

# MOVEMENT TO WORK

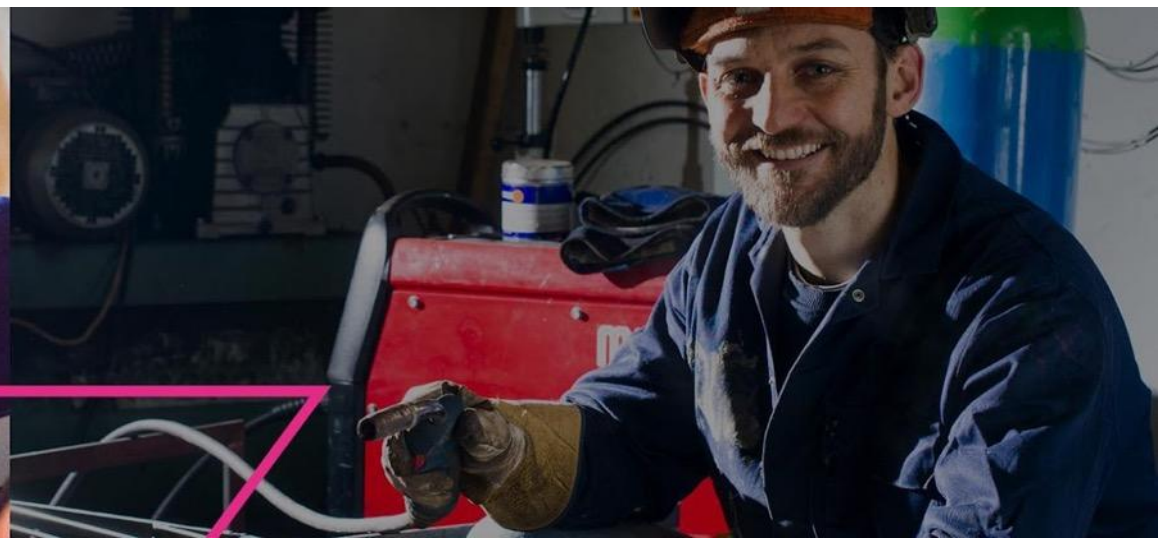
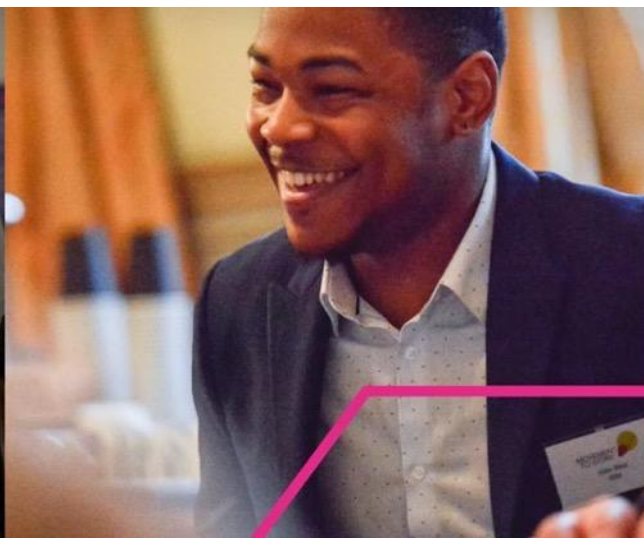
A summary of October 2023 Youth Voice workshops



In partnership with



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions



## ABOUT MOVEMENT TO WORK

### WHO WE ARE

Founded in 2013, Movement to Work (MtW) helps employers deliver high quality employability opportunities for young people aged 16-30 who face barriers to work.

We are a registered UK charity offering 100% no-cost support to businesses interested in youth employment.

Our mission is to help young people gain access to great work experiences and expose organisations to fresh, untapped talent.

### YOUTH VOICE WORKSHOPS

For Movement to Work to offer meaningful advice to employers and help deliver high quality programmes - we must understand the lived experiences of young people. Held multiple times per year, our Youth Voice workshops are just one way we collect data and insights direct from young people to help inform our overall strategy.

## Introduction

On various dates during October 2023, Movement to Work, in collaboration with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), held **five** Youth Voice workshops in **Liverpool, Glasgow, Worcester, Haringey** and **Swansea**.

We brought together **55** young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) to talk about their employment journeys. The following document includes a summary of some of the key themes that emerged from the sessions. All data has been anonymised to protect the identity of the participants and final insights may have been paraphrased where appropriate.

### Key themes explored :

- **Seeking employment** – challenges and opportunities
- **Work experience** – what works and what does not
- **Wellbeing** – how looking for work affects mental health

### Thank you!

We would like to thank our colleagues at the Department for Work and Pensions and the young people who took part for their feedback. These workshops are instrumental in understanding how we as a Movement can help facilitate pathways to work for young people.

## Topic 1: Seeking employment

**Overview:** The session was about the journey from unemployed to employed and understanding the key barriers felt. Please see below for summary of what emerged from the discussion.

“Sometimes just 10 to 20 minutes [of job seeking] gets me overwhelmed and I get frustrated with myself”  
- MtW Youth Voice Participant

### Key problems

- Employers require C.V. for entry level jobs
- Internet overwhelm (too much information, too many sites).
- Confidence issues - get “flustered” during formal interviews.
- Not hearing back (no feedback) from employers after applications and/or interviews.
- Too much change within Jobcentre Plus\* i.e. Job Coach inconsistency.
- Numeracy and literacy challenges.
- Lack of IT literacy / digital skills.
- Travel and location can be an issue
- Not enough flexibility e.g. for working parents.
- Different pay for different age brackets – this is seen as unfair.
- Employers should be more aware of LGBTQ+ and neuro diverse young people.

### Suggested solutions

- Pre-interview: Young people would like to be contacted before interviews with some information on what is expected by the employer and what the young person should expect from the experience i.e. format, structure, example questions, duration, dress code etc.
- Post interview: Prompt communication of job outcomes. At a minimum, let people know if they haven't been successful, and ideally share constructive feedback.
- Employers need to be aware of the core issues young people face and provide more support i.e. lack of confidence, mental health/wellbeing challenges.
- Youth Hubs should be used more for engagement with young people (as opposed to JCPs).
- Remove the need for C.V. and experience for entry level roles.
- Building trust - by developing consistent and respectful relationships with work coaches. Advisors with ‘the human touch’.
- On the job training mentor / ‘work buddy’ scheme in place to support upskilling.

### Core themes

- **Communication:** employers need to improve interactions pre and post interview to ensure positive outcomes for young people.
- **Processes:** Long, complicated and slow recruitment processes need to change to be ‘short and straightforward’.
- **Requirements:** Job descriptions sometimes ask too much for entry level jobs. Feeling that if the applicant doesn't have qualifications, they are immediately at a disadvantage so “why bother”.
- Life skills (such as money management) should be taught in school, or by employers.
- **Humanity:** young people want to feel seen, that employers understand the issues they are facing and that they want to help them succeed.
- **Travel:** Lack of good/reliable local transport links and the cost of travel to work prohibit job uptake.
- **Apprenticeships:** A perceived lack of opportunities for all.

\*Jobcentre Plus or “JCP” are places to help people prepare for work, including job search, C.V. / interview preparation, training, guidance, work placement programmes, work experience and job trialling schemes.



## Topic 2: Work experience

**Overview:** The session was all about evaluating the concept of work experience, how relevant it is for young people today, what works and what doesn't. Please see below for summary of what emerged from the discussion.

### Key problems

- Work Experience (WEX) without an end goal (outcome) perceived as 'not worth it' – should at least lead to a guaranteed interview.
- Would be more likely to consider WEX if it was paid. Perceived as not worth the time as some young people are the primary sources of income in their household.
- Concern that benefits may be impacted.
- Being left out of pocket (travel etc.).
- Family not on doorstep (for support or childcare) – making uptake a challenge.
- Managers perceived as not supportive, getting annoyed with questions from young people.
- Lack of opportunities and unsure where to look.
- Due to COVID, schools didn't offer any work experience for students during their time in education.

### Suggested solutions

- A guaranteed job or prospect of a job at the end of WEX would be attractive, as would:
  - A reference
  - Opportunity to interview for roles
- Long-skinny engagement (1 or 2 days over 6 months as opposed to 2 weeks full time).
- 121 relationships with coaches and mentors (providing additional support where needed).
- Evaluate work experience programmes allowing young people to give feedback anonymously / suggestion boxes. Ask them what they would like to get out of it at the start of the experience.
- Peer group 'buddy' programme, versus senior buddy.
- Group simulation i.e. they would like training to be done in a group environment and within a safe simulated space before going live on the job. i.e with a mock call centre, IT training suite or back of house kitchen.
- Two managers i.e. one line manager plus dedicated contact for for learning.
- Rotation of departments on programmes.
- Pre-employability built into every programme i.e. key skills training, time management, communication, IT etc.
- Adapt training to suit all learning styles.
- Being involved in employability initiatives should not impact benefits that young person may be receiving.

### Core themes

- **Guaranteed outcome:** Work experience should lead to positive outcomes not just add experience to C.V.
- **Financial incentives:** Ideally work experience should be paid, or at a minimum offer support with core expenses such as travel, food/drink, uniform.
- **Wraparound support:** access to coaches, mentors, peer group buddies.
- **Qualifications:** ideally WEX leads to tangible qualifications and skills that will make them more employable.
- **Show not tell:** work experience should be hands on or simulated.
- **Duration:** longer experiences, extended time to learn and adapt to new working environments.
- **Wellbeing:** a focus on ensuring the young person's wellbeing is being monitored and supported pre, during and post WEX.
- **Neurodiversity:** ensure programmes and those that lead them are aware of different learning styles and are mindful of these needs.

"I have no experience, I have a disability, who will hire me? I want an employer to see me for who I am and not a disability quota."  
-MtW Youth Voice Participant

## Topic 3: Wellbeing

**Overview:** The session was about understanding some of the challenges affecting young people's health and wellbeing and where support is most needed. Please see below for summary of what emerged from the discussion.

"By the end of the month I have barely a penny left to buy food."

- MtW Youth Voice Participant

### Key problems

- Cost of living
  - Energy prices
  - Fuel costs
  - Rent costs
  - Food prices
- Worried about the future. Concern about the state of the world.
- Lack of know how around money and mortgages.
- Stressful looking for work and employers not communicating with young people.
- Feeling 'stuck in a rut' with low confidence.
- Struggling with mental health issues.
- Anxiety and depression can be challenge when job hunting. Stress when looking for work and employers are not communicating or feeding back causing sustained anxiety

### Suggested solutions

- Improved support for mental health and wellbeing.
- 'In work calculations' - this is a term used to describe a set of calculations DWP has been able to provide in the past which would illustrate how much "better off" someone would be in work.
- Better information regarding Universal Credit (UC) 'taper off' rules i.e. at which stage of employment is an individual no longer supported by UC or the benefits which run alongside receipt of such welfare.
- "Switching off" from news and social media.
- Lessons on finances / budget management.
- Company benefits should be more relevant to young people.
- Improved pay for young people.
- Employers showing they understand that young people might make mistakes when new to the organisation and that they will have the support they need to move forward.
- A proactive job coach helps massively.

### Core themes

- **Mental health:** struggles with depression and anxiety. Suffering from frustration and fatigue, and loss of hope.
- **Prejudice:** concern that because of their age, background, orientation and race that they will be treated unfairly.
- **Money worries:** feeling constrained due to cost of living crises alongside not feeling they have the knowledge and skills to manage money/ budget.
- **Current affairs:** world news causing fear, panic and distress leading to lack of motivation. Not wanting to leave home.
- **Decision making:** cannot make informed decisions (re. jobs, hours and rate) due to not being aware of in work calculations or Universal Credit taper off rules.
- **Responsibilities:** young people shared how they are in often in conflict with other pressures such as caregiving, helping in the home, and bringing in money versus investing time in their future.

## Next steps

- We will work hard to embed these insights into our overall strategy, supporting businesses, speaking to government and working with training providers to inspire best practice.
- Movement to Work's ongoing Youth Voice Workshop outputs sit alongside a range of data-driven tools including its Youth Survey, Youth Data Dashboard and Youth Ambassador programme. Gathering youth insight is critical to help inform our broader network and to stay up to date with current youth employment challenges.
- Please reach out to Movement to Work should you have any questions about this report or our work more generally.
- **Not a member yet? Join us!** It's 100% free.

### Keep in touch!

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In October 2023, Movement to Work, in collaboration with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), spoke to 55 young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) across Liverpool, Glasgow, Worcester, Haringey and Swansea.