

Youth voice listening project; Young people & Employment opportunities



About the session

This project was designed for The Mid and South Essex NHS foundation Trust to have conversations with young people from Basildon, Chelmsford and Thurrock around current employment options for young people, their awareness of what support is available and how this could be improved. The Foundation Trust hopes to use this information to improve the offer currently available and therefore the voices of the young people are vital to this process.

The session was made up of questions that the Foundation Trust would like young people's input on, and designed into a youth group session plan for the youth workers to run themselves with their young people. This is an important element to receive honest feedback, to help the young people feel relaxed in their own environment, with their own youth leaders, on a normal group night.

Each group received a donation for taking part (donation based on estimated costs of staff time/ venue costs and refreshments). We are proud that all our youth voices projects have an element of reinvesting back into the voluntary groups that take part to recognise the great work that these groups do.

Questions that formed the basis of our youth session & research findings

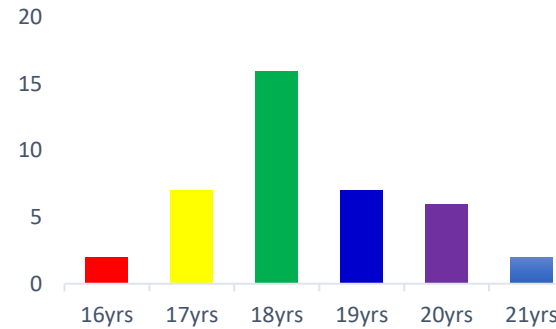
- What support is currently available for young people to find out about careers and job opportunities?
- Has the support that is offered, helped you to make informed choices? How or why?
- What support do you think should be available in every school/college around employment options?
- Who do you think should provide this help?
- What are the challenges for young people in general when looking for work?
- Do you have an idea of the career or type of job you would like to do?
- Have you ever thought about a job in the NHS? Why/Why not?
- What do young people know about the employment options available? Which opportunities interest you the most?
- Do you feel confident in skills that are important to employers?
- What are the most important qualities that you look for in a prospective employer? Why?

Who took part in the project?

98 Young people



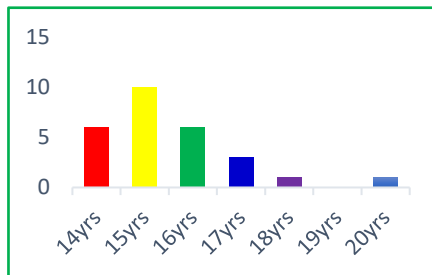
Aged between 13-23yrs



27 young people

From Basildon

Aged 14-20yrs



Kool Carers (Young carers group)

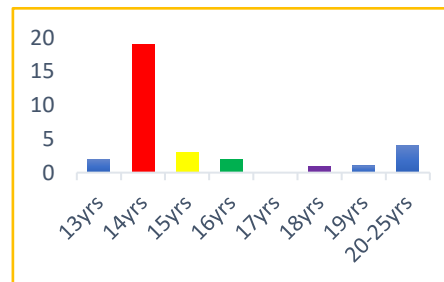


Gateway radio (Youth radio club)

32 young people

From Chelmsford

Aged 13-23yrs



The Art Place (LGBT+ youth group)

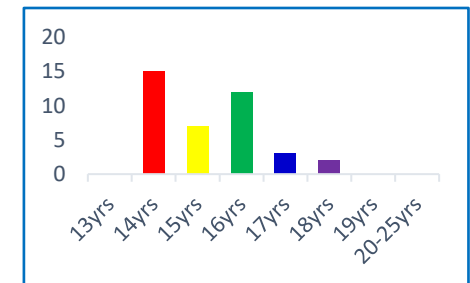


North Avenue youth centre,
Melbourne (Open access youth club)

39 young people

From Thurrock

Aged 15-18yrs



Open Door (Youth with Social care involvement)



Detached work, Koala Park

What support is currently available for young people to find out about careers and job opportunities? (Answers listed in order of popularity)

'Support received at school' was the top answer for every group of young people

Basildon	Chelmsford	Thurrock
1.) Help from teachers at School 2.) School work experience 3.) School trips 4.) Online 5.) *Support from family	1.) School career advice 2.) School work experience 3.) *Parents 4.) Online; Indeed - though people didn't feel that applying on indeed often led to interviews or employment. Google, TikTok, social media, 5.) friends, youth workers & word of mouth 6.) Job centre 7.) Community organisations	1.) Workshops in school 2.) School career advice 3.) Work experience 4.) Online; Google, Reed, Indeed, youtube and social media 5.) Other; Family, The Inspire youth hub - local service for young people's education and training).Open Door support, Job Centre, Social Care.

Has the support offered helped young people to make informed choices?

48% Yes 52% Not really Comments; *Young people from the radio club mentioned that their families help them with carer support. However, all young people in the young carers group stated that school was the only place that they were able to receive career support. (Young carers attending college said that they don't receive this support). <i>'Yes, I learnt new skills'</i> <i>'Yes, I had an insight into the world of work'</i> <i>'Yes, It helped me to make a considered choice about my next steps'</i>	13% Yes 37% Kind of 50% Not really Comments; <i>'No. Career advice in College was not too helpful. The College lacks staff or resources to provide any significant help'</i> <i>'It's easier to find a job if you know people in the industry in which you're looking to work'</i> <i>'The job centre is generally unhelpful, and seems more interested in getting us straight into work, regardless of whether the job is suitable or practical for the individual- especially if you need extra support'</i> Youth workers comments 'The discussion showed us that a lot of support seems to come from parents for those with strong aspirations'	48% Yes 7% Kind of 45% No Comments; Consensus was a yes from the 'Open Door' group, with a few negative experiences- <i>'Yes there was a local job board that got me my job in Grays town centre'</i> <i>'Support from my mentor in Open Door helped me get interviews and rewrite my CV'</i> <i>'No, We don't hear back from the person who is supposed to be helping us at school'</i> <i>'I ended up getting the most help from a family member'</i> Over half of the young people asked through the detached work said yes-
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All the young people from the radio club said yes, and all the young carers said no.	<i>'Support from community organisations (ideas Hub) or friends and family has been helpful'</i>	<i>'Yes, having a better idea of options and what we could do in the future is useful'</i>
No. All the young carers stated that the choices were too limited and the steps to get to the career that they wanted was not explained.	<i>'A few teachers have spoken to me but I wish they focused more on my options rather than information on what job'</i> <i>'My parents are interested and encouraging unlike some teachers'</i> <i>'I get into trouble at school so they aren't interested in helping me'</i>	<i>'kind of. Its helpful for looking for future study'</i> <i>'No, carer stuff at school was rubbish and we just google stuff ourselves'</i>

Almost 50% of young people from across the groups said 'Not really/ no'

- Although 'support received at school' was the top answer, young people felt that they would have liked even more help from their school based upon their individual needs and interests
- Young people who had parents with high aspirations found them helpful and supportive
- Various young people mentioned that if they knew someone personally in the career they were interested in, that that it was helpful in knowing what steps to take next
- A lot of young people mentioned using the internet and social media so that they could research for themselves



What support do you think should be available in every school/college around employment options?

Basildon	Chelmsford	Thurrock
<p>1.) Support from course teachers, form tutors and heads of year at School</p> <p>2.) A designated job coach or careers adviser</p> <p>3.) Career fairs</p> <p>Individual comments from young people; <i>'The school holds the biggest responsibility'</i></p> <p><i>'We need more open days at school to know about other professions'</i></p>	<p>1.) Face to face advice at school</p> <p>2.) Career fairs and visits to work places</p> <p>3.) Work experience and mock interviews</p> <p>4.) Skills for job hunting; tax, retail, cv writing, employment, finance (should be taught in schools)</p> <p>Individual comments from young people; <i>'Bring people into assemblies to talk about different paths and jobs'</i></p> <p><i>'A motor sport talk has helped me by showing me what to expect'</i></p> <p><i>'If you don't sort your own work experience at school then you can't do it - the school doesn't help'</i></p>	<p>1.) More work experience</p> <p>2.) Dedicated careers adviser</p> <p>3.) Teach life skills, C.V support and mock interviews</p> <p>4.) Other; vacancy board focusing on apprenticeships, time off allowed for interviews.</p> <p>Individual comments from young people; <i>'We would love more opportunities to do work experience'</i></p> <p><i>'Inspirational speakers for assemblies from various professions would be good'</i></p> <p><i>'We need a dedicated teacher to talk to about career options'</i></p>

Who do you think should provide this support?

All groups said 'Schools' as their top answer
Also mentioned was 'Parents, College, The Government, Local companies and Charities'

It is important to young people that the main point of contact should be someone who seems friendly and who the young people know and feel comfortable with. Regular contact would also be beneficial rather than a single appointment. Young people said-

'A careers advisor helped me with gcse option choices, it's helped knowing what jobs I don't want to do'
'I had an appointment today with the careers adviser but I forgot - no one reminded me and I booked it months ago'
'There is a lady but she sits in the office doing paperwork so I don't want to go and speak to her because I don't know her'



What are the challenges for young people when looking for work? (Listed in order)

Basildon	Chelmsford	Thurrock
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.) Lack of Transport & jobs in the local area2.) Mental health issues3.) Discrimination4.) Losing benefits5.) Criminal record6.) Lack of work experience7.) Not having the right skills8.) Drug/ alcohol issues, single parent & Disability	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.) Lack of work experience (lack of relevant experience)2.) Mental health issues3.) Not having the right skills (and qualifications)4.) Lack of transport5.) Discrimination6.) Disability7.) Drug or alcohol issues single parent8.) Criminal record and Losing benefits9.) Lack of jobs in the local area10.) Other; Employers not wanting to pay for training	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.) Lack of work experience2.) Mental health issues3.) Lack of jobs in the local area4.) Drugs5.) Single parent6.) Other; lack of confidence, lack of sporting opportunities

'Lack of work experience' was the biggest challenge for young people overall

'Mental health issues' was the second from top answer for every youth group. Young people said-

'I am worried about mental health issues'

'What if I struggle at work and there is no one there to support me?'



Do young people know what occupation they would like to have?

Basildon	Chelmsford	Thurrock
42% Yes 8% Not sure 50% No	16% Yes 65% Not sure 19% No	33% Yes 21% Not sure 46% No

The combined results of all three areas were-

30% Yes 31% Not sure 39% No

What profession are young people aspiring for? (Listed in order of popularity)

Basildon	Chelmsford	Thurrock
1.) Radio and TV 2.) Youtuber Also mentioned- pilot, doctor	1.) Teacher 2.) Footballer 3.) Nurse Also mentioned- motorsport engineer, police, youth worker, social worker, zookeeper, electrician, plumber, childcare, barber, IT, brick laying, acting, crime scene investigator, photography, Tesco,	1.) Social care field 2.) Engineer 3.) footballer 4.) childcare role Also mentioned- veterinarian, finance, cleaner, pilot

Ideas around the type of job young people would like were incredibly varied!

Answers in the top three choices only received 2-6 individual votes!



82% said that they would not want to work in the NHS

(Of the 18% that said yes, it was mainly because they wanted to help others)

Would young people consider a job in the NHS?

Basildon	Chelmsford	Thurrock
<p>78% said No</p> <p>Why or why not? (Top answers) No- 1.) Not sure 2.) lack of interest in the NHS 3.) Its too intense for a job 4.) Too much responsibility to take on</p> <p>Yes (Comments from individuals) 'To help people'</p>	<p>79% said No</p> <p>Why or why not? (Top answers) No- 1.) I don't like blood 2.) Money is bad 3.) I don't want to work with sick people 4.) Just not interested 5.) I don't have the knowledge</p> <p>Yes (Comments from individuals) 'I would like to but there are educational barriers' 'I would like to but there's not enough info about a direct route into the NHS' 'I have been to an NHS open day' 'I want to help young children' 'Because of my family working in the NHS' 'I want to help others' 'Maybe part time but I don't know how' 'Yeah, but I'm not qualified enough'</p>	<p>90% said No</p> <p>Why or why not? (Top answers) No- 1.) The NHS seems scary 2.) I don't like blood 3.) I am looking at apprenticeships (The NHS wasn't considered) 4.) Nurses don't get paid enough 5.) I don't think I will get good enough qualifications</p>

Do young people know about the employment options mentioned?

Basildon	Chelmsford	Thurrock
Listed in order of those most well known- 1.) Apprenticeships 2.) Traineeships 3.) Work placements 4.) Graduates	Listed in order of those most well known- 1.) Starting your own business 2.) Work placement 3.) Entry level jobs 4.) Apprenticeships 5.) Jobs for graduates 6.) Traineeship	Listed in order of those most well known- 1.) Apprenticeships 2.) Starting your own business 3.) Work placements 4.) Jobs for graduates

**The majority of young people had heard about the options above
(but didn't necessarily know they were options available when working within the NHS)**

<u>Which opportunities interest you the most?</u>		
Basildon	Chelmsford	Thurrock
Listed in order of interest- 1.) Apprenticeships and Traineeships 2.) Work Placements 3.) Starting own business	Listed in order of interest- 1.) Starting your own business 2.) Apprenticeships and Traineeships 3.) Work placements 4.) Jobs for graduates 5.) Entry level jobs	Listed in order of interest- 1.) Apprenticeships and Traineeship 2.) Jobs for graduates 3.) Entry level jobs 4.) Starting your own business

The majority of young people taking part said that they were most interested in Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Almost half of the young people who said they weren't interested in any of the opportunities; linked it to having low self-belief

Youth worker comment

'There was very limited knowledge of any of the options listed'

'Other than going to university and becoming a nurse/ surgeon the young people weren't aware of other roles in the NHS'



Comments from young people

- 'Work Experience is just work for free, but not really relevant skills'
- 'Apprenticeships don't give you financial support'
- 'Entry job people are stuck, as those with the entry jobs can't move on into skilled work and won't be promoted'
- 'Traineeships aren't great as that just means they can fire you whenever within those two years'



Do young people feel confident in the following skills that are important to employers?

Basildon	Chelmsford	Thurrock
Young people feel most confident in the following skills- 1.) Communication 2.) Team Work 3.) Creativity	Young people feel most confident in the following skills- 1.) Team Work 2.) Creativity 3.) Communication 4.) Digital Skills 5.) Literacy Skills	Young people feel most confident in the following skills- 1.) Team work 2.) Problem solving 3.) Self- management
Young people feel least confident in the following skills- 1.) Numeracy skills 2.) Self-belief 3.) Problem solving 4.) Literacy skills	Young people feel least confident in the following skills- 1.) Self - Management 2.) Self-belief 3.) Problem Solving 4.) Life Skills 5.) Numeracy Skills	Young people feel least confident in the following skills- 1.) Literacy skills 2.) Self-belief 3.) Self-management 4.) Communication 5.) Numeracy skills

All groups feel confident in 'Team work'

All groups felt less confident in 'self-belief' and 'numeracy skills'

What are the most important qualities that young people look for in a prospective employer?

Basildon	Chelmsford	Thurrock
Most important-	Most important-	Most important-

1.) Fair rate of pay 2.) Looks like a nice place to work 3.) Offers career progression Least important- 1.) Is a large employer 2.) Has a good environmental policy 3.) Has a good inclusion and diversity policy	1.) Training and development opportunities 2.) Offers career progression 3.) Fair rate of pay 4.) Has a good inclusion and diversity policy Least important- 1.) Is a large employer 2.) Has a good environmental policy 3.) Flexible working options	1.) Fair rate of pay 2.) Offers career progression 3.) Training and development opportunities 4.) Flexible working options Least important- 1.) Is a large employer 2.) Has a good environmental policy 3.) Looks like a nice place to work
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The most important qualities for young people are ‘Fair rates of pay’ and ‘career progression’

The least important qualities for young people are ‘Is a large employer’ and ‘Has a good environmental policy’

Summary

98 young people took part in this listening project from Basildon, Chelmsford and Thurrock. The groups were varied in their interests and career aspirations but their answers (especially about careers support and work opportunities within the NHS) were well aligned.

Young people have said that they don’t think there is much career support at school- and even less at College. They would love to have dedicated career advisers, more work experience and personalised support tailored to individual needs and likes rather than just being very generic. Something that holds some young people back is the aspirations of their family- with those from families with high aspirations getting better support and encouragement from their families about careers than those whose aspirations aren’t quite as high.

In all groups that took part there was a real lack of awareness about roles within the NHS and even less about career paths. Some young people were worried that unless they were very academic they could never aspire to a career within the NHS. Something that may be holding others back is lack of self- belief that they could do well in an establishment that feels like it is aimed at those that want to be Nurses and Surgeons. However, there was a real interest in finding out more and young people were very keen on Apprenticeship and traineeships within the NHS.

The young people involved in this project were more interested that the employer offered fair rates of pay and career progression, than the organisation being a large employer or having a good environmental policy.

There are a number of skills gaps and gaps in career support that the NHS could help young people with in schools and it would be a great opportunity to develop this further.

It was felt that there is more importance placed on exam grades at school than on helping young people to find out what they want to do with their lives. Young people also felt that ‘a career’ was something that felt like it was too far in the future for them to think about or understand what they would like to do. However, they would like more support in order to help them understand options available to them.

A big thank you to Gateway radio, Kool carers, The Art place, North Avenue Youth Centre, The Red Balloon Family and Open Door for taking part in this project. I hope this report is helpful and that the views shared can be of assistance in improving the career support for young people.

- Rachel Brett (ECVYS CEO)

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