment UK, 2022) (World Economic Forum, 2020).

“[provide] skill classes, like it doesn’t have to be a long course, it could just be like a four-hour Excel crash course or something like that.”
Participant in Focus Group No4

4.3 Furthermore, there was frustration at not being helped to construct a CV or having been taught how to construct a cover letter. Few knew where to get help with this, but most admitted to needing it. Some had even paid for assistance, others had looked on the internet for templates but few felt they had the skills to do it well by themselves next time round.

“I would say like a lot of us are not really taught too much about how to make CVS, how to go out, look for jobs and a lot of these things to grab opportunities that are seemingly available but we’re not taught or given the first step towards those.” Participant in Focus Group No3

4.4 People choosing to attend the focus group sessions did so in part in the hope they might learn something themselves. An unexpected outcome arising from this was the reassurance and benefit that they gained from a group session with peers. This led to calls for more peer support and networking.

“Like there’s a lot of collective experience and it just shows you’re not the only one, like, who has these feelings around jobs and stuff like that.”
Participant in Focus Group No1

4.5 In addition some wished to boost their knowledge through learning how to start a business and requested regular inspirational talks and Q&As with self-made entrepreneurs to share their success stories.

Recommendation C1. Meeting the demand for relevant skills.

Establish and promote comprehensive skills offer for 18-25s delivered in the community.

Demand for experience:

“For me, experience is key to finding a job.”

Interview 1

4.6 There was overwhelming demand for greater assistance to access quality work experience and a wider range of job opportunities than they currently have access to, or know about. The following responses to Q.43 of the survey illustrated this point:

‘More awareness on jobs’ *‘Work experience’* *‘Being introduced to different opportunities’* *‘More opportunities’* **‘To be offered work trials’** *‘Be given more opportunities to gain professional experience’* *‘Give opportunities in tech based work’* *‘Help gain work experience in different fields so they can choose what path they want to follow’* *‘Better work experience opportunities before we leave school’* **‘More work programmes’** *‘Given more opportunities, as they’re very limited at the moment’*

4.7 There was a preference expressed by several in the focus groups and interviews for apprenticeships over university degrees on the basis that ‘employers want work experience’ (O’Boyle, 2017) and University not only isn’t always seen as delivering this, but there was significant doubt expressed as to the certainty of finding work in their field of study at all after graduating.

4.8 This was supported by 42% of survey respondents who reported being unsure or lacking confidence they have the right *work experience* to land the next job of choice.

“there's definitely fields where it matters more to have experience than it does to have a degree.”

Participant in Focus Group No1

4.9 Indeed, one participant, currently studying at university, regretted their choice. Expressing the wish to have chosen an apprenticeship on the basis of the combined ability to earn, gain qualifications, real world experience and emerge debt free.

4.10 Only one of the focus group participants was actually doing an apprenticeship, and while others would either have liked to, or would still consider it, there was general consensus that apprenticeships hadn't been adequately explained or promoted to them. There was also a sense that highly rated apprenticeships were in short supply and overly subscribed; a finding which echoes that of the Islington Employment Commission nearly ten years ago.

"I tried to get an apprenticeship, but it didn't work. I don't know why I didn't get accepted but I just didn't. So I took a long, long break and wasted most of my life"
Participant in Focus Group No3

Recommendations C2 & C3. Building Pathways to success.

C2) Establish routes to gaining relevant skills, qualifications and work placement starting with community infrastructure and referral to FE qualifications.

C3) Establish higher profile for apprenticeship opportunities with good employers, and provide greater assistance in understanding, navigation and application.

Demand for personalised support:

4.11 Among participants' top priorities to find work, is the call for access to free one-to-one **personalised employment advice** and guidance in the shape of dedicated mentors, coaches, and advisors.

4.12 This is evidenced in the responses of survey participants, also in answer to Q43 of the survey.

'Help to develop necessary skills' 'Help with CVs and knowing where to look for jobs'
'Help to create a good network' 'Support' 'More help and support'
'Group conversation' '**Westminster Employment Service**' 'Having a mentor and personal forms of support' 'More advice' 'More support and availability' '**A lot of help**'
'They should be given support and advice necessary to their personal situations'
'More advice in ALL professional fields' '**Having resources easily accessible to learn the skills to go to interviews and find work**' '*Being helped with the right choices in life to help realise what you want*' 'Having people supporting them and having advice on what to do' 'Have regular meetings and brainstorm ideas of what they want to do in the future' 'By coaching throughout their journey and giving them a boost'
'**Go to local communities more and reach out more**'

4.13 Participants in the focus groups went further to recognise the relative benefits of being able to access a combination of online support and personalised face-to-face interactions, with an emphasis on the latter.

“although universal credit does provide a work coach, they don’t really cater to your individual needs and passions” Participant in Focus Group No3

“If I had to choose one or the other, then real life, because then they wouldn't just look at my CV, they'll look at me” Participant in Focus Group No2

4.14 There was agreement that a dedicated space to meet for this advice is best located in the community, and should be welcoming and stigma free.

“you could go to the Job Centre and get a work coach, but people that age don’t really want to go to the job centre” Participant in Focus Group No3

4.15 In terms of where participants said they currently accessed support it was clear that very few, with the exception of those in college or at university, knew where to access support other than generic internet searches. One interviewee told us:

“Well, no one really [helped me]. Was all me to be honest. I took advice on a couple of quotes from YouTube videos.” Interview 1

4.16 The exact nature and frequency of the support required varied from person to person, underlining the need for the experience to be truly personalised.

Recommendation C4. Universal offer for under 30s

Establish and promote High Street employment Hub in Harrow Road (Paddington Employment Partnership PEP) providing job skills, 121 IAG, online resources and guided referral to skills and jobs progressions integrating WES/WAES/ PDT/AYP and Employers and promoted by YWF to members and corporates.

4.17 In summary, demand in all three areas, skills, experience and support, is not currently being met; with the effect that many young adults in North Paddington who want to work, are not being supported to do so.

In work support

4.18 Once in work, the need for the community-based support described above continues. This ensures the individual is able to adapt to working life, to excel in their job and to derive satisfaction, new skills and a route for progression, (Barnard, 2022).

4.19 In addition participants cited the benefit of being mentored or shadowed on the job by 'higher ups', and being able to learn from more experienced colleagues – both via online tutorials and in person.

4.20 75% of respondents currently 'in work' said their employer had been either 'very' or 'a bit helpful' in settling them into the new job; 25% said their employer had been 'not that helpful' or 'really unhelpful'.

Youth Voice:

4.21 High levels of participation in, and positive feedback about, the research suggest that there is appetite among under-employed young adults to explore any support or opportunity that may enhance their employment prospects. To be attractive and maximise success, services would benefit from involving the target cohort in service design.

“appreciate that [we] are sharing [our] voice rather than not listening to us, because I've had that my whole life, I would make a suggestion and I get shut down because [they think] I don't know anything.”

Participant in Focus Group No3.

Recommendation C5. User-centered service design

Establish a 'Rebel Forum' for youth voice and co-design of support services with Paddington Employment Partnership (PEP).

5) Observations from stakeholder-interviews and literature review:

Formative experiences:

5.1 29% said they left school or college without a plan of what to do next. Of those that had a plan 31% felt they were not on track to achieving it.

5.2 The Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Low Income Family Tracker and other published data all combine to evidence the marginalisation a young person growing up in an area of disadvantage such as North Paddington is likely to face (WCC, 2022). This is in stark contrast to the wealth and privilege that surrounds them in neighbouring Little Venice, St John's Wood and Notting Hill. The psychological effect of living at the 'wrong' end of the widest equality gap in the country cannot be underestimated (Neate, 2022). Although insufficient research exists into the effect this has on young adults in North Paddington and their employment aspirations, we know that neighbourhood deprivation and intersectional inequalities combine to negatively influence life chances more widely (Daniel Holman, 2022). There is also strong evidence that work experience, for example, can help mitigate this disadvantage and is a good predictor of future economic independence and success, (Niamh O Regan, 2023) (Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2013).

5.3 64% (29) survey respondents said they had had careers advice at school, 35% (16) had not. Of those who had, 52% rated it average, 31% "good" or "very good" and 17% "poor".

"I have this idea that I'm going to find someone. Like, I'm going to marry someone and they're going to plan out my future for me whether I work or not."

Participant in Focus Group No4

5.4 Interestingly very few of the young adults we spoke to had held a weekend job or other ongoing paid work experience prior to leaving school. Social norms have changed over the last generation, and parents expect this much less now, (Islington Employment Commission, 2014). Young people attending state school and those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are least likely to have received work experience. The evidence suggests, however, that young people who combine work and study are "less likely to become NEET when they leave full-time education and they are more likely to earn more in the future" (Crowley, 2021).

Recommendation D. Local Jobs for Local People

Establish a subsidised community work programme, supporting work experience and job creation in the local voluntary and social economy sector in partnership with local employment services.

The role of civil society and social economy organisations,

5.5 One of the recurrent themes throughout the research with young adults was the importance of the network in breaking into the world of work. The demoralising process of applying online and the recurrent rejection from cold-calling led nearly every one of the focus group attendees to seek an introduction, usually via a family member, a family friend or friend. 20% of survey respondents cited 'personal networks' as a 'typical' way of looking for work, while over 50% said they would turn to a parent or carer for advice on jobs and careers.

5.6 A majority of the focus group participants had gained work experience either through local businesses who knew them and/or their families, or through local community and social economy organisations who offer ad hoc youth employment opportunities and work experience. In North Paddington these include The Avenues Youth Project, Grand Junction and and Happy Lizzy Youth Club.

5.7 At the APPG on Youth Employment exploring place based approaches to youth unemployment on 28th March 2023, a range of local authorities around the country highlighted best practice in council delivery programmes; it took the two youth ambassadors to point out that in both their cases it was the personal network that provided the breakthrough for them, not a support programme, though of course that is not to say the support programmes are not helpful, just that they sometimes overlook the role of the social capital that already exists in the community (however limited) and the ability of broader voluntary sector and social economy organisations to assist. In Sweden, an internationally recognised best practice model for youth employment support, the contribution of the social economy sector in the co-delivery of publicly-financed employment services has been instrumental, (OECD, 2023).

5.8 The limitation of the 'who you know' approach is that for those with limited networks this may only extend as far as securing low skilled casual work in the community which is helpful in terms of getting experience and starting earning some money but is unlikely to open doors to a successful career path or broaden horizons; poorer communities like North Paddington tend not to have personal networks that extend to a wide range of interests – which in turn serves to reduce opportunity and widen inequality between them and their peers in more affluent parts of the borough.

Recommendation E: Services Working Better Together

Form a North Paddington Employment Partnership bringing together local third sector providers, council employment services, schools, FE and other training providers and businesses to scope budgets and integrated delivery framework.

Existing provision in North Paddington:

5.9 There is no systematic employment support system, either building-based, remote or virtual, that is widely taken up by 18-25s in North Paddington. What this report shows is there is unmet demand in North Paddington for work, skills and advice.

5.10 The closest building-based services in Westminster are Job Centre Plus (JCP) in Lisson Grove, the Youth Hub at Westminster Adult Education Centre (WAES) in Lisson Grove, and the Westminster Employment Service (WES) office in Church Street. These are a one and a half hour round trip on foot from Queen's Park through three gang territories. There is a high-quality infrastructure in North Paddington already offering some employment support, most notably at The Stowe Centre and The Rebel Business School, which could be developed for co-located integrated services targeting under 30s in North Paddington.

5.11 Fewer than 1 in 3 of those looking for work were signed on at the Job Centre, a fact that was reflected in the comments made in the focus group suggesting widespread unwillingness to engage with JCP for reasons of personal pride.

5.12 Awareness in North Paddington of support services such as the Youth Hub at WAES and WES appears to be limited, and provision through the voluntary and social economy sector in the community is patchy and lacks the economic resilience to ensure continuity of service.

5.13 This all makes for a disjointed and fragmented picture which is not user-friendly.

5.14 The North Paddington Programme's promise of co-ordination in this field offers considerable potential. Integration of cross-sector employment services for young adults holds out the prospect of:

- Driving up awareness of support services among 18-25s;
- Increasing awareness and referrals between providers;
- Co-locating advisors and skills training in the community.

5.15 While a localised public information campaign is required to achieve saturation of awareness among the target population, it is important to ensure that sufficient support is available to meet demand.

Recommendation

See C4: Establish and promote High Street employment Hub in Harrow Road (Paddington Employment Partnership PEP) providing job skills, 121 IAG, online resources and guided referral to skills and jobs progressions integrating WES/WAES/PDT/AYP and Employers and promoted by YWF to members and corporates.

Tracking the target cohort

5.16 There is no coordinated and systemic contact with young adults post 18.

5.17 An innovative pilot is being run by Harris Academy and WES. The school identifies those year 11s at risk of becoming NEET and WES works with these individuals to support them into work or further education.

5.18 In the absence of a comprehensive database of young adults that would facilitate systematic outreach, services struggle to recruit and potential clients fall through the gaps. The numbers of young adults accessing employment support services in north Westminster is low, be that through the Youth Hub at WAES, The Job Centre, WES, PDT, 2-3 Degrees' Mastering My Futures Programme or AYP's Kick Start Careers Programme.

5.19 In order to ensure no one is left behind, it is important to track 18-25 year olds, get agreement to maintain alumni databases and adopt a data sharing protocol between data holders (schools, colleges and youth clubs) and service providers.

Recommendation F. Don't lose touch.

Co-design and standardise, annual 'census' of alumni (through schools, colleges & youth clubs) and pool survey results as part of YWF needs analysis.

6) Case study 1

Jasmine is 20 years old and lives on a housing estate in Westbourne Ward. She was born in the area to 1st generation Middle Eastern parents.

She went to a local primary and two secondary schools in North Paddington where she completed her A-Levels. She was excluded from the first secondary school but finished her sixth form at the second.

Sixth form and her A-levels were disrupted by Covid, and studying at home was difficult as she shares a three-bedroom flat with her mother and five siblings.

She had dreams of becoming a lawyer until she met a careers advisor through the school in year 11. The advice she received made her give up on her aspiration to become a lawyer, believing it would be too difficult.

Jasmine is bright, but she says that she used to be much bubblier before Covid. Now she describes herself as withdrawn and quiet. Being detached from her friendship group and learning to be alone has become the norm.

She applied to university and got a place studying a social science. She has regrets over her decision given the debt burden it will leave her with, and she is concerned that she isn't acquiring the work experience she will need to make herself employable after graduating. She is very skeptical about finding a job in the field of her studies and doesn't know anyone who can open doors in the industry. She's worried about facing discrimination when applying for jobs, and imagines herself starting her working life in an unrelated, unexciting, low-paid job with few prospects.

Her decision to go to university was not a result of family or peer expectation, rather the result of just following the herd, and without anyone to discuss alternatives with, such as apprenticeships, she feels let down. Jasmine knew about the Job Centre and Universal Credit, but didn't want to be associated with them because of the stigma that she and her peers attach to it. Jasmine was not aware of other employment support services in the area or in Westminster more broadly.

Jasmine spoke affectionately about the tight-knit community on her estate where everyone looks out for each other, but she was so affected by the crime and violence that are a routine part of growing up in the area that she dreams of leaving the area permanently to work in Dubai where she says it feels much safer. When pressed she said she would love to stay in North Paddington if only the crime would stop. But she had no faith that it would stop. She won't visit her cousins now as that would mean leaving the safety of her estate to run the gauntlet of the Harrow Road and the Mozart Estate.

Other than hoping she'd be swept away by 'Mr. Right', leaving for Dubai seemed, however radical, the closest Jasmine came to having life goals and a plan for achieving them.

The symbolism of the anticipated move to Dubai, illustrates how hopeless the status quo feels to many 18-25s in North Paddington, but it also demonstrates personal resourcefulness and courage to overcome the odds.

Jasmine has been failed by all but her family and closest neighbours. Growing up through years of austerity, she, like most we saw, carries visible signs of scarring from her experience of growing up in North Paddington, too young to vote on Brexit and powerless to control the damaging effects of Covid on her education. Without support she is alone in trying to forge her future, and struggling to know how best to proceed.

But with a little expert support, guidance and the right introductions, Jasmine's potential, like that of many others, could be realised, to help her embark on a career of choice and a pathway to prosperity.

Case Study 2

YA is a young man, now 20, who has lived all his life in North Paddington with his mother, father and a younger sister. The siblings were born to refugee parents from the horn of Africa. The parents were themselves child refugees spending much time in refugee camps in Africa and then in Libya before arriving in the UK.

YA grew up in a loving home, but his mother became prone to severe bouts of depression, and his father had to leave his job in order to care for the family.

YA has learning difficulties and was bullied at school. This together with other complex personal issues caused him to go off the rails at age 14. The next five years were spent going missing from home, dropping out of school, and selling weed to get by. He refuses to talk to his parents about the things that have troubled him.

Over this time, YA's father was desperate. With the help of the Police, YA came to the attention of Westminster Council's Integrated Gangs Unit who started working with the family.

Throughout these traumatic years YA's father had managed to stay sane by taking up a volunteering position with Paddington Development Trust (PDT) that he credits with restoring his self-esteem and the strength to help put his son on the road to recovery.

Meanwhile YA's mother's mental health was getting worse. While her husband was dealing with YA, their daughter was referred by her school to take up a place on The Avenues juniors' programme, The Zone. This community-led after-school service effectively provided the family with free after-school care five days a week in term time and throughout the holidays. As well as ensuring the daughter was in a safe space and well looked-after it gave her mother much needed respite and her father the time to dedicate himself to supporting his son and to carrying out his restorative volunteering role in the community.

WCC's Gangs Unit were able to work with YA and with support from Westminster Employment Service who allocated him a work coach, YA was found a work placement which he has held for nearly a year. The WES work coach continues to provide support.

YA's father describes the help he received from a combination of Westminster Council's Gangs Unit, Westminster Employment Service, PDT, Tell it Parents Action Group and The Avenues Youth Project as a 'life saver'.

It is notable that this combination of support services exists in Westminster and North Paddington at all. Even more reassuringly they combined to provide valuable holistic, wrap-around support to the family. Strikingly, however, it was YA's father who stitched this inter-agency support together around himself and his family. Many other less well-informed people might struggle to know how to commandeer the support available so successfully.

This points to the potential for greater targeted support which could accrue from improved joining up across Statutory and non-statutory services in the community.

It is therefore incumbent on the service providers themselves to join up their services more deliberately to achieve the greatest synergy for those who need it most.

7) Recommendations

Theme	Recommendation
Connecting YP with opportunities	<p>B. Working w. WCC Responsible Business Unit, WES, PDT and YWF develop a framework for identifying good employers, and jointly profile them. Build knowledge base of advisors and connect job seekers with good employers.</p> <p>C3. Establish higher profile for apprenticeship opportunities with good employers, and provide greater assistance in understanding, navigation and application.</p> <p>D. Establish a subsidised community work programme, supporting work experience and job creation in the local voluntary and social economy sector in partnership with local employment services.</p>
Up-skilling	<p>C1. Establish and promote comprehensive skills offer for 18-25s delivered in the community.</p> <p>C2. Establish routes to gaining relevant skills, qualifications and work placement starting with community infrastructure (e.g. AYP & GJ) and referral to FE qualifications.</p>
Services working better together	<p>E. Form a North Paddington Employment Partnership bringing together local third sector providers, council employment services, schools, FE and other training providers and businesses to scope budgets and integrated delivery framework.</p> <p>C4. Establish and promote High Street employment Hub in Harrow Road (Paddington Employment Partnership PEP) providing job skills, 121 IAG, online resources and guided referral to skills and jobs progressions integrating WES/WAES/ PDT/AYP and Employers and promoted by YWF to members and corporates.</p>
With young adults for young adults	<p>A. Hold monthly 'Rebel Network' (peer-to-peer) & themed networking events designed with young people and young adults supported by coaches, mentors, advisors, employers etc.</p> <p>C5. Establish a 'Rebel Forum' for youth voice and co-design of support services with PEP.</p>
Leave no one behind	<p>F. Co-design and standardise, annual 'census' of alumni (schools, colleges, youth clubs) and pool survey results as part of YWF needs analysis.</p>

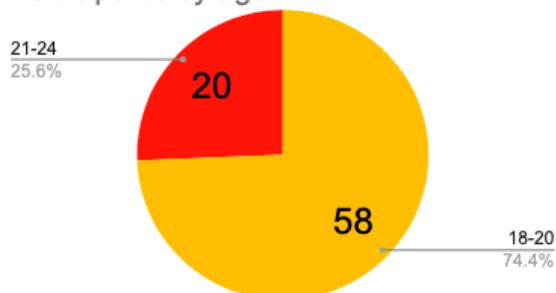
8) Further research, and next steps:

Age:

18-20s accounted for 74% (58) of those electing to take part in the research across all mediums. 26% (20) were evenly spread across the 21-25 age group.

The 18-20s typically have less work experience; are more likely to be still living at home and more represented in further or higher education.

Participants by age



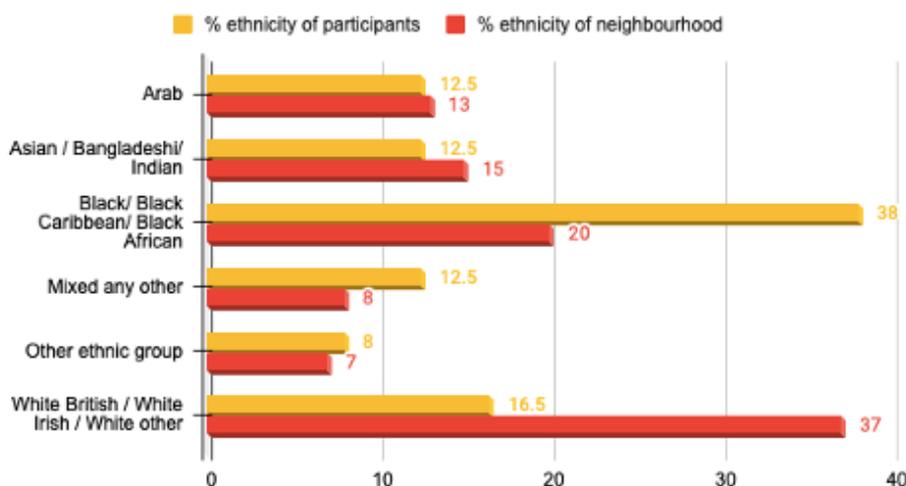
Further research: 21s-25s were harder to engage and more work is required to engage and better understand the needs of this cohort.

Ethnicity profile:

Participants in the two pilot groups, four focus groups and the two interviewees were asked to self-identify their ethnicity. The pie chart below contains the responses received. The bar graph below shows the ethnic breakdown of participants compared to that of the neighbourhood population in the age group. White British/Irish/Other was under-represented in the study, making up just 16% of respondents, compared to a local population in the age group of 37%.

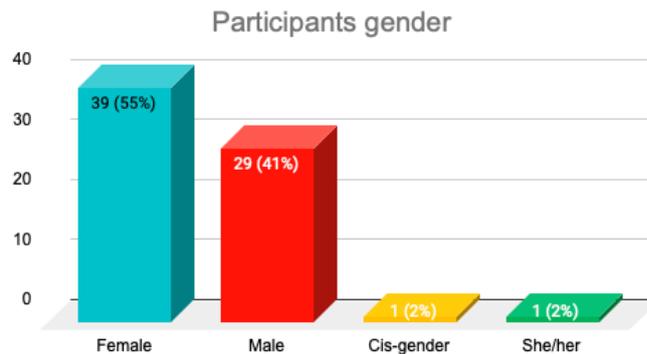
Further research: given the marked shortfall in engagement by White British/Irish/Other in the study, as well as from participation in many of the 'feeder' services, more work is required to better understand the reasons for this disconnect.

Ethnicity % participants vs neighbourhood



Gender:

The 78 participants in the research were asked to self-identify their gender; the breakdown is as follows:



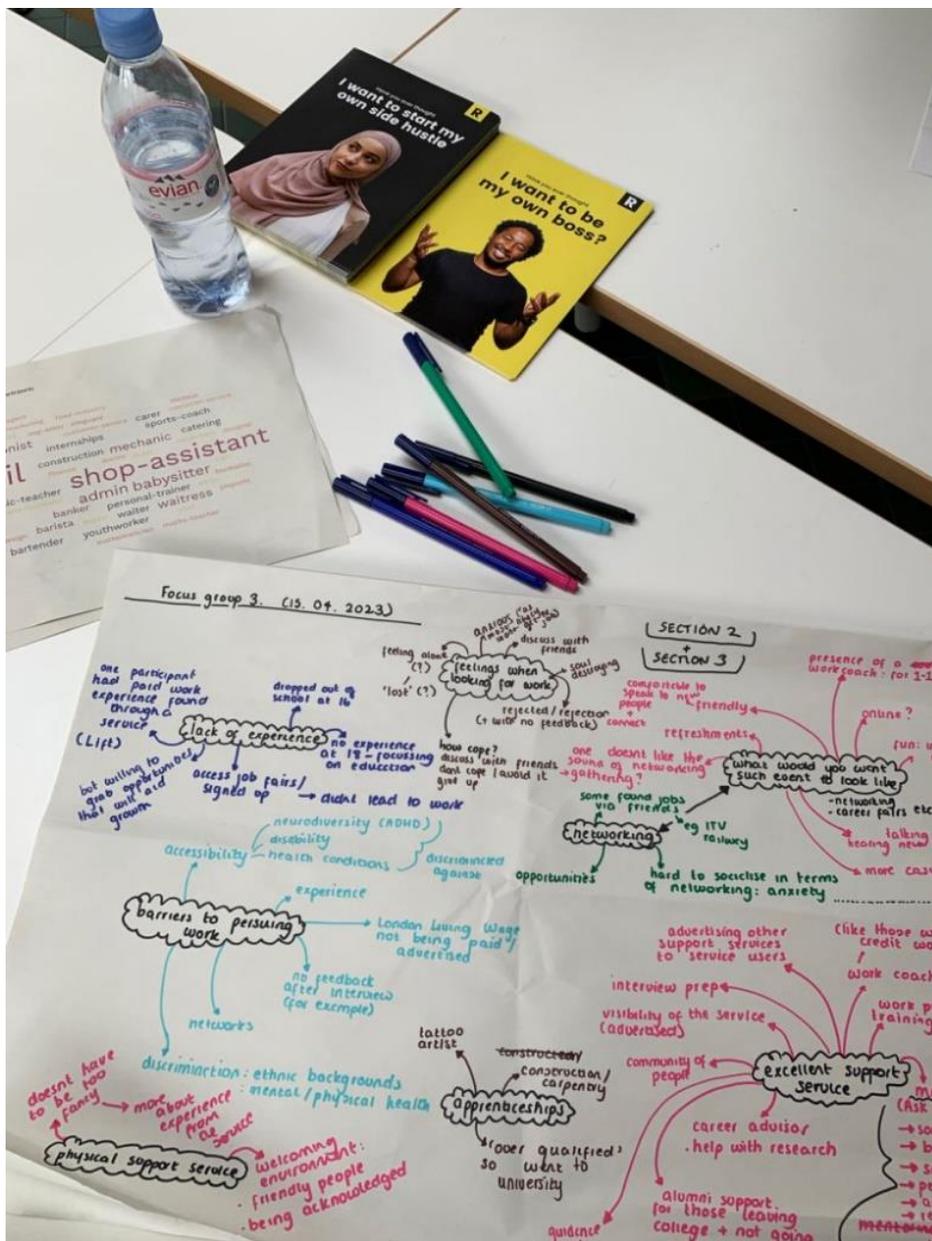
Further research: The data doesn't break down NEETs or economically inactive by gender so it's difficult to know whether there is a disparity. A better understanding of how gender-based needs differ in this age group would be of help to support services.

Further research: Not enough is known about the psychological effect that exposure to extreme inequality has on young people; in particular their self-esteem and career ambitions. Research should also include the effect that those growing up in North Paddington experience as a result of prolonged exposure to, and fear of serious violence.

This report into the employment support needs of 18-25s forms part of a wider Needs Analysis being carried out by Young Westminster Foundation to be published in the Autumn of 2023.

Next steps:

1. Recommend report to the North Paddington Partnership – in particular the theme group concerned with youth employment.
2. Convene a round table of key stakeholders
3. Cost recommendations and raise funds to implement.
4. Work with university partner to agree evaluation of NP Youth Employment programme.



9) Report Commissioners joint undertaking

"With partial funding from Westminster City Council, Paddington Development Trust and Young Westminster Foundation set out to commission this piece of research because we believe that young adult's voices should be at the heart of decision making around youth services for under-25s.

Our work with communities in Westminster, including those of North Paddington, has exposed the stark challenges young adults face in their search for meaningful and supportive careers. Young adults and families have told us this has significantly worsened in recent years due to the impact of the pandemic and economic turbulence.

Greater collaboration between communities, Westminster City Council, youth organisations, schools, businesses and specialist employment services has been an ongoing goal for all our organisations. To date, we haven't fulfilled that ambition as effectively as we should; as heard by those contributing to this report.

This research is an opportunity to reset and strengthen that collaboration for a specific community of young adults aged 18-25 in North Paddington, led by the experiences and ideas of those who matter most. With young people, for young people. We thank Fabian Sharp, the peer researchers of the University of Westminster and their teaching staff, the Rebel Business School and all those who shared their experiences.

We commit to:

- ✓ *Improving the way we join-up,*
- ✓ *Opening conversations on the recommendations contained in this report, and*
- ✓ *Acting together so no young adult in North Paddington is left behind.*

This work will begin as part of the North Paddington Partnership and the convening of a roundtable of key stakeholders within the next six months i.e. no later than April 2024. We further commit to sharing the outcome of this action and additional research by October 2024, so that we can be held accountable by the young adults of North Paddington."

Appendix 1 – Providers and Professional Input

APPG Youth Employment – Place Based Approaches; Attended

Badamosi, Ola (Paddington Development Trust); Interview

Baker, Emma (Rocket Science); Methodology

Davis, Stephen (College of North West London); Interview

Edeh, Arinola (Westminster Adult Education Service); Interview

Gallagher, Eileen (WCC); Interview

Gardner, Andy (Careers Advisor); Interview

Highwood, Damian (WCC); Interview

Johnston, Neil (PDT)

Konadu, Carl (2-3 Degrees); Interview

Leon, Marcus (Avenues Youth Project); Interview

Dr Thalia Magioglou (University of Westminster); Training

Mann, Helen (Young Westminster Foundation); Interview

Marange, John (JCP); Interview

Nolan, John (WCC); Interview

Olaoshun, Oyin (2-3 Degrees); Interview

Porter, Alan (University of Westminster), Methodology and Analysis

Rawlings, Laura-Jane (Youth Employment); Interview

Vertkin, Jayne (WCC); Interview

Walsh, Louis (Teacher, Westminster Academy); Interview

Wilson, James (City of Westminster College); Interview

Youth Futures Foundation, High NEET Rates; Webinar.

Appendix 2 – Survey Design, Questions and Answers

The survey was designed in Typeform.

74 people accessed the survey.

Anyone who was not in the 18-25 age bracket or lived outside the area was not able to continue. 29 people were disqualified. 45 people completed the survey.

At Q3 the 45 valid respondents were asked to choose from a list which option most closely described their current situation.

The answer given would route participants through a distinct and relevant set of questions, before eventually bringing everyone back to the same questions for the final part from Q26 to 44.

The following questions were answered only by subsets of the total (45) respondents:

Qs 8-14 Those "Looking for work" (11 people)

Qs 15-21 Those "In Work" (12 people)

Qs 22-23 Those "Hustling" (2 people)

Qs 24-25 Those "Starting their own business". (3 people)

None of the 45 respondents identified with the statement "Not working, not studying and not actively looking for work". As a result Qs 4-7 of the questionnaire were unanswered.

Anyone choosing any other category skipped straight to Q26.

18-25s Employment Questionnaire Questions and Answers

Q.1 How old are you?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Under 18	7	9
18	21	28
19	10	13
20	9	12
21	3	4
22	3	4
23	3	4
24	3	4
25	2	3
Over 25	13	17

Q.2 Do you live in or near North Westminster (now or at any time in the last 5 years)

A.

Answer	Number	%
Yes	45	83
No	9	17

Q.3 Which of these best describes your situation now?

A.

Answer	Number	%
In full or part time education or training	16	35
In paid work	12	27
Looking for Work	11	24
Hustling	2	4
Other	2	4
“Working and studying but looking for a solid full time job once I graduate this year”		
“Working Part time, while participating in a programme to help look for work”		
Starting my own business	1	2
Unable to work or study (e.g. caring duty or long term sick)	1	2
Not working, not studying and not actively looking for work	-	-

Q.4 What's the main reason you aren't looking for work right now?

A. *(nobody answered this question)*

Q.5 How soon might you be ready to look for work?

A. *(nobody answered this question)*

Q.6 When you are ready to start looking for work, what kind of assistance would really help you find and keep a good job? e.g. affordable childcare, employer understanding of my needs etc.

A. *(nobody answered this question)*

Q.7 What would most attract you to a job?

A. *(nobody answered this question)*

Q.8 So you're looking for work. Select all that apply to you now.

A

Answer	Number	%
Looking for work but NOT signed on	8	72

Looking for cash in hand work	6	54
Looking for work and signed on at job centre	3	27
Looking to start up own business	1	9
Other	-	-

Q.9 What would most attract you to a job?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Close to Home	8	72
Good Salary	8	72
Flexible Hours	7	63
Remote Working	4	36
Opportunities for promotion / development	3	27
Staff discounts, company car or other perks	2	18
Health Benefits	1	9
Pension Contributions	-	-
Dedicated time for CPD or training opportunities	-	-
Childcare Benefits	-	-
Don't Know	-	-
Other	-	-

Q.10 What kind of jobs are you looking for?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Entry Level Jobs	5	50
Skilled Jobs	5	50
Apprenticeship	3	30
Graduate Jobs	2	20
Other	-	-

Q.11 What is the lowest hourly rate of pay you would accept for an entry level job?

A.

Answer	Number	%
£5.28 / hr (minimum apprentice rate for 18-21s)	4	80
£7.49/hr (minimum wage for 18-20s)	1	20
£10.18 / hr (minimum wage for 21-22 year olds)	-	-
£10.42 / hr Minimum wage for 23s and over	-	-
£11.95 / hr (London Living Wage)	-	-
Other	-	-

Q.12 And how confident are you that you have enough **experience** to get an entry level job?
 A. 1=low confidence, 5=high confidence

Answer	1	2	3	4	5
Number	3	-	1	-	1
%	60	-	20	-	20

Q.13 How confident are you that you have the **qualities** that employers want for an entry level job?
 A. 1=low confidence, 5=high confidence

Answer	1	2	3	4	5
Number	3	-	1	-	1
%	60	-	20	-	20

Q.14 How would you rate your **motivation** to look for an entry level job?
 A. 1 = low motivation 5 = high motivation

Answer	1	2	3	4	5
Number	1	0	2	1	1
%	20	0	40	20	20

Q.15 Well done on getting into work. What employment contract type do you have?
 A.

Answer	Number	%
Permanent contract	7	58
Freelance contract	2	17
Temporary contract	1	8
Zero Hours contract	1	8
Short-term rolling contract	1	8
No contract i.e. cash in hand	-	-
Don't know	-	-
Other	-	-

Q.16 What is most likely to keep you in your current job?
 A.

Answer	Number	%
Good Salary	10	83
Opportunities for promotion / development	8	66
Flexible Hours	7	58
Don't Know	4	33
Close to Home	2	16
Pension Contributions	2	16
Health Benefits	1	8
Staff discounts, company car or other perks	1	8
Other "pays the bills"	1	8
Dedicated time for CPD or training opportunities	-	-
Remote Working	-	-
Childcare Benefits	-	-

Q.17 To what extent are you happy with your job?

A. 1 = not at all happy; 5 = loving it

Answer	1	2	3	4	5
Number	-	2	3	4	3
%	-	15	25	33	25

Q.18 How supportive has your employer been in settling you in to the workplace and training you up for the job?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Very Helpful	5	42
A bit Helpful	4	33
Not that helpful	2	17
Really unhelpful	1	8
Don't know.	-	-

Q.19 What is the biggest frustration you have encountered in holding down a job?

A.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Adapting to different situations", • "childcare", • "Commuting to work", • "Dealing with unreasonable "management", • "Discrimination", • "Guaranteed hours", 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Inequality of pay structure to value of worker / skill set", • "Job cutting hours", • "making enough money", • "Miss communication", • "Not found something I enjoy".
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Q.20 Which of these best describes your working hours?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Full time	7	58
Part time more than 16 hours a week	3	25
Part time less than 16 hours a week	1	8
Occasional Hours – not regular	1	8
Seasonal work	-	-
Other	-	-

Q.21 What is the main reason for working part time?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Have other commitments	2	40
It's a lifestyle choice, i.e. work-life balance	1	20

On a study course at the same time	1	20
Can't find full time work	1	20
Don't want it to affect my parent's benefits	-	-
Part of an Apprenticeship	-	-
Cannot cope with full time work right now	-	-
Don't want it to affect my benefits	-	-
Gives me time to develop my side hustle	-	-
Other	-	-

Q.22 OK, in a few words describe your main hustles? answers are anonymised and treated in strictest confidence e.g. online trading, bike courier, 'this and that'.

"Admin, Finance, Youth Work, Activity Coach"

"I'm a musician fresh out of drama school trying to juggling making money and working on my career"

A.

Q.23 If your hustle is legit, do you have a business plan?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Yes	1	50
No	-	-
N/a	1	50

Q.24 Have you ever had sound business advice that has helped develop your earning potential?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Yes	2	100
No	-	-

Q.25 If you wanted business advice who would you ask?

A.

Answer	Number	%
A family member	2	66
A friend	1	33
A business advisor	1	33
Other <i>"colleague"</i>	1	33
Online tutorial	-	-
Self help book	-	-

Q.26 Ok, thinking back, did you get careers advice at school?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Yes	29	64
No	16	35

Q.27 Rate the quality of the careers support you had at school or college. 1= poor 5 = excellent.

A.

Answer	1	2	3	4	5
Number	-	5	15	7	2
%	-	17	52	24	7

Q.28 On leaving school did you have a plan of what to do next?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Yes	16	35
No	13	29
Sort of	16	35

Q.29 Are you on track with your career path and plans? 1 = no, not on track at all; 5 = yes, I'm doing better than I had hoped

A.

Answer	1	2	3	4	5
Number	8	2	13	7	2
%	25	6	40	22	6

Q.30 How would you typically look for work?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Find a job website	21	47
LinkedIn	13	29
Direct Approach with CV	12	27
Find an apprenticeship website	10	22
Social media	9	20
Personal Networks	9	20
Apps	9	20
Employer's own website	8	18
Newspapers	-	-

Q.31 Rate your experience of job hunting. 1 is difficult, 9 is easy

A.

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Number	3	3	5	5	9	11	3	3	3
%	7	7	11	11	20	24	7	7	7

Q.32 What has been your single biggest barrier when looking for work?

A.

- "no one has come back to me",
- "procrastination",
- "Mobility in payment",
- "Not receiving feedback or replies",
- "Not meeting the requirements",
- "Experience",
- "Location/ travel",
- "All jobs ask for experience",
- "health",
- "lack of professional experience",
- "Anxiety and not where to go next",
- "Having experience",
- "Not available hour",
- "I don't know",
- "motivation to be ready for it every day",
- "Autism",
- "Inaccessibility",
- "Anxiety", "Flexibility",
- "cant find apprenticeships in places im interested in",
- "the fact companies aren't consistent",
- "Having no gcse"

Q.33 What advice would you give your younger peers or siblings to make finding work easier for them?

A.

- "don't give up",
- "Have references and have a strong CV",
- "Focus on what they enjoy doing and work off that",
- "Study harder",
- "Do more work experience",
- "Walk into shops that need staff in ur area, ask if there are still vacancies, then show your cv etc",
- "Get experience working in different jobs so you know what type of role you enjoy",
- "Don't sell yourself short have confidence and fake it till you make it 🙌🏻👉",
- "Get experience anywhere and anyhow you can. Employers now value this more than a degree in most cases",
- "Work on communication skills",
- "Get a job in what your studying or have a hobby in",
- "Ask around and just focus and gain experience",
- "I don't know",
- "Apply on the website",
- "look on job websites instead of just hoping to stumble upon something",
- "Never give up and look at websites",
- "Download creative work apps",
- "Find a passion",
- "I really don't know, it depends on their career path",
- "Ask for career advice at school",
- "know what you want to do before you finish education",
- "Do something you enjoy".

Q.34 Have you faced discrimination when looking for work?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Yes	10	40
No	10	40
Not Sure	5	20

Q.35 What kind of discrimination have you faced when looking for work?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Race	6	60
Age	3	30
Gender	2	20
Disability	1	10
Religion	1	10
Sexual orientation	1	10
Prefer not to say	1	10
Class	-	-
Accent	-	-
Looks	-	-
None	-	-
Other	-	-

Q.36 Tell us the TOP 3 types of job you actively looked for as a first job after leaving school/college. e.g. bartender; shop assistant; babysitter; etc.
A.



Q.37 Please describe a job you can see yourself doing for the next 2-3 years?

A.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Waiter", • "working hard", • "baby-sitting", • "Minor job with Law firm", • "I'm not too sure maybe property sales", • "Músic teacher", • "midwife", • "Vocal coach, receptionist and musical director", • "accounting and banking", • "Work placements", • "consultant", • "The job i am currently in people services for Westminster and RBKC", • "Production Assistant", • "A&R", • "Actor", • "Owning my own business", • "Technician", • "Fashion Stylist", • "Dental Nurse", • "Finance", • "I'm not sure about a job because i'm picky. But i would like to start a business", • "Retail or skilled work", • "Nurse", • "Controlling the UKs biggest logistical circuit", | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Receptionist or estate agent", • "I don't know", • "electrician", • "I don't know", • "anyone", • "car technician", • "project manager", • "anything related to playing or teaching music", • "Football coach for a youth club", • "Drama therapy", • "Security", • "Something creative that allows flexibility in my personal life", • "teaching assistant/ training in teaching", • "Heathrow Wheelchair assistance", • "Railway engineer", • "Manager or be in university", • "Mechanic", • "Asking successful business owners how did they make it through from the start", • "a project manager", • "coach/mentor". |
|--|--|

Q.38 How confident are you that you have the **right skills** to get your work life off to a good start?

A.

Answer	Very Confident	Confident	Not Sure	Not Confident	Not at all Confident
Number	11	22	9	3	-
%	24	49	20	7	-

Q.39 And how confident are you that you have **relevant work experience** to get you into your next job of choice?

A.

Answer	Very Confident	Confident	Not Sure	Not Confident	Not at all
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					Confident
Number	6	20	15	3	1
%	13	44	33	7	2

Q.40 And how confident are you that you have the **right qualifications** to get your career underway?

A.

Answer	Very Confident	Confident	Not Sure	Not Confident	Not at all Confident
Number	8	18	14	5	-
%	18	40	31	11	-

Q.41 How confident are you that you have the **right personal network** to help you get started in your chosen career

A.

Answer	Very Confident	Confident	Not Sure	Not Confident	Not at all Confident
Number	7	12	18	7	1
%	15	27	40	15	2

Q.42 Which sources of advice on jobs and careers would you use and trust?

A.

Answer	Number	%
Parent or Carer	24	53
Careers and employability websites	22	49
People I know who are employed	22	49
Friend	19	42
Mentor	17	38
Social Media	16	35
Sibling	13	29
Westminster Employment Service	8	18
National Careers Service	4	9
Job Centre Plus	4	9
Other	3	7
<i>"People who I meet at work that are employed"</i>		
<i>"Rich people that have done my career before me"</i>		
<i>"Personal networks"</i>		

Q.43 How do you think 18-25s could be helped to thrive in their early career?

A.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Work experiences", • "support from higher-ups", • "Create a good network and get out there in the work force", • "By being introduced to different opportunities", • "More awareness on jobs", • "By being helped to develop necessary skills", • "More opportunities", • "by having someone experienced on the job to make us feel comfortable", • "Help with cvs and knowing where to look for jobs", • "Networking events and opportunities", • "Support", • "Be given more opportunities to gain professional experience.", • "Group conversation", "Apprenticeship", • "Set up meeting with important people", • "By researching on what they want to do", • "With more help and support", • "More apprenticeships", • "Westminster Employment Service", • "Having someone lead/shadow them", • "To be offered work trials", • "Having a mentor and personal forms of support", • "Give opportunities in tech based work as the younger generation are more in tune and adapted to the technology used today. Resulting in more efficient workers", • "More advice", • "I don't know", | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "More support and availability", • "I don't know", • "Get help to gain work experience in loads of different job fields so they can choose what path/career they want to follow", • "Better work experience opportunities before we leave school", • "they should be given support and advice necessary to their personal situations", • "A lot of help", • "More work programmes", • "More options at school", • "More advice in ALL professional fields rather", • "Having resources easily accessible to learn the skills to go to interviews and find work", • "Being helped with the right choices in life to help realise what you want", • "Stay confident and to be engaged and learn deeper about the career to go further", • "I think they can be helped by having people supporting them and having advice on what to do", • "Have regular meetings and brainstorm ideas of what they want to do in the future. Have sessions where they go search for jobs or apprenticeships and help them apply for them", • "By coaching throughout their journey and giving them a boost", • "Go to local communities more and reach out more", • "If given more opportunities, as they're very limited at the moment". |
|---|--|

Q.44 Finally, please describe your gender:

A.

Answer	Number	%
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Male	18	40
Female	26	56
Cis-gender	1	2
She/her	1	2

Qualitative Insights from Questionnaire

<p>What advice would you give your younger peer or siblings?</p>	<p><i>Confidence / resilience</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't give up! • Don't sell yourself short have confidence and fake it till you make it! • Never give up and look at websites; <p><i>Be pro-active / build a track record / self-improvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for career advice at school; • Know what you want to do before you finish education; • Have references and have a strong CV; • Study harder; • Do more work experience; • Walk into shops that need staff in ur area, ask if there are still vacancies, then show your cv etc; • Get experience working in different jobs so you know what type of role you enjoy; • Get experience anywhere and anyhow you can. Employers now value this more than a degree in most cases; • Work on communication skills; • Ask around and just focus and gain experience; • Apply on the website; • Look on job websites instead of just hoping to stumble upon something; • Download creative work apps; <p><i>Choose what's right for you</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on what they enjoy doing and work off that; • Get a job in what your studying or have a hobby in; • Find a passion; • Do something you enjoy.
<p>How do you think 18-25s could be helped to</p>	<p><i>Apprenticeships and work experience:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By being introduced to different opportunities; • Work experiences; • More opportunities;

thrive in their early career?

- Be given more opportunities to gain professional experience;
- Apprenticeship;
- More apprenticeships;
- To be offered work trials;
- Get help to gain work experience in loads of different job fields so they can choose what path/career they want to follow;
- Better work experience opportunities before we leave school;
- More work programmes;
- If given more opportunities, as they're very limited at the moment.

Pre-employment information, support, advice and guidance:

- Help with CVs and knowing where to look for jobs;
- support from higher-ups;
- More awareness on jobs;
- By being helped to develop necessary skills;
- Support;
- By researching on what they want to do;
- With more help and support;
- Westminster Employment Service;
- More advice;
- More support and availability;
- They should be given support and advice necessary to their personal situations;
- A lot of help;
- More advice in ALL professional fields rather;
- Having resources easily accessible to learn the skills to go to interviews and find work;
- Being helped with the right choices in life to help realise what you want;
- Stay confidence and to be engaged and learn deeper about the career to go further;
- I think they can be helped by having people supporting them and having advice on what to do;
- Have regular meetings and brainstorm ideas of what they want to do in the future. Have sessions where they go search for jobs or apprenticeships and help them apply for them;

Networking:

- Create a good network and get out there in the work force;
- Networking events and opportunities;

- Group conversation;
- Set up meeting with important people;

In-work mentoring:

- By having someone experienced on the job to make us feel comfortable;
- Having someone lead/shadow them;
- Having a mentor and personal forms of support;
- By coaching throughout their journey and giving them a boost;

Other:

- Give opportunities in tech based work as the younger generation are more in tune and adapted to the technology used today. Resulting in more efficient workers;
- More options at school;
- Go to local communities more and reach out more;

Appendix 3 – Transcript of Focus Group No3 of 4. [by way of example]

Transcript of Recording

Focus Group 3 – 15th April 2023, at Rebel Business School, 470 Harrow Road

1.

Interviewer: Nice. Okay. So as I said, this comes off the back of the questionnaire. And there were some really interesting findings that already came out. 45 of you responded. So 45 really good answers in the questionnaires.

We're going to cover three topics today.

- Entry level jobs. Getting in there, you know. So you're 18 looking for work, you know, how does that pan out? Maybe you've been there, you've done that, you're on to your third, fourth, fifth job. I don't know. You're on to a professional career, but it'd be really helpful to get your experience of what it was like [to get an entry level job] because it's certainly more recent than mine. And if you're in that moment right now, where you're kind of navigating first, jobs need money in your pocket, and all that, then it's super relevant as well. So getting your experience on entry level jobs will be the first thing we look at.
- The next thing we're going to look at is the barriers to you either staying in work or finding work in the first place; the things that you're struggling with, I suppose, in that respect.
- And then finally, the third thing is going to be around the support needs so that I can take away your ideas and put them into the blender and come up with the perfect support service so that when you are here in six month's time or a year's time, I can say to you, this building is not just an empty space with Dan doing, you know, employment support, but you've got employment coaches. You've got... I'm not going to give you the answers because I don't know what they're going to be. That's what I need to hear from you: What would you put in this building? What would you put online? What would that support look like?

02:00

So that's the third and final piece of the conversation. We'll probably do the first two and then have a break and then do the last piece. And in the break, you can go and speak to Ben and Dan as well.

Okay. So, what do we see? Yeah, in the survey half of the people said that they were looking for entry level jobs and the kinds of jobs that people said they were looking for were, well, if we break them down into sort of area of retail, hospitality, caring professions, few office jobs, some sports related music related jobs, and a couple of manual trade type jobs.

But that was the sort of the general area where people are beginning to look for work.

How does that sound to you? What are the sorts of things that you were looking at when you came out of college? There's no order.

DS: So for me yeah, like when I came out of school, I wanted to be, I wanted to do carpentry, so I tried to get an apprenticeship, but it didn't work. I don't know why I didn't get accepted but I just didn't get accepted. So I took a long, long break and I wasted most of my life taking a long break stuff and started selling drugs and all that shit. So yeah, like, but the jobs there you listed, they don't really sound like careers, you know, like they just sound like, as you said, entry level jobs. But I don't know if anyone wants to do that. Like when I was that age, I was thinking if I get stuck in one of these jobs I'm never going to get out of it, I was going to be stuck there being content with it. Now I got rent to pay, got bills to pay, and I'll just be stuck in it. Just don't feel like it.

04:00

Interviewer: What about the rest of you?

RL: I feel like this is about doing something that you enjoy because in the last year I've been in two careers, currently in one now but ain't attending 'cos I don't think it's for me. Currently the railway but before I was doing ITV but I don't think it's about, yeah I'm just doing this because it seems because it's enjoyable which it is, but like Ben said, if it's not bringing you some sort of happiness over time, because the money's good - don't get it twisted, but it's not all about the money. It's about if you enjoy. Yeah that's what I'm saying about bills and stuff, it is hard in retail, but you always have to start from somewhere.

Interviewer: Do you see some of these jobs as a springboard to one that you would find more satisfying?

RL: It depends what you want to go into. So for example if you want to go into, for example for me, I see it as retail, as something where you use to start yourself off. Like if you want to go and do marketing then you use it to buy stuff for that. If you want to do, let's just say, I don't know, gaming and using stuff to buy about that, I don't think it's something OK in my life now, I'm going to pay my bills, do this, do that. But then on the other hand, it is quite easy to move up in retail, but it's strictly just about what you want to do.

DS: And I say the experience that you gain, and that, isn't like it's not really long term experience. You can't, it's not very useful. Like say like you what do you wanna do you wanna be a drama therapist. She needs, like, experience in working in like people with careers and stuff like that innit? She needs to work with people, but not like retail. Retail is not going to do anything for her. You know what I'm saying? You need experience in what you want to do.

Interviewer: How about the others?

DS: Bub, speak! You always have lots to say.

SA: Um. I had my first job when I was 18. It was customer service I worked in Stratford at the Orbit – the red slide.

06:00

Um, first of all, the most important thing about entry level jobs is they don't have good pay. And if they do have a London living wage, one boss would say we're getting paid too much for it, then she'll say "well you got to give him £10 per hour. And at my first job I got paid £6 for doing the same thing". And it's like that they have all that mentality and it's, it's very degrading because you can tell that the way they see us we're just doing it and trying to get paid well because of working alongside.

And you can just say that you don't deserve it or whatever, that like we're getting paid too much for it.

And it's just ridiculous because if you're speaking about her time, that was like 20 years ago before, like inflation, cost of living and all that, but like, adults don't really have any, like any idea of that.

And they just think that just that attitude, it's the main reason why a lot of young people don't like working because it's not even the job itself, it's the attitude they getting from their supervisors like the amount of managers I had that just did not back me up, that I got in trouble for following the rules, but not listen to the customers. But if I listen to customers, I would have got in trouble, just like I got bullied by my own manager.

But it's just like the main reason why people don't like working is the attitude towards the higher ups and how they just think that, you know, we're young and we're like overachievers, so we don't deserve to pay.

Interviewer: Do you agree with that?

RL: I agree. But um, I think it is slightly deeper than that. I feel like everyone gets treated unfairly and I feel like you get cheated because you're not respected in a way. And I feel I was close to this manager when I used to work for JD, but I was still disrespected that they'd still step on me like I'm gum.

08:00

But when you think of it in the other ways like I've done jobs from 12 and 15 (£ per hour) or down the scale, even six when I was in JD you can do the same it's like, it's like you're capped if you think about your capped that the only average what you're going to be making if in full time is 1.2 to probably 2500.

That's basically very good. But even to me it is not a lot, but what can I do to get bigger than that?

And so when people are trying to tell you that £10 an hour and then my sister was doing £10 and I was doing £15, but when we weighed it out at the end of the month we'd basically been doing the same thing.

Interviewer: You were doing the same, same work.

RL: Yeah. I was just doing two more days than her. So there's not really any difference, I'm just doing hard labour and she's just serving people.

We're getting the same, right? There's no difference.

Interviewer: But you were getting paid more than she was?

RL: Yeah I was getting paid £5 more than her you so then that's when you have to use your initiative and even play the game smarter or get played.

Interviewer: So how about playing the game smarter or risk getting played mean for you CC?. What's your experience?

10:00

CC: Um, I got my first job when I was 18 and I'd say last year and I was in it for about seven months. Then I quit because my mental health was really bad and I couldn't get up in the morning and all that stuff. And now I've been trying to find work lately because I realised I need to do something with myself and I just find it very hard to get some jobs.

I mean like applying for I think 100 jobs a month. And I've only had like three or four interviews out of those. And I'd do a trial shift afterwards but then they'd never get back to me.

Interviewer: Right. And what sort of jobs were those?

CC: They were customer service, retail, working in hospitality. And that's about it.

Interviewer: So actually quite a few of the things that were on this list.

And thinking about when you were in work for seven months did that contribute to your poor mental health?

CC: Yeah, a little bit. Cos workin' with people and it was always busy and short staffed and and the like two people in the kitchen and two people in front of the house. And that's about it.

Interviewer: Right. Where was it?

CC: It was in Holborn, it was a small cafe.

Interviewer: Okay. Thanks for your honesty, that's really, really good. Evan, what about you?

EW: Um, I'm the youngest here. I'm just 18. I'm still in college right now, so I've never had, like, a full job or work. But I've applied for work before, like summer holidays or when I could.

Most of the time there was a lot of concentration of younger people trying to do the same thing the hours. So a lot of us wouldn't get jobs or even have passed the first step of even going to an interview And I would say like a lot of us are not really taught too much about how to make CVS, how to go out, look for jobs and a lot of these things to grab opportunities that are seemingly available but we're not taught or given the first step towards those.

Interviewer: Where are you in college?

EW: I'm in Kilburn.

Interviewer: And is there any kind of career support there?

EW: Yeah, there's a lot of opportunities that you can get for short term positions, but nothing in the long term, right?

Interviewer: By short term, what do you mean?

12:00

EW: It's more like you work with a company for a couple of weeks. Just basic work experience. But not something sustainable or something to find outside study.

RL: What is it that you are studying?

EW: I'm studying history, politics and sociology.

Interviewer: Good one. And in terms of casual work like say, for example, a Saturday job or something that you could do alongside your studies, is that something that anyone in your age group would think of doing in that kind of 18?

When I had my job for three years it was zero hours. So I used to do that and study at Uni full time so that helped a lot with bills and stuff, but it's just like just the attitude that people have in general and also the London living wage is not enforced. Like the fact that most people, most jobs like if you work at Tesco or something it would be like £7.50 per hour. And it's ridiculous because these are people who are trying to pay rent and everything and they can't live like that. So the London Living Wage needs to be enforced more. They need to be more confident following that and to like when you're trying to apply for a job and you don't get any feedback, you just get ghosted. That's really unprofessional. And yet if we do that, like we would get in trouble for it, but like why are companies allowed to do that to us?

Interviewer: Has everyone had that experience?

All: Yeah, yeah, yes, yes.

RL: Yeah. And this is sad that obviously we get treated like that. There's nothing we can do. But I feel like that's just honestly how it goes down, but it's like I want to say something to everyone.

I would literally say that I personally can't hold a job because I just find it hard in a sense because there's nothing I enjoy - the things I do enjoy it's like they don't get back to me or things like that.

What I would say, is genuinely just like retail, working in things like, for example, a job, a job is never a career.

The chances of you finding anything that you're gonna want to do now is honestly, I would say quite low.

So I would say, like, if it's something you genuinely want to do, all you have to do is go and get experience and strive within that and you can get it.

But for me, I just jump from so many things to different things because I'd just get distracted quickly. But I would say like, just do retail, then whilst you're doing that try and study to do whatever else it is you want to do extra. But it just is difficult; I feel like jobs, they don't really care if you're not what they want exactly in a blueprint then they don't want you. [INAUDIBLE] like you said they get how many [applicants] a day so to you it's just a case of case or right okay onto the next thing.

14:00

Interviewer: In terms of that tension between the thing you want to do and the need to bring some money in. You know Jack said, you know, there was a moment where he was selling drugs because presumably that was easier than getting a job at Tesco's and maybe paid more.

What are the options? You know, when you are thinking about getting some money in, you know, what's the first thing? So you had a job in a cafe, you know, and some of these retail and so on seemed like a sort of you'd hope that they were a stepping stone, kind of needs must, and then on to something else. But what are the things that you would go to, even though you don't want to do them as a career? What are the jobs that you would do?

16:00

DS: See you right now? Tomorrow I start a job in security, I don't want to do security. I just need money. I was doing construction before. And I was like, [INAUDIBLE], construction is too much. So yeah, like, I don't want to do that, but since I left school, I don't know what I would do. I never actually found something I was passionate enough about to be like, that's what I wanna do the rest of my life.

I didn't want to be like my parents just floating from job to job but I guess I'm going to turn out the same way.

Interviewer: not necessarily

DS: But I don't have any passion about something that makes money.

RL: that this is the thing because I always used to feel the same way but for me it's just been a thing of like I'm just my mind's like, blown in a way. I just have to figure out why I want to do it, you know, how old are you?

DS: 25

RL: you still got time. I think I'm old already and I'm only 20. I think you still have time like my sister's just finished a degree but she feels like she's just got a degree but there's nothing she can actually do with it. She's doing sociology but she feels like she's just got a degree for no reason. It's hard for her, she couldn't find a job. She's going to do a master's but I feel like nowadays it's not actually about but how much you do, it's literally about who you know.

DS: It is isn't it, Like even my security job I got through my sister, or my construction job I got through my uncle was just like, you know,

RL: yeah, that's all it is. Both ITV and Railways were both connections but then it's only about how you stand out. And I know it's a bit off topic, but a Uni degree in all these things, so if he has a degree they're going to want him more. But I feel like if I came with the knowledge and everything can study whatever is I wanted to do on my brain, but then it's not on paper, it's like, Yeah, yeah, it's a bit weird, but I just feel like the way it goes and the way it's always going to be. It's just the economy is not going to change. So inflation, all these things are still going to happen and they're put in place for a reason. So there's nothing anyone can do to change it.

Interviewer: There are some things that I'm hoping we can do to provide some support, and we'll come onto that later. But you made the point about changing your mindset, didn't you?

18:00

And I think that's some kind of realisation that you're in the real world and some of these knock backs will happen.

RL: I think everyone will agree that it's just like a cycle. Like you'll get a job and think right this is me now, but then it will be like OK next week I'm not feeling it. It's just you know what it is for me, I don't know if anyone agrees, but it's like, when I feel like I enjoy something I'll continue to do it then if I feel especially it happens a lot with agencies, mostly construction,

I would get street work for two weeks and then for a month there wouldn't be any work. Or they'll tell me off so I don't want to go back there anymore.

Interviewer: Is that common? Ewan, you haven't had that experience but for the rest of you is that, you were talking about 0 hours contracts and sometimes the flexibility is good. But RL's experience is actually that of uncertainty...

SA: Yeah it's not like that. I mean, now, it's not even a full time thing in effect, I've a three month contract so that it's not a full time job. So you're constantly not sure. But we do it every month instead of saying I have enough. And because it's not permanent that way, if they want to end it, he can end it without having to pay me like severance pay or cover me for anything. So, it is like that's the most difficult thing. But at the same time, it's like it's the best route for people who are students or people who don't really look for a full time job yet.

And I'd prefer that than going back to entry level customer service. I hated it as it's like Ben said Unionised jobs are better 'cos in these precarious jobs you're not protected.

And like the stuff you go through, like the verbal abuse you go through from the customers and you can't even say anything but you're expected to take it.

20:00

It's just, you know your manager not even going to have your back and it's just not worth it, especially if, let's say if you're doing, you know, you're just like making coffee or something and then the customer like is mad at you and you know, you're going to get that hate like you could wake up in front of my happen to you and you not expect to take it. It's not very good for mental health.

Interviewer: It doesn't sound like it, no. But in terms of who you know, like networks, has anyone here found a job through a friend or a family friend or someone that, you know, that has that helped you?

DS: CC is working for her family.

All: yes, yes, yes.

SA: I work for a community company around here and I would recommend her. And I should probably.

Interviewer: Oh, brilliant. Okay. So that that network can help and. And in your case RL?

RL: Yeah. Yeah. So [a family friend's] nephew is the third in charge at ITV this Morning, so I worked there for like a month. But then it just wasn't feeling it. Then my cousin's boyfriend works in the railway, then he put me on an eight week course.

Interviewer: So actually, quite a few of your experiences have come through connections. That's just great. And even though you weren't feeling them as the king of the job for life or you know, that the big career move, do you feel that it was a useful experience, that you learned something different?

RL: Yeah 100%. It kind of opens your brain

DS: I agree with that, cos like with construction I hated it, but I'm thankful I did it, like, it taught me a lot.

Interviewer: I mean I remember working in retail and I still fold my clothes a certain way, My cupboard looks very organised.

22:00

Interviewer 2: Um, when you are looking for jobs or if you were to look for a job, how would you go about looking? Where would you look? What would you do?

DS: I wouldn't really do that. I just ring up someone I know and go through connections. I wouldn't even bother going through that process because I have such little experience most of my life I didn't really do anything legal. So there's like a big gap in my employment history innit. So I go from connections.

SA: statistically its been shown that most jobs are got through connections. and like people kind of colour generally don't really like, especially if you are born here but your family are immigrants they don't really have the connections which if you want a job I know someone I can give you that and it's the main reason why you see like generally people who are first generation immigrants or like people of colour would struggle to find jobs because like even if they were trying. I remember when I was young, I was trying to apply for jobs since I was 17 and thinking I'm going to get rejected because my surname; and it's legit, it's a fact that it is a thing where if you don't have a white name, a white surname people won't even look at your CV and I think that needs to change like me, if you try to like you can try to do as much a diversity training or whatever but people are always going to have that bias and like if we try to change the way we do CVs like maybe not have any names in it or maybe don't have the agenda in it because what relevance does that have on whether you want to hire someone or not?

24:00

Interviewer: there are companies who it's a bit like the London Living Wage, so it's optional. It's not a legal requirement yet, but there are companies who've chosen to do their recruitment in a sort of anonymous way. So no names, no ages, no photographs, no detail of gender or anything else and they just literally look at the facts. I don't know how you can find a list of who those companies are.

RL: I know this might seem a bit crazy. But sometimes you actually have to play them at their own game to get where you want.. When I was applying and I had no experience every time I would apply for a job and never get it, but the one time I did that I got it. They called me straight after and I got it, but it's things you have to do. At the end of the day I don't want to have to do that, But if I have to do that, I have to be willing to do it.

If you think about it, when I left school, I was going to college and I did the employability skills, and I did business. I never had any clue about anything so I didn't know that the railway existed. I didn't know that all these other jobs existed. All I knew was retail. In school they don't teach you anything to do with, like, all occupations, these little jobs they don't teach you.

Interviewer: And after college as well, even in college, you didn't get that?.

RL I didn't. And they just said, oh yeah, go see your career advisor. I visited that. But to me, I'll be honest. To me, it's just B.S. I've given this because I've been to plenty of workshops, hands down I'd say this is probably the best one because I can be open, that's cos its Avenues so I know, but it's been more of a thing of like where there's just actually, yeah it's just crazy how it actually works, but you just have to use your brain.

26:00

I wouldn't recommend it, but I would say if you actually want to get a job and get started, just lie on your CV 'cos they're not going to check.

Interviewer: That's one way. And yours was another. So EW you haven't spoken much, What do you think you will need to do when you're at the point of trying to get your first, even if it's just an entry level one, what kind of things do you think you might...

EW: For now I've been leaving off looking for careers and jobs. But some of my friends have jobs. They work zero hour contracts or random jobs, and they get paid but I've been putting it off till later in summer because I can't balance out a job and education. It hurts my mind and I lose focus a lot.

Yeah. So what I did initially when I was looking for a job previously, I went on Indeed and I signed up for it. I sent off my CV thousands of times, random places, all I could 'cos in my mind my mindset was I need to get money, not really a career.

Just get somewhere, no matter what. I think I was when I was just like, as long as it's like £8 above, I'll be fine regardless. But a lot of them turned me down. And even the process when I was trying to go through, especially online, I had to do a lot of quizzes, a lot of checks and balances. And it was all confusing and it was like they offer you jobs in spaces, especially online, but they will limit you as soon as you enter and you give your CV through

And especially since a lot of us aren't taught how to make CVs properly, I had to go pay for some site to properly fix up my information and put it in. Because I have experiences from places like here and other things but I don't know how to properly structure it into a well thought out CV. So I had to do a lot of that and it's hard and some of my friends even had to go around Oxford Circus a lot of the time to hand out CVs but get turned down.

28:00

But the jobs weren't even really sustainable. So I think what I'd have to do, especially with what I learnt from here...

SA: It's hard because everything's online now and has much more competition so that you apply to jobs for hours and hours and you don't get any feedback. And even when you go through the interview process, you go through all of that, you'll find a stage where you don't get accepted, you are never told why you don't get any feedback. And then you're left to

wonder what it is like? Especially if you got all the relevant qualifications, got everything, and you start questioning, is it the lack of background? Is it my race? It's just not fair.

Interviewer: Yeah. it's very soul destroying, isn't it? It was interesting hearing from Ben about the fact that there's 30 million people chasing jobs on Indeed, and if you are putting out a CV and having to fill out forms every time it's a huge amount of work.

But what I'm hearing is that actually quite a lot of the success in finding jobs has been through connections. And so that's definitely something to look to try and to big up.

Just before we move on to the next section about barriers, although we've talked quite a lot about barriers already, I'd like to talk about travel, and before that to ask about the immediate local area.

Interviewer: So how do you feel? And I'm thinking about this area now. Are there jobs? They may not be the exciting ones, but jobs that you can go to? That may be the other 30 million on indeed are not going to, I don't know. E.g. They've opened a Gorillaz up here.

DS: I think it's easy for anyone to find a job. But it's just about if you want to do that job, that you can find any job looking to be a cleaner. So it's not hard to find a job. It's about doing a job that you actually care about and you want to go to work. You don't want to wake up every day. Just to do a chore.

30:00

SA: Even then it's more about connections, you can go around applying, but they usually recruit people they know personally rather than a stranger.

Like my little sister would print out a CV and go around and people just told her apply online, apply online... it's like everything is just online now and it's like especially when you don't have the skills or anything and they just don't hire out for no reason. You want the skills, but you have no skills, then you don't get hired further. How do you start working?

Interviewer: So tell me how you got your job?

SA: My first ever job was through a networking programme called Arts Emergency. They are amazing, they are a mentoring programme for 16 plus for people who just finished college and need that one year Mentoring. And within that, after you finish that mentoring, you're with the mailing. And if you say you're in an emergency, do it. They recruit you because they're looking for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. They are trying to increase that so it's even better than connections.

Interviewer: So that's also the network, is it you got yourself in and then that network has helped you to find work.

SA: So I graduated 2 years ago through Covid. And it's a thing like they expected a lot from us. But we don't have any open door to anything. It's really not fair, especially when you're paying so much money for your education, you know, I think that should be like some sort of connection with that. This is what you can apply for. But we don't get anything.

32:00

RL: Just the funny thing is, I generally see there's no opportunity at all, literally I feel like the only opportunity nowadays is social media. That's where the money is, yes the high street or

the shops. There's nothing there that's easy to get a job, but I don't think anyone here wants to work there.

Interviewer: Has anyone made any money on social media?

DS: She kind of managed a social media account for her job. It's not really making money on social media. I also got a cousin who has a business on social media. She does. She sells crystals; she has a market stall as well.

Interviewer: Is that what sort of social media things were you thinking of?

RL: Like everything, you tube, snapchat, tiktok.

Interviewer: What is making money?

SA: Yes, content creation.

RL: Yeah content creating, like my friend does tik tok and he gets quite a lot. The money in Tik Tok is quite rubbish but on YouTube it's just disgusting. The money is literally disgusting, as in good, disgusting.

Like there's a YouTube artist I used to play football with and he's got millions of subscribers, but the money he makes is out of this world, it's mad.

Interviewer: But is that really accessible? I mean, does that feel like an opportunity?

DS: Not really. Because it's kind of like a shot in the dark. And it is a gamble if you do that kind of job, as in nine times out of ten, you ain't going to be nothing, I mean, you're just a random person, 99 of 100 more likely.

34:00

EW: The thing about social media especially right now is that it's over-concentrated and there's lots of people on it, so there's not as many opportunities to get it.

RL: But that's the thing when you think about it, you have to stand out and you have to do that. You just have to make sure that you stand out for people to actually acknowledge you.

Interviewer: I think that's probably true in life, isn't it? You need to find a way of making yourself stand out so that whether it's an employer who's looking at your CV or whether it's...

DS: I think it's hard to stand out with a CV – I could write a good CV but could write 100 good CVs, like if I actually meet a person it is easier.

Interviewer: Yeah, but you might need the two things together. So you go with a good CV, but you present yourself as well. Could be an option. So just think about the local area and what it has to offer. And what I'm hearing back is you're basically saying yeah, there's jobs but we don't really want those jobs. And sometimes when we have got those jobs, they're understaffed, underpaid, and, you know, it takes a toll on our mental health.

So if you found something that was better paid and you were prepared to do it, how far would you be prepared to travel to do it?

DS: I think it depends. If the pay was high enough I'd travel across the country I don't care.

SA: Yeah, yeah. True. And at the end of the day, you need to make sure that the pay per hour is enough to cover the travel. It has to be worth it because you don't want to just cover it.

Interviewer: But realistically, where would you go? And like from here now, how far would you go?

36:00

DS: Like an hour.

SA: When I applied for my first job, it was like little pay, it was based on age, and it was all the way over in East Acton. It took an hour and a half.

Interviewer: So. So one of the hours basically paid for your travel?

SA: Yeah, well, it was even less than that. Well, I get free travel anyway, But it wouldn't be enough for other people that would be a problem.

Interviewer: And CC what's your experience of travelling, for example?

CC: I struggle to pay for travel. So far. But if it was like a high paying job I'd travel an hour max.

Interviewer: And EW how far do you think it's reasonable to commute?

EW: From my mindset, because I haven't had a job, if it was like £12 per hour I'd probably be willing to go to Stratford, Stratford and back just to get the job and get paid.

SA: As Londoners you kind of expect to travel an hour right?

Interviewer: What about you RL?

38:00

RL: I wouldn't travel that far.

Interviewer: So half an hour?

RL: Yeah.

DS: You're not getting paid for the travel time, It's just like time taken out of your life. You know what I'm saying?

Interviewer: Yeah, I hear that. Are there ways that you've reduced the cost of transport to get to your job like?

SA: she will walk everywhere, like for an hour.

Interviewer: Well, it's free and good exercise, but it does take longer sometimes. Have any of you found other ways other than public transport to get to work?

DS: Not to work, but I cycle everywhere to save money. When I was working construction I'd go with my uncle, he would drive the car, so I kind of saved money like that.

Interviewer: You get a lift?

DS: Yeah. But, you know, I would pay for the petrol for a week and then he'd pay for the petrol for a week. Yeah, but I think more people would be willing to have their own cars.

RL: On the railways everyone drives. For me I had to get the train, and depend on other people to come and get me.

Interviewer: You didn't talk about a bicycle.

40:00

CC walks places. Would you consider other forms of transport that don't cost or cost little?

DS: Like what?

Interviewer: I don't know, you tell me.

CC: The motorcycle is a good investment.

CC: But a CBT is £100. And then do a provisional licence.

Interviewer: Does everyone ride electric scooters?

RL: Yeah, but like everything there's a problem. You ride a scooter, the police will stop you. You ride a moped, the same. Car, anything can happen. You drive a lime bike or Boris bike, the electric will eventually stop working or you have to dock it every half an hour. What if you can't find a docking point and you can't find a bike. It's happened to me before. There's always a blockage.

Interviewer: Does everyone own a bike?

RL, CC, EW : No.

RL and CC: We just walk everywhere.

42:00

EW: I don't have a bike. I actually still go free on public transport till September. And that's going to run out. And sometimes I have to pay for a train in certain situations where I'd normally use the bus and I've seen the way the prices are in comparison. It makes me not want to travel far for work or even get a job in certain cases because of how much it costs in comparison to free travel. Because a lot of us had to go from Free Travel and instantly jump to public transport and have to pay. And it's very significant in comparison.

Interviewer: Massive. And just sticking on the bicycle thing for a second because I cycle everywhere. So I'm particularly keen. But do you feel it's safe to cycle in London?

DS: I cycle all the time but I don't think it's safe because I've been hit by cars loads of times. But I still do..

Interviewer: Okay, that's you. You seem like a daredevil.

EW: I would but I can't ride a bike so...

RL: Yeah, I did loads of stupid stuff on a bike but really I just walk everywhere now.

Interviewer: Right. Okay, that's really good. We should move on to the next section. I'll tell you what, why don't we have a quick break now.

Break

44:00

Interviewer: So we're back on after the break. And I've made an executive decision that to keep things, and really focus on the solutions, I think we've covered barriers already. And Beth, unless you unless there's any specific questions that you want to drill down into.

I'm happy to move on to support needs at this stage. We talked about stuff around the experience. We kind of talked about that before. There was stuff around personal networks.

We talked about that before and there was stuff around kind of anxiety, personal reasons why you may or may not be looking for work. And I think in one way or another, we touched on those things too. So for me, barriers are covered. By the way, we've lost Romell because he's having a really important 1 to 1. And he also needs to leave quite soon. So he's going to be okay. But if anybody wants to say anything extra just now on the question of barriers, something that hasn't been talked about, or if you had it on your mind, you wanted to say why, you know, you were finding it difficult to get into work then or find work or get help to get into work. Now's a good time to say it, but it does feed into the next session, which is what support needs do you have and how should we design the service to help you?

SA you want to say something.

SA: Accessibility is a big thing. It is, I don't know, legalised in the UK. Where jobs can reject people with different disabilities so that's the main reason why disabled people don't even bother applying, unless at the bottom of the page it says, 'disabled people friendly'. Any time I apply for a job I make sure I see that logo. So that's a big, big problem.

46:00

Interviewer: I mean, my understanding is that employers shouldn't be able to discriminate on the grounds of disability.

SA: They find loopholes around how they can get away with it.

Interviewer: Okay. So discrimination exists despite the legislation and you feel that. So in terms of accessibility, just to expand a little bit on that before we move into support needs,

SA: I need to find out the name of the scheme but if more companies enforce that, more people would be willing to apply for jobs.

Interviewer: So if you saw a company that advertised as being open to employing people with disabilities, you'd be more likely to apply to those?

SA: Only those.

Interviewer: That's all you apply to?

SA: Yeah.

Interviewer? If they don't advertise it, you don't apply.

SA: Yeah, like I know for a fact that I can get away with looking normal, but if I do get the job, like say admin work, I can't do phone calls, I can't do that. And then I'm probably going to lose the job for that.

Interviewer: Just thinking about this and extending it to, to other kinds of potential discrimination. Um, a lot of employers have a sort of recruitment policy where they say that they're an organisation who welcomes applications from minority groups and, you know...

48:00

SA: yeah lately there's been a lot of companies that say they encourage applicants from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Interviewer: And is that helpful?

SA: Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: It's more likely to make you apply if you see that?

SA: yeah if you can find the thing.

CC: I've also had problems with my job. Sometimes I mentioned I have ADHD and then they will backtrack and not let me go through with the application. They would say, 'Oh no, sorry you're not going through to the next trial.'

But when I don't mention it, I do end up getting a trial shift. But I don't get in the end. But I have noticed that a lot. Like I mentioned, I had ADHD and then after the interview they do say 'oh, you're not what we want'.

Interviewer: and you put two and two together and assume that it's because...

CC: Yeah, because you have ADHD.

Interviewer: Right. What adjustments would you expect an employer to make to accommodate your ADHD?

I don't really expect them to do much, just like a bit of communication, maybe to remind me every now and then, because I do forget a lot, but that's about it.

Interviewer: Okay. So actually quite reasonable. If there was that communication.

DS: Yeah. I also have a health condition, but I wouldn't tell an employer that I've got pancreatitis, I wouldn't tell an employer that, I'd just keep it to myself just because I feel like it's more like you're not going to get the job if I told them that.

Interviewer: One more reason for them to say no. Yeah, I hear that. Okay.

50:00

SA: So yeah, I was looking for this logo – Disability Confident Scheme.

Interviewer: Aha. Yeah. And London living wage. So yeah. I mean this is important because I think one of the recommendations that I hope to be able to make through the report is not just what services we can provide to help young people, but I think we also need to have another section of the report that speaks to employers and says, you know, you need to think about doing things differently because people like SA won't apply to you for jobs unless, you know, you provide in-work support. you advertise and pay London Living Wage you, you know, you're inclusive about the workforce that you want to work with.

SA: I think after 2020 a lot of things have changed and lots of employers are trying to be inclusive and anti-racist, but how can you tell if they are genuine or if they're just doing it just so they don't get backlash?

That's why a lot of them would have a page where it says actions for change equality and inclusion, and they'll link the pledges and the policies. That's how you can tell they actually care.

Interviewer: And how many of you would look for that?

DS: I wouldn't.

Interviewer: It's not just about disability though is it?

DS: I wouldn't really care about that stuff. Personally.

Interviewer: Okay. Yeah. EW?

EW: I can pretty much tell when I walk in to the door, when I walk in and there's a certain presence I can already tell how it's going to be either way. So that's what I look for more than looking up on the page. But it's useful in that sense.

But, I can already sense if an employer is going to like me or if people are going to like me when I walk into a room, especially because of my appearance and my demeanour most of the time until I start expressing myself. But even then, when I do express myself at certain times, I can tell there's still that block and barrier already in place. So yeah.

Interviewer: OK, That's really helpful. So I think that let's move into the support section.

52:00

So this is the chance to say: in an ideal world, you know, when you hit 18, what would you like there to be available? You know, what are the support needs that you identify in yourself? And we're all different, so we all respond to different things. What are the kinds of things that you wish you had that perhaps...

DS: I'd like a work coach, a work coach would be really helpful. I know you can't get work coaches for everyone. Maybe there can be one assigned to a certain number of people.

SA: maybe like a monthly work programme or something. The way you have universal credit does it right if you're on benefits they try to get work coaches and stuff and they try to post jobs and you can just do a trial shift. Stuff like that would be really nice. It's just, we don't

get anything like that. I remember when I just finished at college I already applied for Uni. But if I had the chance of thinking, you know, I didn't have to apply, like, but never thought, I didn't know 'cos no one ever told me. We're just taught that you need to get a job you need to go through Uni. I didn't get any alternatives - no one told me anything.

Interviewer: do you think you might have acted differently or taken different choices...

SA: I kind of wish I had taken a gap year? Like probably working around other jobs and stuff 'cos the job I do right now has nothing to do with my degree whatsoever, so I'm just in debt now.

DS: I find that most of the time as well, people get degrees, but their jobs don't match their degrees.

They're just like, my sister works as a manager for building properties or something, but it's nothing to do with her degree which was in sociology. It's like a lot of people get degrees, but it's like the work that they get into has nothing to do with that degree.

54:00

I think also when you choose to go to Uni to study, what you study, you actually don't know what to do in life so you kind of get a broad spectrum of whatever innit. And then it doesn't really apply to what you're actually going to do in life.

Interviewer: And do you think, I mean, from your own experience and your own friendships, groups and stuff similar? Two of you are at University, one of you wants to go, one of you chose not to go and the other dropped out of school at 16. How prevalent does it feel in your peer groups, the kind of pressure to go to university or perhaps the desire to just get working?

DS: So with my year, people my age there were like two options. You either go to Uni or college or you get an apprenticeship. I don't really know anyone that was very successful with apprenticeships, though I have a cousin who did an apprenticeship in plumbing and he was quite successful at that.

Interviewer: Okay. Anyone else know any success stories with apprenticeships? Anyone looking for an apprenticeship?

DS: Yeah. I look for one in carpentry,

SA: I know a friend who applied was told he was overqualified so he ended up going to Uni.

Interviewer: Okay. So we talked about work coaches and I think you mentioned some kind of event?

SA: like maybe some sort of monthly work programmes with work coaches so if you miss one you can do the next month's.

56:00

DS: Yeah. Also, like you could go to the Job Centre and get a work coach, but people that age don't really want to go to the job centre. We're too young, we don't want to have to go to the job centre. In our mind that's for people who've failed in life. That's where you go at the end when there is nothing else left.

Interviewer: Everyone is agreeing with that I can see.

CC: Last time I went to a Job Centre I slid in the door, I was so embarrassed.

DS: Same, same.

SA: It's for people on benefits. The idea of being on benefits is frowned upon. If you're a young person and you're on benefits there's a sort of shame around it. And although universal credit does provide a work coach, they don't really cater to your individual needs and passions.

DS: There's no rapport with the work coach at the Job Centre, they don't know you really.

SA: So maybe a mentoring programme.

Interviewer: has anyone had any experience of a mentoring programme?

SA: Actually yes. SO Arts Emergency is a one year mentoring programme based on your interests. I was interested in drama so I was connected to an actress for one year. It's amazing I've learned so many things, I've learned about acting, she made me look at drama schools and it's what led me to choose the drama school that I'm at now. So the whole mentoring thing helped a lot. It was very personal. I could tell the person really cared. And just 'cos you're 16 or 18 plus you get that you don't even know what you're doing and we need an adult in the field that we're in to guide you through, and that way we're more likely to know what we want to do. Trouble is we don't have anything like that. Or if you do, it's usually not free.

58:00

DS: I mean, I think that should really be part of school as well. I think in school like when you get near the end like that should be part of it. Yeah, but I don't think you can change the education system so...

Interviewer: No, that's probably something that is beyond my reach.

But, I think the idea of coaching, of some kind, mentoring and coaching is definitely worth exploring further in this group now. So what are the kinds of things you'd be looking for in a coach or a mentor? I mean if Ben, for example, said to you, yeah okay, the service is open. We have 25 coaches, we're going to assign you one. What could go wrong?

DS: Generally just personality. If their personality is alright and you get along, that's pretty much it. Personally, the first time you go out and get along, then I don't think anything can go wrong too much.

SA: As long as you can tell a work coach has your best interest and cares. The most important thing if you do this coaching – you need to make sure the coach listens to the person. A lot of the time the adult is speaking for the young adult, rather than the young adult speaking for themselves. So you have to make sure their voice comes first, like you're hearing what they say what they want and if they have any suggestions, you're not just dismissing it because you know they are young, but actually taking it seriously.

I think we've got to make sure we're fostering their voices and appreciating that they are sharing their voice, rather than not listening to them. Because I've had that my whole life, I would make a suggestion and I get shut down because I don't know anything.

And that's why people don't like me speaking.

Interviewer: Okay so the mentor or coach has to be an active listener they have to have your best interests at heart.

DS: As long as they care, everything else will fall into place and they genuinely care and that they don't just treat it as a job.

01:00:00

Interviewer: and that they're not driven by the same sort of targets, perhaps that the universal credit or job centre coaches are who just want to get you into work straight away. Did I understand correctly?

All: Yes

SA: It's the idea of, you know, it's more than just a job, but the skill they get would help them in the future long term rather than short term.

Interviewer: CC have you had any experience of any kind of coaching or even careers advice, maybe at school or college or college?

CC: Not at college. I did try to go to a careers advisor but she didn't know anything about what career I wanted to go into. She didn't really help much.

Interviewer: Where did you find this careers advisor?

CC: It was at college.

Interviewer: And have you had any access to any mentor?

CC: Yeah, with Arts Emergency I have a mentor. So I saw her yesterday and we were talking about and she's going to help me do some research, about Tattoo Artists, she said she's going to take me, we're going to meet in Camden Town and go round some Tattoo places to see if they're taking apprenticeships.

DS: I think she wants to be a tattoo artist which is quite a niche thing. So it's hard to find a work coach that's actually helpful in the same way that I want to be a Music producer at one time. It's hard to find someone that's going to actually mentor you in music production.

Interviewer: Well, I don't know, but I think it's possibly more likely in music production than tattoo artistry. Although I think sometimes a mentor who cares will use whatever resources they have at their disposal, even if they don't know a tattoo artist.

01:02:00

SA: But it's like an adult when you're older, you're so used to the adult world of working you know things an 18 year old wouldn't know. There's so many things I know now that I didn't know at 18, for example the Access to Work scheme – a government funded scheme for deaf

people. If you need equipment they pay for it. I didn't know that at 18 – if I knew that I would have applied for so many other stuff.

It's like adults, even if they're not in the same niche or same field, as long as they know resources, that they know something they can share, that there's so much information and so much stuff that you know, that will benefit people, but no one knows about it.

Interviewer: Okay, so just picking up on that, then imagine some of these services were available. I mean, there are services we heard Westminster Employment Service exists. Nobody had heard of them. How do you find out? How would you need to be made aware of these things at 18, that these things exist so that you're not having to pay?

CC: maybe tell colleges more, and careers advisors to help find these places.

SA: The way Arts Emergency did it they went to college and did a speech, and the students that were interested would sign up for it. Do public speaking and preach about it more. Colleges should be working more, when people are just about to finish, they should be working on what they want to do next. I realise that at the college I went to, if you go to Uni straight after they get more points or more funding or something. So most colleges instead of caring about us they just say make them go to university, so it looks like they have a plan or something. And it's the whole point of ticking boxes and stuff, rather than actually caring.

Interviewer: So some sort of alumni support

SA: Oh yeah, that would be perfect.

Interviewer: alumni support for college leavers who don't go to university

01:04:00

So if your college got in touch on social media after you finished your course, and said there's this event, you know, it's about jobs would you think of going?

DS: At that age I probably wouldn't 'cause I was really anxious and like really like I was basically introverted. But at this age I would definitely do that.

Interviewer: So, what made you stay at home?

DS: The fact that I just don't know I didn't like socialising.

Interviewer: Okay. CC you're nodding.

CC: I would have gone, even though I have anxiety I'd have still gone, spoken around, see what I could do. There's a job fair next Friday that I'm going to.

Interviewer: And what's your experience of job fairs?

CC: they seem alright, I have signed up to a few things. When I was in college they had a Jobs fair. I picked up some leaflets and I signed up to, like, a hotel saying if they are hiring and stuff they will contact me and see if I would be interested. So I signed up for stuff like that. So I had quite a good experience there.

Interviewer: And did that lead to any work?

CC: Unfortunately, no.

Interviewer: But the experience in the session was okay?

CC: Yeah 'cos there were loads of people there.

SA: I think in work coaching it would be really nice if we get coaching on how to do interviews like What to Say, what to answer, because you go through your emails, you go through all of that, but then you don't do the interview part that you don't know what to ask.

01:06:00

Like I've heard that when they ask you if you have any questions, if you actually ask some questions you can make the interview think oh, they're interested in us. You know, like we need training in stuff like that. Definitely.

Interviewer: Given that there are work coaches but people are not accessing it, is the problem that the service isn't sufficiently visible? People aren't going onto the website and doing their self-referral and saying I want to sign up to this service?

DS: People don't know about it. I don't think anyone knows about it.

Interviewer: And if they did, do you think they'd all be in?

DS: No, they wouldn't all be in. But some of them would be.

EW: More people would be willing.

SA: This could be the younger generation Z who grew up with technology and social media. You guys, you could change your approach on how you promote yourself. Most of the stuff I found was on social media, everything around them. There's not one I found outside from anywhere else.

DS: See personally, I don't have any social media, I'm different. I don't know. I don't know how you're going to get the message out to people like me.

Interviewer: Well that's interesting isn't it, because you're not the you're not the only one, you know. And I think it's important for the services to recognise that you've got different types of people who consume information and have different needs. And, you know, not everyone wants to go to an event in person.

DS: I think the best way I'll find out is by advertising if I see it on a train or bus.

SA: I think a mix of social media and advertising is going to be the best way.

Interviewer: Yeah. And what about how you receive that mentoring? How often? Where?

SA: monthly

01:08:00

DS: I think weekly

SA: Monthly is more likely, not many adults can commit weekly, I'm just being realistic. Would be ideal if you do like a one year programme.

DS: That's only twelve times a year, that's not enough.

CC: or perhaps ask how the person would like to meet – would they like to meet weekly, monthly, every now and then,

Interviewer: So be guided by the young adult?

All: Yeah.

DS: But you don't want to spend a whole year trying to get a job – you want to get a job as quickly as possible.

Interviewer: Imagine, though, thinking realistically, imagine that there was, you know, at a finite amount of sessions. Yeah, let's say 12.

DS: I'd rather spend them quickly.

SA: Maybe you could run two programmes – one short term (three month weekly) intensive, and one longer term support.

Interviewer: Okay. And just thinking about the circumstances you might be in when you want that help, is it really just when you're looking for work?

CC: Or they could also help when you're doing work, you're working, but you're not happy with it. Or you want to get a different career.

SA: After you've finished college, it's really career advice you need. That's it.

Interviewer: Yeah right. And there was that moment when we were talking earlier, wasn't there, about the entry level jobs becoming potentially a barrier to the to the next one, you know, and one recognising that you might have to have an entry level job. But really what you're after is something difficult. And making that step. Is that where the mentor could be useful?

All: Definitely. Yes.

Interviewer: What other things might we pitch for? You know, I'm basically going to go up in front of not quite the mayor, but, you know, whoever and say, this is what we want, guys. In your ideal service what would you want?

So the work that I found now is through LIFT, which is a 12 week programme paid, London Living Wage and work experience at the same time. It was four days a week work experience and one day teaching class. Perfect.

DS: You can't get better than that. It's like an apprenticeship.

01:10:00

Like an apprenticeship, but it's like both so I'm getting work experience and getting paid for it and at the same time one class of learning.

I see a lot of opportunities that are like 12 weeks, six weeks for people to get in to jobs, but it's not paid and it's very unrealistic because if you're going to spend your whole six month,

Especially if you're looking at people who are 18 + who are not living at home, they need to earn some money. I live in a hostel right now. It's a women's shelter.

So like I was introduced to a theatre company that is working to tackle homelessness. And they wanted me to apply for a twelve week programme, but it's not paid for and it's just a waste of my time.

[interlude]

Interviewer 2: If there was a physical support venue, what would you want it to look like? It can be from the interior, the actual building.

SA: I don't think it matters, we're not really fancy about all the fancy venues. It's about the training and the people and what we get from it. And if the programme's not going to be paid can it at least cover transport and food. So at least when we're learning something, we're not wasting money in the meantime.

I mean imagine it. You're going there to look for jobs. You got no money whatsoever and you're gonna use this time, but you're still paying for travel, you're paying for food. You're making me lose. Like if it's something where it's a very short term of something and you get something out of it and you also learn then people would be like, yes sure, they'd be up for it.

01:14:00

Interviewer 2: Would there be something within the actual building that would make you think like, yeah, like I feel comfortable at this sort of place. Not like, you know, oh yeah, I want a gold statue, But it could be something like the way it's laid out, the space, the colours with the things that actually have inside.

SA: I mean if it's a new building everyone will be like ooh this is fancy, but as long as when you come in the receptionist smiles at you in a welcoming environment – that's all that matters. Imagine you just walk in and you're just standing there. You have no idea what you're doing and everyone just ignores you, you know.

Interviewer: So sometimes if you don't ask, you don't get right. And I needed a place to hold these sessions, and I thought I'd ask these guys. It's kind of in the right area physically, and they do something that's relevant to your needs. I didn't have a budget. I asked them and they said, Yeah, sure, because no one else was using it. So here we are. For me, this could be a useful space too and I think they're really excited by the fact.

DS: How big is this place?

Interviewer: It's the whole building, and I can imagine an event happening in this space that maybe isn't just a jobs fair as you were describing, but is something a bit more organic?

01:16:00

DS: If there was like a barbecue going on out there, everyone would come. People will come, they don't care about the job, they'll just come for the barbecue.

SA: You could just build a community of Westminster residents who are interested and do it both online and in person. You get an arts facilitator to help.

I did an event recently where there were a lot of business people and at the end of the event we gave them food and everyone started chatting and it went from a business environment to a friendly environment. Both were good but the friendly bit was when people started exchanging numbers. of it because the friendlier it was better I was exchanging numbers.

Interviewer: What would you call that kind of event?

SA: It depends who sponsored the event, Like if Rebel sponsored it, it could be called the Rebellers.

You could call it a connection programme, a community connection programme.

Interviewer: What do you think of the word network? How does that sound to you?

EW: Just talking to more people to get more experience and get more opportunities.

and learn something. And does it sound like something that you would want?

DS: I don't like the word networking personally...I think it needs to be more casual.

EW: But the thing is that the word network implies employment. You know what you're there for rather than it being just, yeah. So yeah. Network implies what you're there to do to maintain something like a career. you know.

I think it's cool talking about opportunities to grow employment and things of that nature. So the network applies.

Interviewer: And do you think, just thinking even just about today, hearing from each other, you know, hearing each other's experience, is that something that you do in your friendships groups?

SA: We do that all the time.

Interviewer: You talk about these things anyway. I mean talking about jobs and difficulty getting it.

SA: We discuss this all the time.

Interviewer: And is it helpful hearing from others who are not in your immediate friendship group?

SA: My best quote is "experience and the best teacher." So when you hear from people that have gone through something like that, you learn, yeah, you share all these things, and, you know, that's how people make connections, that's how people get moving.

01:20:00

Interviewer: So my question really is, as well as having people like Ben and Dan come and present and say, this is what we do and this is who we are, and it might be that it's Microsoft or, you know, whoever; is there also value in your peers. Do you perceive that there's value in your peers?

Yeah, I do. Because, like, lets you know that you're not alone, going through the same shit that they went through.

EW: You're not the only one that's going through it. But even now with me as a young person, I've learned a lot in terms of what is actually like out there, because when you are like 18 to 17 or just coming out of college, the perception is you just go out there and that's it. You just do. So, hearing from them, you can have a visualisation of what is actually like an opportunity, opportunities, other things you can do in that sense.

So having a get together with just this age group or different people of all different sorts of background helps you gain more experience and visualise the way the working world actually is.

DS: Yeah, I think if I was 16 and I came to one of these groups and there were older people that would help a lot. I hope to hear from their experiences and to learn from them.

Interviewer 2: And how do you feel when you are looking for work?

DS: I feel anxious. I don't cope with it, I avoid it. If I was passionate about the thing I was doing I wouldn't feel those emotions. I'd feel fine. It's because I don't actually want to do what I'm doing but I'll do it for money.

CC: I feel anxious that I most likely wouldn't get the job.

01:22:00

Interviewer: Do you feel hopeful that you will?

CC: Sometimes, Yes.

DS: Although if you don't get it, that's like destroying your hope, you know,

SA: like you're constantly getting rejected over and over and over.

Like what's the point in trying you know, especially if you don't have any feedback like that.

CC: When I apply for things that I've experienced before, I get hopeful that I will most likely get the job because I have experience with making coffees.

I applied to Barista Jobs hoping that I would get it because I had that.

Yeah, exactly. But then I don't hear back from them or I just don't get the job.

Interviewer: Okay, I feel like we're now going back to the start. It feels like we've come all the way around, but maybe just before we finish, is it worth saying one thing, if you can, that you've learned or that you would do differently as a result of the session today? Maybe a light

bulb has switched on in your head or some new idea has occurred to you, something that you might try or do more of that you're already doing.

DS: I don't really personally think anything's affected me, but it is a lightbulb for my girlfriend in my mind I'm like, Oh, you can do that.

Interviewer: And why do you think it's not done anything for you?

01:24:00

DS: Because I don't have any passion. She has a passion. She knows what she wants to do in life. I don't know what I want to do in life. What's the point in speaking to a work coach? They just say what do you want to do in life and I'll say I dunno, so they'll say figure it out. I feel I'm a bit of a lost cause, that's how I feel.

Interviewer: we change and the circumstances around us change.

Yeah. So what was true yesterday won't necessarily be true tomorrow.

And actually getting rich doesn't necessarily fulfil you. And given that the numbers of jobs where you can get filthy rich are pretty small anyway, they're just dangling a carrot in front of you that if you can never get it, makes you feel even less happy. So. Okay. If you're going to be the one that goes off to make millions, good for you, I hope you're happy with it. Yeah. But for the vast majority of us, fulfilment comes in very different ways.

DS: Yeah. No you are Right.

01:26:00

Interviewer: It may be that you just haven't found the thing that's your passion right now. And at 25 you're still young. And as you grow you change, you'll discover new things and your girlfriend will introduce you to new things and you'll keep changing, you'll you've already got new passions, you know. So together, life will change.

DS: Even now she's fixing me, like I'm a drug addict and shit, and she's making me stop and, like, changing me. So I'm becoming a different person.

Interviewer: I think what, what I've picked up from the sessions, and not just this one, is how much strength the young adults have found in themselves to navigate this really hard moment in life to find the strength, the resilience, despite feeling anxious, despite having, you know, all the knock backs. And I find that hugely humbling and kind of empowering at the same time.

And a lot of the things that you've talked about resonate really strongly with me, too. So I hope that that kind of shared experience will rub off on all of us a little bit. And even though you don't know it, I'm sure it has rubbed off on you too. EW?

EW: I mean, I think this has really helped me. Like meeting new people 'cos I'm always not active, but I'm always interested in taking opportunities that can help me further in life.

01:28:00

Because the way in my mind the way I visualise life, like even if I don't get certain things, my life is not over yet. Like, I'm not exactly 40 years old. I still have a lot of time to grow and progress. Whatever the situation might be. Obviously there's going to be disadvantages, but if I have knowledge that I've gained from all of you, the more I can grow in certain ways and

the more I can fulfil myself and things. I may not get super rich, but I'm comfortable with consistency and sustainability in certain things I appreciate.

DS: That's a very mature mind set for the youngest one here, I swear down.

EW: Thing is because I used to be even just last year I had major social anxiety. Because of my social anxiety, I've had this since I was very young. And so the fact I progressed means nothing is constant. I can always move forward and progress, whatever situation I might be, even if I'm down in the dumps or struggling I can always further myself.

DS: That's a sick mind state.

Interviewer: Yes, that's impressive. Well done. Who wants to go to CC next?

CC: Well, yeah, this group has kind of told me, like, you know, take every opportunity I could get because I'm still young at 19. So grab any opportunity I could around my age group. Um, also not to give up hope of jobs. If I get turned down, I get turned down.

Interviewer: Yeah. And you're not the only one. Yeah. You know, everyone here has been turned down many times for many jobs. Yeah. No, that's really it's really important, I think, to hear that and give yourself a good pep talk.

01:30:00

Well done. SA?

SA: I learned two things. One from Ben. If a job Advert has been up on Indeed for more than 24 hours, don't bother applying.

And Number 2 – that there are places where you can get free space. That is very interesting because I didn't know that just by asking you might be lucky.

Interviewer: Yeah. Maybe the world falls into two types of people, right.

The ones that one is prepared to help and the ones that, you know, are too busy or don't want to. And there's plenty who are prepared to help, but they won't if they don't know that you need it. Yeah. So you have to ask in order to get help.

I think about the power of the network for me. As you discussed today – wow - that, that blew me away is just how important it is to ask people to be able to get a foot in the door. And it's about and then it becomes a kind of snowball effect because by the time you've got some experience, then you've got something to put on your CV and you've got the next one and then the next one. And then I think you're on your way, you know.

01:32:00

SA: would be great if the programme would teach you to add stuff to your CV. What words or jargon to use.

Interviewer: and what would you do differently as a result of today?

SA: I'll be reaching out to WES and Rebel.

Interviewer: And Interviewer 2?

Interviewer 2: Well, we're all very different in different ways about different levels. But we have a collective experience, like when we try to look for a job or how we feel about it. And I want to give some good quotes. My friend told me that rejection is redirection.

And what about you, Interviewer 1?

Interviewer: Well, I'm just really energised by not just the conversations today, which have been genuinely open and honest. And I appreciate all that you've said. I think it really is illuminating for me, but I hope to do it justice and translate that into a report with some recommendations that we'll have.

DS: Can we read this report of yours?

Interviewer: Yeah, of course. I'm going to circulate it to you in kind of draft form, at least the recommendations so you can see the sorts of things that we're saying or really it's just the things that you've been saying. But I'm just going to put them in the shape of the report.

And then if there's anything that jumps out there as being wrong or whatever, hopefully you'll see this conversation reflected in that. But no, like I said, I'm humbled.

I'm blown away by the resourcefulness that each and every one of you has to find inside in order to get through this really difficult time. All I can say is that it may seem like it was easier in the past. It's not necessarily the case. You know, maybe there were differences in the availability of jobs but, you know, I could say that discrimination probably was much more prevalent in the past.

So, you know, there are pros and cons and you're experiencing what others have experienced and have been through.

01:36:00

And it's always funny when people talk about 35 year olds being old or 40 year olds being old, but, you know, you'll get through this period.

I just want to help and make sure that you have some support and direction and whilst we're waiting for that to happen and be put into place, hopefully the people who've been involved in the study so you guys know that you can pick up the phone and speak to me, Dan, The Rebel Business School or Ben from WES.

Okay, I think that concludes the session. There's an evaluation form that I'd like you to fill in, and if you can, and thank you so much for staying on a lot longer than you originally signed up for.

Appendix 4 – Thematic Analysis – excerpt for illustration:

B7 Theme – “Rejection”:

FG1:

- Job searching is hard because even on Indeed, you just think “Whose even looking at this?” So you’re just applying, applying, applying. And most times you don't hear anything back. So it's like, what's the point?
- Try applying again, but they might realise that it's you and just not reply again.
- Yeah, and even when you are waiting for so long, you still get anxiety. Like, are they going to reply to like tell me I didn't get it, or I did get it, like it's kind of kinda sad, when your existence is sort of just ignored
- And when I did it, it didn't really help, because I reached a dead end where erm I went through my post code and then they said there was no vacancies
- I did find one, but again, they didn't accept me because I'm a level three [so `over qualified`].
- You know, when you keep getting rejected, you're like, Oh, well, what's wrong with me? Like, maybe you just need someone to, like, speak to in confidence, who will remember your situation. So, you can always come back like the next week or in a month's time and they'll, they'll know like what, how, what you've been through

FG2:

- Well rejection is just a part of life, so I don't really care about it. So, I just deal with it, like, if I don't get accepted to that, I'd get accepted to another.
- They will just like, yeah, well, if they rejected you sometimes they don't say why, sometimes they don't go through the CV, sometimes they might see the CV's a bit long and they're like er not bothered so they'll just reject you, So even if you ask them why they won't give a reason
- Depends on how bad you want it, if it's like they're taking a long time, like a month or something then you want that job then yeah.

FG3:

- I tried to get an apprenticeship, but it didn't work. I don't know why I didn't get accepted but I just didn't get accepted. So I took a long, long break and I wasted most of my life taking a long break stuff
- And I'd do a trial shift afterwards but then they'd never get back to me.

- But a lot of them turned me down.
- It's hard because everything's online now and has much more competition so that you apply to jobs for hours and hours and you don't get any feedback
- It's like everything is just online now and it's like especially when you don't have the skills or anything and they just don't hire out for no reason. You want the skills, but you have no skills, then you don't get hired further. How do you start working?
- Although if you don't get it, that's like destroying your hope, you know
- Like you're constantly getting rejected over and over and over. Like what's the point in trying you know, especially if you don't have any feedback like that
- My friend told me that rejection is redirection

FG4:

- I have probably applied to indeed over like 500 times. But it's just almost as if no one, I don't think a person checks it, it's like a computer. It's all automated, it's an algorithm.

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