Written evidence submitted by RSBC (Royal Society For Blind Children)(BYC013)

Summary:

This response was put together by RSBC Youth Forum members (aged 18-25) and outlines some of the barriers they have experienced when trying to access work experience and job opportunities. The content of this response answers the questions directed at young people which were outlined in the brief.

1. **How do differences between young people (e.g. geographic location, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, disability) affect the work experience opportunities they people have?**

There are definite barriers to work experience and job opportunities for young people who are blind and vision impaired. One of the main barriers here is that companies offering these positions have very limited knowledge about what adjustments would be needed in order for a blind or VI young person to fulfil the role.

Often these adjustments can be something very straightforward and simple, such as installing voiceover software onto the staff member’s computer, making IT work easy for them. A lot of the companies that we have approached for work experience etc. seem almost frightened of employing a blind or VI person, claiming that it would be too costly for them to make the necessary adjustments. I think this can make it even harder for young people who are blind or VI to gain work experience and access to job opportunities.

1. **How could resources to help young people find out about and access work experience be improved?**

We think companies should have more direct contact with schools and colleges and offer more direct work experience through more accessible channels. This would also include visiting specialist schools and organisations for young people with disabilities such as vision impairment, and learning from the young people how they could create inclusive and accessible work placements. Better online promotion about work experience opportunities for young people is crucial- in accessible formats such as on Facebook and Instagram.

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