Written evidence submitted by Plymouth Youth Parliament (BYC017)

Barriers to Work Experience

In May 2018 young people from Plymouth Youth Parliament were approached by the British Youth Council to take part in a National Campaign on work experience.

For young people, knowing where to find work experience can be challenging. The British Youth Council’s Youth Select Committee has therefore launched an inquiry into the work experience opportunities available for young people and how these might be improved.

This involved disseminating a survey to a wider group of young people with the questions developed by the BYC alongside young people. The survey was sent out across the ‘Plymouth Youth Network’ and through some schools across Plymouth. UK Youth Parliament Plymouth worked alongside the Millfields Inspired Charity and undertook small workshops in order to allow for wider discussions on the topic.

The survey results, from over 85 young people, have been completed and collated and the results will be submitted to the BYC by 18th June 18. This information will then be forwarded to the Youth Select Committee.

Access to work experience was voted one of the top issues affecting young people in last year’s Make Your Mark ballot – the largest annual consultation of young people in the UK. Work experience can provide young people with the opportunity to develop skills and confidence and learn about potential career paths.

Which is why this year, the committee will look at issues including:

* What does good quality work experience look like?
* What do young people and businesses expect to get from it?
* How important is good quality work experience to successful industrial strategy?
* What evidence is there that work experience boosts social mobility?

The official report, including conclusions and recommendations, will be released in late November 18. The following results have been collated by Jenny Way, Professional Youth Worker, Plymouth City Council.

**Results from Plymouth**

**General**

1. What does “good quality work experience” look like? What do young people and businesses expect to get from it?

* May provide young person with a small salary
* 1-2 weeks in a workplace
* Have impacts and outcomes
* Work experience should be more like a work trial
* Good quality – Interesting - planned –varied – purpose/end product and include support from schools
* Easy to organize
* Provides valuable experience of the industry and what the job is like
* Insight of future career
* Staff members that are friendly and treat students as equals
* When you don’t need to do a lot of writing
* Something you enjoy
* Activity
* Work with younger years
* Engaging in work and hands on experience
* Work in a good environment
* Taste of the work and reality of what to expect
* For the young person to be productive
* Free workers
* Not much paid out
* Stuff made more quicker
* Young people get more experience, knowledge and skills
* Business gets feedback
* Get half term job
* Good for your CV

2. How important is good quality work experience to a successful industrial strategy?

* Good quality labour that benefits students and employer
* Talent spot
* Realistic aspirations young people with ambition and drive
* Getting work that doesn’t put pressure on budget (for employer)
* Entices new employees into industry
* Make your confidence go down if it’s not good
* Gets people wanting to be employed there
* Enables employers to keep their staff and sector

3. What evidence is there that work experience boosts social mobility?

* Breaks down barrier between employers and students
* Raises aspirations
* Wider awareness of opportunities
* Creating networks
* Wider experience – reality check for some people
* Allows young people to get involved in careers that they previously wouldn’t have
* Young people get experience to boost CV and benefit employability
* People have healthier mental health/social life/ aspirations
* Boosts confidence
* People have different views on you

**Young people**

4. How do differences between young people (eg. geographic location, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, disability) affect the work experience opportunities that people have?

* Some people are snobs
* Support level from parent can impact on work experience opportunities – “who you know”
* Some schools advocate more effectively for their students – which means wider and better opportunities
* Differences can result in different expectations of self e.g. uni vs vocational routes
* Transport affects different areas
* Stereotyping young people in general
* Disability access i.e. wheelchair, people afraid of the unknown and how your condition will affect you in work place or others
* People judge you because of the area you come from – or past behavior people and are not willing to give them same opportunities as others
* Some companies are obsessed with image – race/appearance
* Even if you have turned things around its harder for you
* Mental health issues (confidence etc.)
* Some people don’t provide accessible buildings
* Distance/transport issues
* Some young people have lack of money and can’t afford the extra costs involved – clothes for work – transport cost – lunches – equipment

**Schools and businesses**

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

* Businesses can advertise work experience opportunities
* More help from schools
* Young people feel they are left to arrange/apply for –lack support/encouragement/advice
* Dream job Vs actual – reality –young people feel that some placements dead end jobs
* Work experience placements can be unrealistic
* More engaging connections
* Online opportunities but schools have to pay to access the resources and some schools won’t do that due to budget cuts
* Practicalities of work experience – risk assessments, visits to sites, need for DBS checks – time and money needs to be added
* Easier to access (can only be done through school at the moment)
* More info around schools/social media
* Posters/lessons
* Instagram, snapchat, Facebook
* Lower the age for work experience
* Better support in schools
* More awareness and advertising
* Taster sessions / talks form people in real jobs
* More information online about opportunities
* Online data base for work experience placements in your town/city that schools and young people can link into

6. Should compulsory work experience for under-16s be reinstated? What is the right age for work experience within compulsory education: 14-16 or 16-18?

* Overall, yes
* Need to define choice words – compulsory work experience – time frames – compulsory to all
* If its compulsory would yp receive job profile – that way clear expectations – yp get skills, knowledge and are valued
* Work experience Vs taster sessions for young people
* Young people build up and gain knowledge of employability skills which employers now want and recognize
* Experience of career sector
* Years 10 and upwards natural time frame
* Although in year 9 you do have to pick your GCSE options so maybe taster sessions in year 9
* Good opportunity to allow young people to try out work
* Teaches young people capable skills
* Many miss out on opportunity as they do not do the work to apply
* More valuable than environment work
* 14 is possibly young?
* Choice of work experience or enrichment?
* 14-16 compulsory
* Think it should be an opt-in scheme aged 14-16 but compulsory 16-18
* Felt that young people should undertake work experience before starting year 10 in schools
* Because it would help them make better choices for GCSE’s because they could have tried out their ideally profession and got a better idea if its right for them.

**Young people were asked if they should all have opportunity to undertake work experience in year 10?**

**76% said yes**

**10.9% said No**

**13.2% said they didn’t know because there school does not offer it**

7. How could schools and colleges be better supported to help their student’s access quality work experience?

* Companies allow better access to work experience
* Publicity/advertising
* RE lessons used to offer more information about work experience nad jobs
* Redesign/rebrand and raise awareness
* Talks by workforce in lessons
* Funding assistance
* Capacity to support young people on placements
* Knowledgeable guidance to pick right placement
* Support young people and employer
* Better schools and employer engagement in process and placements
* Provision of a wider range of opportunities
* Lessons on it – schools
* Employer talks
* Trial week – pair up different year groups
* Taster days

**In our questionnaire young people stated they wanted:**

**80.2% - Taster days would be good in workplaces**

**62.7% - More opportunities for work experience**

**63.3% - Help to get a part time/weekend or holiday job**

8. Are services to help schools and colleges develop relationships with businesses working well? How could they be improved?

* Some businesses are more promoted than others (e.g. Babcock, army, STEM, Building Plymouth etc.) in our areas
* Would be good to encourage others like City Council and Hospitals who hire thousands of staff and the hospitals and other big companies to do same and offer placements, taster days and talks
* We need to identify where the gaps are that could support young people’s interests, cover gaps in the City, build future skills and new industries
* Wider range of businesses needs to be connected to schools
* Teacher/adult passionate about youth work to feedback to students and find opportunities for them
* Employability skills
* Networks – strong partnerships
* Talks in classes/assemblies
* Learning to deal with real life work situations – dilemmas in work place

9. How could barriers to businesses (including small businesses) offering work experience be overcome?

* Better links to smaller businesses
* Funding
* More support from schools/colleges
* Realistic expectations of businesses having students, time, effort, planning
* For those considering an apprenterships have input from current people doing the role
* Insurance limitations – limit what a young person can actually do sometimes they are unable to do the exciting stuff can this be explored?
* Help businesses understand barriers of age (younger people are capable)
* Communication between schools-business and students-businesses
* overcome through leaflets/
* communication with councils to demonstrate how beneficial work experience can be to them for recruitment

10. What does good practice in offering, advertising and recruiting for work experience look like, and how can businesses be encouraged to follow it?

* Access to websites for work experiences places
* Make managing any risks easier
* Clear role profiles or job descriptions from start so young people know what’s expected and what they will do
* Communication with young people (assemblies etc.)
* Jobs fairs are useful – more businesses gives a wider variety of work experience jobs
* Good offering and advertising of work experience would look like adverts such as a poster or brochure which condenses only be the key information about the business so more people will read it.
* Location is also important e.g. in communal spaces in schools and colleges where people have the time to read them
* Natural they should be made available at any careers days/career office

**Other services and organizations**

11. Does work experience benefit businesses? What are the motivations for businesses to offer work experience?

* If students enjoy work experience they could recruit future employees
* Yes of course it can and does
* Talent and ambition of the young people
* They gain feedback on company and roles and workers
* See Q7 – refer back to previous answers
* Work experience does benefit businesses
* because although the young people can primarily be a burden in the long run it can help the businesses with recruitment
* which will be beneficial to maintain the company

12. What role should the Government have in ensuring young people have access to quality work experience?

* Make work experience compulsory
* Where does ofstead fit – do they oversee – make checks
* Standardized system for Local authorities
* Could the Council support business that offer placements to earn some sort of charter mark – quality assurance which encourages them to sign up and offer placements but young people know that company has signed up and is also a good place to work
* Investing In People – criteria Mark been offered before
* Work experience reflect young people’s interests and meet the needs of employer so better support to ensure smooth process
* Communication with young people to ensure they get what they want
* Offer more, increase direct contact with all schools
* Better support and assistance – national database system of placements

13. Should the Government invest in resources to help young people find work experience independently? What would these resources ideally look like?

* Yes because Government should work with local council and ensure safety and quality links back to idea of a charter mark – quality assurance
* A system like trip advisor for work experience opportunities – can be rated
* Leaflets and advertising for work experience
* Yes – companies of a certain size should have an expectation to take work experience placements
* Responsibility
* Local authority especially health should take more of a role in offering support and work experience
* Contractual obligation with people we hire to offer work experience
* Chamber of commerce
* Trade bodies support and self-monitor
* Structure should be in place to assistance and oversee

14. How could private and third sector organization’s be better supported and encouraged to help young people access quality work experience?

* Incentives from government to offer work experience
* Work experience being a variety of things/offers not just a few days
* Encourage and offer taster days/sessions
* Communication between schools/students and businesses
* Make contact with local councils
* so they can offer support to businesses with their city/region as they will have awareness of which businesses are most capable of offering work experience
* or equally know which businesses may need support

15. What lessons can be learned from the approaches of the devolved administrations and other countries to work experience?

* (Unsure but discussed Scandinavian approaches to diversity and youth employment)
* Work experience provides young people with life skills that are needed especially ore now than ever before – we need to learn how to – Write a cv – deal with real life situations – apply for jobs – Gain interview skills – Practical things how to open a bank account – budget – deal money – pay taxes – gain communication skills – learn to talk to people properly and communicate feelings and ideas
* Real life experiences – situations instead of just theory work
* The work experience ought to be relevant
* otherwise already limited funds and resources are wasted on work experience which doesn’t help navigate young people closer to what they want from their future career (in many cases)

**Young people highlighted that since the changes to how schools run since academies and free schools opened, RE, PSHE (Curriculum for Life) and Work Experience are the 3 main topics that have been cut or you now have to put requests in to be part of them.**

**Yet on the Make your Mark ballot last year they were 3 very important topics voted for by young people so who are making the right choices?**

**June 2018**