

YOUNG
PEOPLE
WORK



2021

Movement to Work
Youth Summit 2021

Overview & Roundtable Notes



Contents

Page 1

- Overview

Page 2

- Discussion 1: Choosing the job for you
- Discussion 2: Accessing Apprenticeships

Page 3

- Discussion 3: Finding opportunities

Page 4

- Discussion 4: Seizing the opportunity

Page 5

- Discussion 5: Jobs vs. Careers

Page 6

- Discussion 6: COVID-19 and the job market
- Discussion 7: Money Worries

Page 7

- Discussion 7: Money Worries (cont.)
- Discussion 8: Building confidence

Page 8

- Discussion 8: Building confidence (cont.)

Page 9

- Next steps

Overview

On 17th November we held our first face-to-face Movement to Work (MtW) Youth Summit since lockdown. We welcomed 54 attendees including HR leaders from across the MtW network (both existing and prospective members), together with young people who are currently job-seeking, in employability programmes, or have overcome barriers to work and are now in steady employment.

What we set out to do

1. Provide a positive platform for young people to share their lived-experiences in a way that is safe and truly heard
2. Offer business leaders a real opportunity to listen to young people, understand their journey to work and encourage them to use these insights to drive best practice
3. To refresh and deepen Movement to Work's understanding of what a quality job and career means to young people today
4. To uncover what barriers need to be addressed for more young people to enter the job market
5. To collate insights gathered directly from young people and implement into Movement to Work forward-looking strategy



*"I'm not a risk.
I'm an investment."*

Key challenges

Putting young people front and centre of the event – with a youth panel and youth presenters following the roundtable – we heard many challenges including:

- Not knowing how to look for and access job and employability opportunities.
- Finding applications overwhelming including the use of language that can feel intimidating to young people e.g. previous experience needed, qualifications, corporate jargon, long lists of required skills.
- Logistical barriers such as money management, not having a form of ID, digital equipment, or not being able to afford the commute.

Possible solutions were discussed with business representatives and we are looking forward to using the CEO Summit as a platform to formalise these solutions.

Acknowledgements

The 'sold out' event was MC'd by Movement to Work Graduate **Anastacia Jamfrey** (BAE Systems) and was held in collaboration with **The Prince's Trust** who provided us with our Panel Host **Tyler West** (Celebrity, Prince's Trust Ambassador, KissFM DJ, TV & Radio Presenter), and connected us with two young Prince's Trust creatives who were our photographer (**Fanny Beckman**) and videographer (**Lyle Ashun**).

Special thanks also to Movement to Work employer partner **BT** who provided us with a spectacular venue (BT Tower, Fitzrovia), food and drink, audio/visual and branding support. Thanks also to our partners at **Marks & Spencer, Tesco, BAE Systems** and **Unilever** who also provided financial support, free product and vouchers for goodie bags for the young attendees.

Next steps

This document is a top-line summary of notes from the roundtable discussions at the heart of the event. Over the next few weeks and months we will be using these insights to further develop our strategy for the year ahead – with a key focus on our Movement to Work CEO Summit and Youth Employability Awards coming up on Monday 28th March 2022. Here we'll be putting some of the topics raised in November to senior influencers in business and government.

We will also be re-launching **the Youth Ambassador programme** in 2022 to continue to strengthen our youth voice. If someone you know wants to get involved, please drop a note to elaine.mcculloch@movementtowork.com

Discussion 1: Choosing the job for you

Original questions & stimulus:

The DWP has told us there is currently a large number of entry level/minimum wage jobs to choose from.

- What is it like having to decide which job to apply for and what are the deciding factors when making these choices?
- What kind of sectors are you hoping to work in and why?
- What skills are you hoping to develop?
- What minimum pay threshold are you looking for to live and work comfortably?

What came up:

- For some young people, it is not just about pay but about feeling useful. One said: "it's not about the pay its about having purpose"
- Wanting to get out and experience the world of work instead of staying at home.
- Employers need a mediator to aid communication between the young person and the employer to make the interaction smoother.
- Young people want to feel useful.
- Work can be important for a change of environment - online jobs don't provide this.
- Employers may make an effort at the start but then their enthusiasm can waiver overtime e.g. young person's experience of volunteering was taken away when they could no longer make it accessible for their disability.
- Can be stressful for the whole family of the young person when they are looking for a job.

Key problems:

- Not knowing where to access information on opportunities for young people.
- Low self esteem and poor mental health.
- Lack of support for people with disabilities.
- Not knowing where to start when looking for jobs.

Key solutions:

- Make jobs and their application processes more accessible.
- More widely distributed opportunities.
- More information on local disability friendly employers.
- Workplace mentors.
- Employment support training opportunities need to be pushed to schools and colleges so that they can direct young people to the support.
- Most important for self esteem is feeling useful, especially from the perspective of someone with a disability.
- Importance of purpose for the young person and the environment that they work in.

Discussion 2: Accessing Apprenticeships:

Original questions & stimulus:

Data from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) tells us that uptake and retention for Apprenticeships is still low.

- What is the reality of trying to get an Apprenticeship?
- What considerations do you have when deciding to do one or not?
- Do you think not having a GCSE A-C grade limits your chance of getting an apprenticeship?
- What is your understanding of how a traineeship prepare you for an apprenticeship?

What came up:

- Apprenticeships are seen as a lesser route and often seen as a bigger risk.
- Need greater visibility of the different apprenticeships on offer.
- Need more info on local schemes/businesses offering apprenticeships to be tailored to the young person when they are looking for a job.
- Needs to be earlier intervention to raise awareness around Apprenticeships as an option for young people – and support on how and when to apply.

Key problems:

- Lack of knowledge and awareness around Apprenticeships as another route for young people.
- Can be hard to find quality Apprenticeships – government portal can be daunting and unappealing
- A big barrier to Apprenticeships is low wages and how they interfere with benefits and they are all skills based.

Key solutions:

- Need personalised support for people to understand Apprenticeships better and know what to apply for.
- Consider shorter Apprenticeships - 2 years can be too long to go without progress or pay increase.
- Make the commitment to the young person about what will happen after the Apprenticeship so their time invested in the programme is rewarded with job security.

Discussion 3: Finding opportunities

Original questions & stimulus:

A quick Google search shows the huge range of platforms where organisations and businesses can advertise their jobs.

- What is the impact of having 'too many' platforms and organisations to support you to seek work?
- What is your 'go to' place to look for work and why?
- Is there anything about these platforms that could be improved to make your job search easier?

What came up:

- Often, a first port of call for young people looking for jobs is *Google*. *Indeed* & *LinkedIn* mentioned too.
- Examples of experience, skills and qualifications they expect for entry level jobs are unrealistic.
- Navigating the sites can be a separate skill in itself. It can feel that it is about how experienced you are at job applications rather than your actual work experience/skills.
- Regions - locations being a barrier - difficult sometimes to know what is actually available in your local area/region.
- Jobs wanting experience and then a lot of young people will just shut that down straight away.
- Language – job descriptions can be inaccessible i.e. too long with a lot of jargon, hard to digest especially for someone just out of school with no GCSEs.
- Minimum requirements can be unnecessary especially when they require skills/experience that have nothing to do with the job.
- Job applications asking questions which have no relevance at all to the day to day job is really off putting; "there is no need for the process to be this complicated".

Key problems:

- Employers presume a lot of prior knowledge in the job application process. Young people are not taught explicitly how to apply for jobs so employers need to make it as easy and clear as possible.
- Employers need to remember that young people do not always have access to parents, siblings, and mentors that can/want to help them – so many go in cold and without the knowledge and support to make the right decisions whilst in their search.
- Volume of jobs can be overwhelming.
- Disproportionate distribution of opportunities - most opportunities in London.
- The language on websites can be tricky to navigate - job titles can come across as random. Sometimes it has nothing to do with what you're actually doing.
- Intimidating to see a long list of skills and buzz words marked as required in a job description.

Key solutions:

- Employers need to simplify language and recognise that language in job descriptions can sometimes be either too complex (i.e. hard to understand) or too generic (i.e. doesn't give the young person a good idea of the specifics of the role)
- Youth centres should be hubs to upskill young people.
- Employers need to realise that you don't need lots of irrelevant qualifications for all roles – dig deep to think about what is really critical info the job at hand.
- Employers need to give young people space to grow and learn in job roles. Introduce further development slowly (not all at once as can be overwhelming in the beginning).
- Employers should give example questions prior to interview to make it less daunting.
- Informalise interview process – try and play to the strength and interest of the young person.
- One day tasters for jobs offered by all employers to
- Encourage young people to do work experience so
- Employers should make it more obvious what skills
- Employers ensure all entry level jobs don't require e

"You can't see me because

I have no qualifications
but I have skills to offer
your company"



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you buy'.
tomer service).

Discussion 4: Seizing the opportunity

Original questions & stimulus:

DWP data shows that youth unemployment is at an all time high but there is also a record number of job vacancies right now.

- *Why would you say this opportunity awareness gap is happening?*
- *Did you find it easy or hard to find vacancies?*
- *What can you say about the level of support young people are given to navigate option, choices and application processes?*
- *What was helpful or what could have helped making finding opportunities easier?*

What came up:

- At school its all about academics and exams and not enough about the job market and different routes
- There are too many places to look for jobs and courses – it can be confusing where to start and really stressful and consuming to navigate on your own.
- Schools / youth clubs should offer courses or more support on how to find and get a job
- Desire for opportunities from all of the different platforms to be collated into one or fewer places. There are so many places to look it takes a high degree of digital literacy and admin skills to search, save and apply for everything is out there – things are being missed and young people and employers are missing out.
- Careers advice for young people - often unclear where to find a careers advisor if you do not go to university.
- Accessibility - getting the job but then you go and it's not accessible, e.g. no lifts and no software to facilitate the young person to do the job.
- "Writing off" jobs if they mention previous experience – even when a young person is likely capable of the role. Young people think it is too competitive already and that they have no chance so they don't bother applying in the first place. (No experience no job cycle reinforced)

Key problems:

- Not enough knowledge provided by schools to advise young people.
- Too many places to look for jobs confuses young people.
- School/education systems teach us how to pass exams rather than have life skills - "robots not leaders"

- Disjointed communication between different organisations all intending to help young people - no one has all the answers in one place.
- Volunteering opportunities are not meeting needs and are not accessible.
- Imposter syndrome - doubting yourself and lacking confidence.
- Never hearing back from employers when you apply, not getting the feedback you need to learn - annoying and demoralising.

Key solutions:

- Improved careers services and job preparation in every school and college, signposting young people towards qualified careers coaches/training providers.
- Include leadership skills training in a young person's journey when finding a job and starting work.
- Increase self resilience and self confidence of young people through workshops and training.
- Visually appealing representations of all the options available for young people - help with accessibility.
- A one-stop-shop for youth focussed / entry level jobs and opportunities
- There is no one size fits all solution - it is complicated, we need to come up with a comprehensive plan across schools, colleges, local & national government, and business. Different organisations need to join up more



"It's not always about the pay... it's about having a purpose"

Discussion 5: Jobs vs. Careers

Original questions & stimulus:

We know the gig economy and flexible working is attractive to many young people right now. For example, the gig economy refers to a labour market where short-term, freelance, temporary, or independent self-employed contracted work is common. Full-time permanent positions are not part of the gig economy.

- *Why do you think we are seeing this trend?*
- *What is your understanding of the difference between gigs and a job with career progression and does this help your decision making when choosing what to apply for?*
- *What do you think are the benefits of a steady career route versus shorter job opportunities with more flexibility?*

What came up:

- Younger people like to go for gigs or short terms jobs because there is less commitment, especially for young people with not much structure in their life.
- For many young people, it is a difficult decision to make between a steady career versus shorter jobs where they is more flexibility.
- A steady career gives time for the young person to gain qualifications and develop skills more sustainability.
- However, flexibility is key, with jobs seeming to offer more options in the short term.
- Full time jobs - young people tend to avoid them because they're more commitment and not everyone wants to jump into a job/career that they don't understand.
- 'Gigs' can be seen as quick and 'easy money'.

Key problems:

- Not knowing rights in the workplace (hours you can work, overtime conditions, sick pay etc.) - more of an issue in the gig economy.
- If self employed – a lot of paper work and admin that requires a lot of support to handle on your own, or a lot of costs to pay someone else to help with it (i.e. invoicing software, accountants, financial advisers etc.)
- Money worries - Particularly travel costs and concerns about commuting.
- Financial instability – under working or over working depending on what the employer wants and needs month by month.

- Barrier of ID - not a lot of young people have ID, especially if you move around a lot and have no fixed address.
- Having to wait for first pay cheque but incurring costs already from commuting. Assumes young people have a certain baseline wealth.
- Money management skills not taught in schools, and not discussed at work –more support needed
- Gigs' often have no set structure/long-term plan or stability involved – no managed personal development etc.
- Employees can lose money in the gig economy as they have to invest in equipment first and they may not make their investment back.
- Gigs or short-term / part time work can be preferable to jumping straight into a career you know nothing about. No chance to try out jobs, without being under scrutiny/having instability (pros/cons of probation periods).

Key solutions:

- Gigs or short-term jobs / part time work: More support to make the gig economy and self employment accessible to young people – how do you get sorted and ensure you don't get yourself into financial difficulty.
- Careers: Get rid of probation periods - drain on mental health.
- Employers and line managers being aware of personal problems (mental, financial, and social) as well as work related issues so that they can be more fully inclusive and young people can feel more supported



Discussion 6: COVID-19 and the job market

Original questions & stimulus:

We are on the slow road out of the pandemic and lock down.

- *What impact do you think Covid 19 has had on the job market for young people?*
- *Do you think this has changed the way young people think about working?*
- *What do you think about working from home and virtual work experience?*

What came up:

- For those who have less confidence, working behind a screen can be really helpful.
- Virtual work experience can be either very well received or an off-putting experience.
- For many businesses, e.g. Greene King, virtual work experience was not practical even though they adapted their systems.
- Virtual programmes can be really accessible but don't give young people the same level of workplace experience that is really valuable to developing their skillset
- A lot of young people don't know what they want post-pandemic. Young people need to understand that you have to start from somewhere and work your way up.

Key problems:

- Young people save money by not commuting – but when they are asked to go into work in person, this can put a sudden strain on finances and work/life balance.
- Some young people struggle with low confidence, conversation and communication skills don't want to speak to strangers e.g. lots of call centre vacancies - young people want to text/type instead.
- Hopelessness following the pandemic due to difficulty planning in uncertainty.
- Low drive for young people as a result of poor mental health, exacerbated by the pandemic.
- Unequal distribution of opportunities – still mostly in city centres and capitals.
- For employers, a key problem is getting to the young people to fill their vacancies but
- Ineffectiveness of online learning/shadowing – entry level workers need face to face guidance
- Digital divide - lack of access to and knowledge of tech and how this negatively impacts young people job hunting.

Key solutions:

- Supplying laptops/tech for virtual working.
- Telling young people how employers have adapted after COVID.
- Being clear from the start (in the job description) on expectations

(e.g. what exactly are the hybrid working conditions and how might they change overtime).

Discussion 7: Money Worries

Original questions & stimulus:

We know that jumping from benefits to full time employment is a big step and can cost you money in the short term.

- *How does the cost of travel, work clothes, adjusting to a monthly salary and paying an increase in bills impact you when making a choice to get a job?*
- *What financial concerns do young people face when job hunting, on work placement or in their early careers?*

What came up:

- Short term cost of coming off Universal Credit and going into full time work.
- Access to technology can be a barrier
- Do employers and young people know what's available for young people in their area? E.g. local charities, support grants, services etc.
- "Flood gates open" when young people go from unemployment to employment - chucked in at the deep end – E.g. money management, paying council tax, travel etc..
- With the new generation, it's presumed that if you want money advice 'just Google it', but it's not tailored advice and it's not made individually accessible - should be taught in schools or as part of the support that charities and training providers offer.

Key problems:

- Lack of money management guidance.
- Different wages - not many companies are happy to pay youth living wage - young people get paid less but their rent and travel isn't less.
- Geographical location and disadvantage for youth due to cost of living - a lot harder for youth in London to survive.
- No money for ID - passports and drivers licenses are expensive.
- Instability of employment and income for youth - zero hours contract have a massive impact - one week you get a full time wage, next week you get nothing.
- Pressure on young people to be flexible - *here's a part time contract but we expect you to always be available* .
- Lack of money for up to date and useful technology. Expensive commute/travel costs. Cost of travel to interviews with no guaranteed job.
- Waiting for first wages to be paid..

Key solutions:

- Employers providing vouchers for travel/clothing.
- First month payment up front
- Removing the taboo - Employers providing money management skills to new joiners
- Flexible support fund.
- Employer awareness of schemes such as Smartworks to refer young people to for support. Employers should partner with these charities and offer life skills training and financial advice.
- Employers need to be flexible when it comes to working hours, especially for young carers and young people with children.

Discussion 8: Building Confidence

Original questions & stimulus:

We know from our friends at Youth Employment UK that confidence is a huge challenge when entering the job market. Even at those early application and interview stages it can be hard to know what to do or say to give the best impression.

- *What advice can you give us on how we can better support you and your confidence when seeking and applying for work?*
- *What support do you need in those early weeks and months at work?*

What came up:

- Reply and respond – give young people feedback if they are unsuccessful and give them updates if they are. The stress of waiting or not hearing anything back can be really damaging.
- Need to be clear what to expect in an interview – great to know questions in advance so they can prepare (e.g. what, why, how, when, where - what is the set up and who the interviewers are with, especially important from an accessibility perspective) - this will help build confidence and reduce the fear of the unknown.
- No interviews before 9am – give the young person a chance to bring their best self!
- Employers should consider the language they use, what platforms they advertise their jobs on to reach young people in the right way
- Induction experience can drastically affect confidence and wellbeing for young people starting a new job. It is vital to let new starters know what to expect from the induction process.

- High quality inductions when you start the job, make sure people know how to use the technology - feeling lost if you don't know how to use the technology. Employers should ensure that they have everything ready for the new starter, such as tech, log-ins, training and resources.
- Get friendly people to support inductions.
- Young people should get regular feedback from your line manager and have regular check ins in the first few weeks.
- Young people might feel bounced around between teams: HR/MtW person/line manager etc. - good to have clarity and continuity on their 'first point of call'
- Learning at the start of the job focuses on technical skills rather than soft skills.
- Employers need to give young people confidence that the employer is 'young person friendly'.
- Employers need to give young people confidence that a company is diverse and inclusive so that if they are different they will still feel welcome and comfortable.
- Line managers need to be reassuring and welcoming in the first weeks for new starters, taking account of any barriers that the young person may be facing in their life.

Key problems:

- Lack of explanation about process and the reasons for the different stages.
- Unclear job descriptions. Feeling lost.
- Young people don't know safe companies/which companies they can rely on to feel comfortable and welcomed.
- Young people can't be what they can't see - good role models in the workplace is vital and a clear idea of the behaviours that are expected of someone in that job role.
- Lack of confidence to admit they don't know things when starting a new job.
- Online inductions leading to isolation as they are less people centred.
- Can't settle in properly and do the job well if you are stressed.
- Critical role of managers involved to support young people - can easily be done poorly.
- Employers may talk the talk and appear 'inclusive' but do not walk the walk as they fail to make reasonable adjustments for candidates/new starters who are disabled.
- Employers seeing a physical disability as a 'barrier' or 'problem' for the young person settling in to the workplace, rather than just asking what the young person actually needs, adapting and putting the young person first. "It's not as expensive as you think and there is support out there which I can tell you about"

Key solutions:

- Explain the why – i.e. why interview processes or assessment centres are designed a certain way E.g. why group exercises / doing novelty activities are valuable to the interviewer and/or job - otherwise can feel pointless and embarrassing.
- Use multiple ways to reach people e.g. flyers, job portals, social media, influencers etc.
- Use recruitment systems/tools that are easy for the end user and accessible for all young people.
- Do 'day in the life' videos/article to share what it is like to actually do the job advertised.
- Don't use jargon and technical language in job descriptions - it is off putting.
- Show how NEET young people ("Not in Education, Employment, or Training") have progressed in your company via stories and videos to show that the employer is inclusive and to act as positive role models. Needs to be authentic - not too staged or polished.
- Expose the young person to a variety of role models/mentors so that they can find the right match for them and make the most of the benefits of mentoring.
- Having a buddy system at work can help build confidence.
- Having an MtW Alumni group so that you can connect to people who have been in your position.
- Having a safe 'go to' person, who is not the same as your line manager, to have chats with.
- Training on communication skills, life skills, and resilience training as these all affects the confidence of young people.
- Cultural induction to the workplace with emphasis on behaviours, wellbeing and values.
- Ask the new starters what they are looking for from the work experience- what do they need from their perspective? Account for additional needs and adapt.
- Get recent new starters to help to design and update induction experience.
- Developing line managers' capability.
- Specialist equipment to make workplaces accessible; tailored to individuals' needs where needed.
- High quality inductions when you start the job, make sure people know how to use the technology - feeling lost if you don't know how to use the technology. Employers should ensure that they have everything ready for the new starter, such as tech, log-ins, training and resources.



You said we did

We're now hard at work digesting these insights and implementing them into our forward-looking strategy. Immediate actions will include:

- Hosting a workshop with young people to do a deeper dive on what young people want and need from job descriptions and the application process. With this further insight, we are hoping to develop a best practice job description template for MtW employers.
- Working to re-launch the Youth Ambassador programme with a bang in 2022 and connecting young people with MtW Alumni who can share their stories and inspire fellow young people.

Let's get to work

Join the Movement

If you are not already involved with Movement to Work, consider joining today:

- **FREE to join** – no cost for you or your organisation. All we ask is that you deliver quality programmes.
- **Receive bespoke advice** from experts
- **Access additional funding** with guidance
- **Unlock diverse talent** and boost CSR
- **Be part of a community** sharing tools, best practice and thought leadership

Share the success

Please put us in touch with your Comms, PR, Marketing or events teams, so that we can continue to join-up and raise awareness for the great work we're doing together.

Case studies

We are eager to learn about the remarkable stories and the journeys the young people have been on before, during, and after their placement. We have a template to help you have this conversation with a young person. Please do share these with us once completed as they can serve as measurement and evaluation tools, as well as authentic marketing material so we can inspire more people to join MtW!

Blog with us

As a Movement to Work partner, we want to hear from you: your experience of working with us, how it has positively impacted your organisation, and most importantly, how you've seen it help young people to flourish. If you would like to write a short piece for our website, please get in touch!

Social media engagement

Please Follow us, Like, and Share on all our social media channels, and tag us in content that you want us to see! Here you will also see the latest updates from the Movement to Work network and how you can get more involved.

For more information on any of the above please contact: info@movementtowork.com or via your Movement to Work account manager.

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Thank you