

FUTURES AT STAKE 2020

A REPORT BY THE PRINCE'S
TRUST AND GOVIA
THAMESLINK RAILWAY



Prince's Trust

GTR

FOREWORD



Our research shows that young people could be the solution to skills shortages in our country; however, education is not always preparing them for the world of work. The report also highlights further difficulties for young people, as many are struggling to make ends meet financially.

The findings suggest that employers are struggling to recruit people with the skills they need as they rely on old and outdated recruitment practices which aren't fit for purpose. Young people also feel like they aren't being given a chance to show their potential properly when applying for roles, creating a gap between vacancies and young talent.

Teachers, young people and employers indicate that education isn't always preparing young people for the realities of work and this is something we need to change. Truancy also appears to be an increasing issue according to many teachers, and a quarter of young people aged 16-18 in full time education have admitted to truanting in the past year.

Here at The Prince's Trust, we are dedicated to improving young people's chances in life, helping them to progress no matter their circumstances. We believe in young people and, by opening doors instead of putting barriers in their way, we can make sure the future is better for them, their families and their communities.

Dame Martina Milburn
Group Chief Executive
The Prince's Trust

INTRODUCTION



This research paints a picture of the issues that are affecting young people in the UK today and highlights the importance of having access to opportunities to help them get ahead.

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) is proud to be a partner of The Prince's Trust and to support this important research, which gives a better understanding of how we can help even more young people. Over the past five years running our employability programme, we've helped hundreds of young people get into careers in rail, enabling them to build a future for themselves.

The research shows how employers are struggling to recruit and how their traditional recruitment practices aren't delivering for them. Through our partnership, we've re-assessed how we recruit young talent, giving them the chance to learn new skills and gain valuable experience on the job. Hiring

these young people not only drives positive change within GTR and inspires existing colleagues, but it also benefits wider society, embodying our commitment to engage with local communities and attract a workforce that reflects the areas we serve. We have calculated that our programme alone has delivered £1.6 million in social value to date and hope to continue to build on this for the future.

Patrick Verwer
Chief Executive Officer
Govia Thameslink Railway



BACKGROUND

Futures at Stake 2020 is a national survey which looks at the issues which matter to young people now and for their future.

The findings in this report are derived from three separate online surveys of young people, employers and secondary school teachers.

2,252 young people between the ages of 16 and 30 participated in the young person survey between 28th August and 17th September 2019.

1,004 employers participated in the employer survey between 28th August and 3rd September 2019.

511 secondary school teachers participated in the teacher survey between 28th August and 16th September 2019.

The surveys were conducted by YouGov on behalf of The Prince's Trust and figures have been weighted and are representative of each respondent group within the UK.

Methodology

Survey participants were asked a series of questions about issues which affect young people, such as recruitment, skills for work, education and poverty.

In addition, employers were asked questions about how some of these issues affect their own businesses and practices, and their relationships with schools.

Secondary school teachers were asked questions about their pupils now and in the future, as well as their relationships with local employers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Avoiding a skills crisis

The report reveals that employers believe there is currently a shortage of skills across the UK and they are struggling to recruit people with the skills their organisation needs. Insight from employers also suggests that current recruitment methods are not always suitable for attracting the talent needed to avert a skills crisis.

Key findings

- Almost half of employers (47 per cent) believe there is a skills shortage across the UK
- More than half of employers (59 per cent) say they struggle to recruit people with the skills their organisation needs
- Almost three-quarters of employers (73 per cent) agree the recruitment of young people under 25 is vital to avert a skills crisis in their sector
- Almost half of employers (48 per cent) believe that traditional recruitment methods are no longer working and that their organisation needs to be more innovative
- 60 per cent of employers say attitudes and behaviours are more important than technical skills when recruiting for their organisation



Ready for work?

Secondary school teachers were polled as part of the research and revealed that they are worried about their pupils' prospects when they leave school. Similarly, employers report that school leavers don't have a grasp on the realities of the workplace.

Key findings

- Three-quarters (75 per cent) of young people aged 16 to 30 believe there was too much emphasis on grades at school rather than preparing them for work
- Eight in ten (81 per cent) employers say that school leavers do not have a grasp on the realities of the workplace
- Seven in ten (70 per cent) teachers worry their pupils won't be prepared for the world of work when they leave school
- A quarter (25 per cent) of 16 to 18-year-olds in full time education admit to truanting in the past 12 months. Twenty per cent of all young people who had truanted said it was because their lessons weren't preparing them for what they want to do when they leave school/college.



Making ends meet

The research shows how young people are skipping meals, selling items that are important to them and not putting the heating on to save money. The findings also reveal how young people from disadvantaged backgrounds feel less hopeful about their future.

Key findings

- 15 per cent of young people say they've had to skip meals to save money in the last year
- 21 per cent of young bill payers can't afford to turn the heating on
- Six in ten (62 per cent) feel embarrassed to ask others for financial help
- Young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are significantly less confident about getting the job they want ¹
- Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to believe that they will never buy their own home ²



¹ 55 per cent of young people classified as "AB" in household NRS social grading say that they are confident that they will find a job they want. This compares to 36 per cent of those classified as "DE".
² 50 per cent of young people in the DE bracket who aren't homeowners say that do not think they'll ever be a homeowner. This compares to 33 per cent of AB young people who aren't homeowners.

BEN O'DAY

"I had just finished sixth form and was a typical teenager in that I didn't really know what I wanted to do with my life and I lacked motivation. Given my age I didn't have much to put down on a CV as I hadn't had the chance to build up much work experience. I went down to the local community centre and it was the last day of the Prince's Trust course for work experience on the railway with Govia Thameslink Railway. I applied to take part and got invited to a taster day.

"I was sceptical at first but the first day was eye opening. Everyone was treated as individuals and everything they said was tailored to people's needs. It was really refreshing to see. The trainers were very firm with us, but fair.

"Programmes like the one I completed make a real difference to young people's lives. Your potential is the primary thing the employer is looking for; it doesn't matter if you don't have a CV or work experience, you can build both of these on the course. If you can show you have the right attitude and qualities they are looking for, you have the opportunity to embark on the start of an exciting career."

A LOT OF EMPLOYERS WOULD READ YOUR CV AND SAY YOU DON'T HAVE A LOT OF EXPERIENCE, BUT IT'S DIFFICULT BECAUSE YOU'RE 18. YOU NEED TO GET EXPERIENCE SOMEWHERE.



AVOIDING A SKILLS CRISIS

Employers are warning of a looming skills crisis in the UK. Of those surveyed, 38 per cent said they are currently experiencing skills shortages in their organisations and 47 per cent think there is a skills shortage across the country. The poll suggests that businesses expect the situation to worsen, with six in ten saying they believe it's only going to get harder to recruit new employees with the right skills for their organisation.

The majority of employers (73 per cent) believe recruiting young people under 25 is vital to avert a skills crisis in their sector, signalling that young people could be the solution. However, almost half (48 per cent) of young people aged 16 to 30 who have applied to jobs feel they have missed out because they weren't given a fair chance to show their skills properly.

Seven in ten (72 per cent) 16 to 30-year-olds say that employers rarely give them helpful feedback when they've been unsuccessful in applying for a role and 79 per cent believe employers need to be more transparent in their recruitment processes.

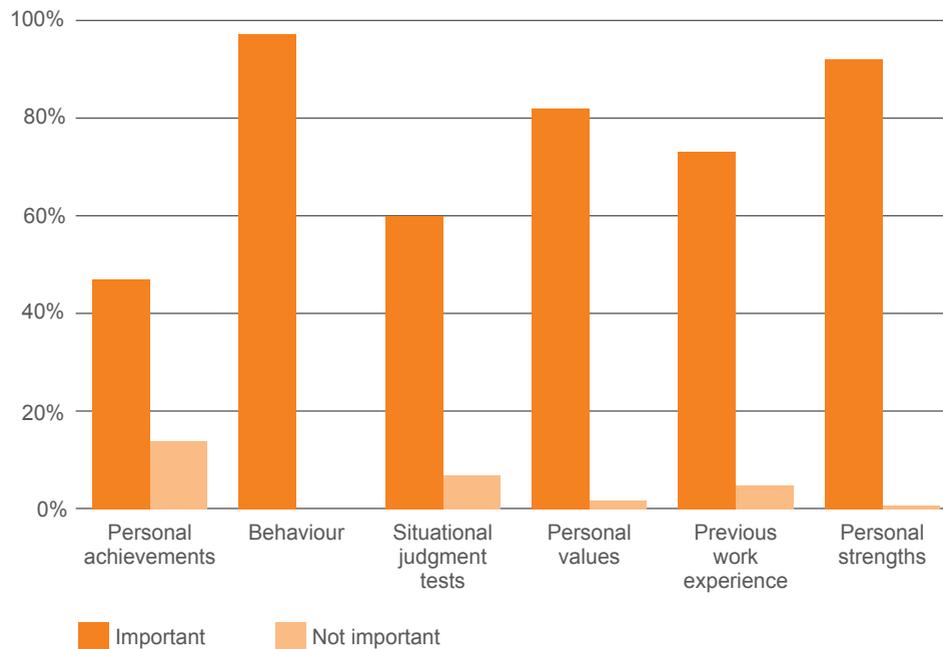
This could, in part, be down to the ways in which employers are recruiting new talent. The research highlights the role recruitment practices have to play, as more than one in three employers (36 per cent) say that relying on traditional or outdated recruitment practices is perpetuating skills shortages. Almost half of employers (48 per cent) believe that traditional recruitment practices are no longer working, and that they need to be more innovative.

RECRUITING FOR THE FUTURE

The research indicates that employers are open to introducing more innovative models of recruitment. Half of all employers (49 per cent) said they would be interested in candidates applying for jobs by participating in work experience through an external training provider.

The findings also suggest that both employers and young people may place more importance on values and strengths over experience. 67 per cent of employers believe that recruiting for entry level jobs based on values is more effective than academic achievement, and 60 per cent feel attitudes and behaviours are more important than technical skills when recruiting. Two thirds of young people (64 per cent) believe employers should place more emphasis on personal strengths than previous experience.

How important or unimportant are each of the following to you personally when shortlisting job candidates?



* Unweighted base of 1,004 employers

READY FOR WORK?

Education and employment

Eight in ten (81 per cent) employers reported that school leavers do not have a grasp on the realities of the workplace, and almost two thirds (64 per cent) claim school leavers do not have the skills they need for work. Despite this, 44 per cent of employers admit that their organisation has no interaction with local schools. Seven out of ten (69 per cent) employers believe employers should play an active role in supporting local schools to prepare pupils for work, while 61 per cent agree that businesses should do more to help educate young people from disadvantaged backgrounds about the world of work.

Similarly, teachers have expressed concern about their pupils' preparedness for work. Seven in ten (70 per cent) teachers worry their pupils won't be prepared for the world of work when they leave school, while 73 per cent worry their pupils won't leave school with the skills they need for adult life.

Teachers appear open to new ideas to help address this, with 51 per cent of those surveyed saying they would support their school dropping a GCSE subject to use the time to give pupils work experience instead. More than three-quarters (79 per cent) believe there should be dedicated time within the curriculum to prepare pupils for work.

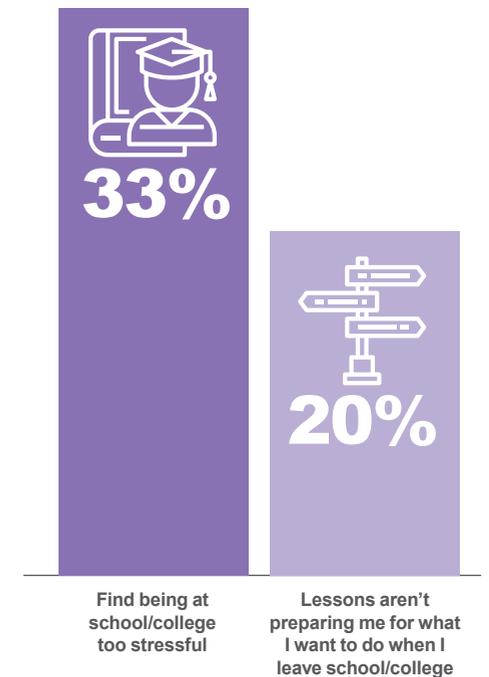
* Unweighted base of 164 young people aged between 16 and 18 in full-time education

Missing from school

A third of teachers (33 per cent) have indicated that they think truancy is an increasing issue.

A quarter of the sample of 16 to 18 year-olds in full time education (25 per cent)* admit to truanting in the last year. The reasons given for truanting are varied, ranging from stress to feeling that lessons are not preparing them for what they want to do after school or college.

Top reasons for truancy according to all young people in full-time education



RACHEL SMYTH

“Most girls at my age were out with their friends and weren’t thinking about having babies, but I was a single mum trying to get through school and college whilst holding down a part-time job and caring for my son.

“I thought I’d easily get a hairdressing job after studying it at college, but there was nothing going and I was forced to sign on for Job Seekers Allowance.

“Sometimes money was so tight I couldn’t afford the electricity to warm the house and often lived off one meal a day so that my son could have three.

“My JobCentre Plus work coach said I should go on Get into Healthcare, a Prince’s Trust programme run in partnership with the NHS.

“All I had was my hairdressing skills so I didn’t think I stood a chance of being selected, but I was and I was absolutely ecstatic when I heard!

“The programme lasted six weeks and in the final week I was interviewed and secured a job with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.”

SOMETIMES MONEY WAS SO TIGHT I COULDN’T AFFORD THE ELECTRICITY TO WARM THE HOUSE AND OFTEN LIVED OFF ONE MEAL A DAY SO THAT MY SON COULD HAVE THREE.



MAKING ENDS MEET

The research suggests that young people are skipping meals, selling items that are important to them and not putting the heating on to save money. The research reveals a gap between the confidence levels of the UK’s most and least disadvantaged young people, with those from disadvantaged backgrounds feeling less hopeful about their future prospects.

Tough decisions

In the last 12 months, 15 per cent of young people say they’ve had to skip meals to save money and 10 per cent say they’ve had to sell items that are important to them. One in five (21 per cent) young people responsible for energy bills can’t afford to turn their heating on.

Confidence gap

Young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are significantly less confident about getting the job they want¹ and more likely to believe that they will never buy their own home². They are also more likely to believe that their future financial security will rely on having another job or income alongside their main job³.

Money worries

The research shows that one in three young people aged 18 and over with an overdraft facility are regularly using it, and one in five (18 per cent) go further into their overdraft each month. Over a fifth (22 per cent) of young people in rented accommodation struggle to pay their rent.

Borrowing from family and friends has also been a necessity for some, with one in four young people (26 per cent) admitting they have done this in the past year. However, six in ten young people (62 per cent) are embarrassed to ask others for financial support.



1 55 per cent of young people classified as “AB” in household NRS social grading say that they are confident that they will find a job they want. This compares to 36 per cent of those classified as “DE”.

2 50 per cent of young people in the DE bracket who aren’t homeowners say that do not think they’ll ever be a homeowner. This compares to 33 per cent of AB young people who aren’t homeowners.

3 41 per cent of DE young people believe that their future financial security will rely on having another job or income alongside their main job. This compares to 30 per cent of AB young people

ABOUT THE PRINCE'S TRUST

Youth charity The Prince's Trust helps young people to develop the confidence and skills they need to realise their ambitions, so that they can live, learn and earn. Founded by The Prince of Wales in 1976, the charity supports 11 to 30 year-olds who are unemployed, struggling at school and at risk of exclusion.

Many of the young people helped by The Trust are in or leaving care, facing issues such as homelessness, mental health problems, or have been in trouble with the law. The programmes offered by the charity give vulnerable young people the practical and financial support needed to stabilise their lives, helping develop self-esteem and skills for work. Three in four young people supported by The Prince's Trust move into work, education or training.

The Trust has helped over 950,000 young people to date and supports over 100 more each day.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE PRINCE'S TRUST

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