

The experiences and perceptions of young people toward employment and career progression

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The RECLAIM Project: RECLAIM is an innovative youth leadership and social change charity based in Manchester. RECLAIM aims to encourage the leadership potential that exists in all young people regardless of socio-economic background.

The Research

The research was part of RECLAIM's Fairer Futures campaign which aims to tackle leadership imbalance and inequality within the workplace. Whilst leadership employment exists in all young people regardless of background, achieving this potential is often made difficult. The research aimed to look at how young people perceived employment and career progression and aimed to contrast this with previous research done by RECLAIM on employers perspectives on making employment accessible for all.

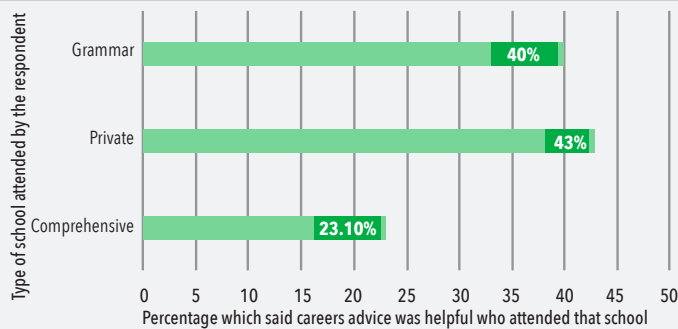


Figure 1 Whether careers advice was helpful at their school

Other Key Findings

- 66.7% of young people who received free school meals felt like they wouldn't get a job because of where they came from
- 77.3% of those who went to private school had got a job because they knew someone who worked there (47.2% of comprehensive)
- 66.7% of those from the top ten most deprived areas in the country felt worried about having to pay for travel, uniforms etc.
- 86.7% of young people felt they would feel more confident if they had a role model in the job they were going into it
- 83.8% of young people said there wasn't enough support available

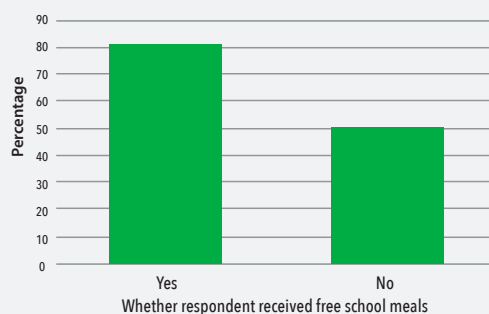


Figure 2 Percentages of young people who did and didn't receive free school meals who had been put off applying for a job because they felt they wouldn't fit in

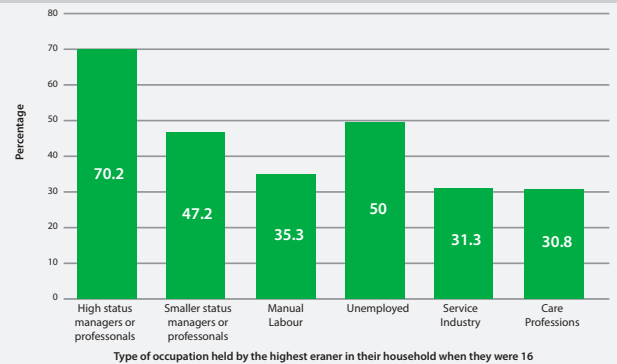


Figure 3 Whether they had ever got a job because they knew someone who worked there

The Method

To conduct the research I decided to undertake an online survey using Google Forms. The questions in the survey took inspiration from previous Fairer Futures research and aimed to look at experience of the workplace, feelings of preparation and attitudes towards the support available.

To reach survey participants, I conducted snowball sampling where I contacted friends, family, the University, charities and organisations who work with young people aged 16-24, and asked them to share and spread widely. This age group was targeted as they were young people who would have experience of either part-time work, full-time work, apprenticeships or graduate schemes. Within the survey, there were a few questions which aimed to get a loose grasp of socio-economic positioning (such as type of school attended, postcode which was then scanned through a deprivation index, whether they received free school meals and parental occupation). The survey was live for 2 weeks and then the data was coded and inputted into SPSS.

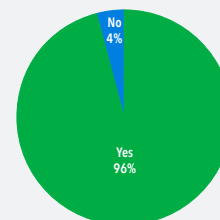


Figure 4 Is it easier to get a job if you know someone who works there?

Conclusions

There were many conclusions which could be made from the research:

1. Employers need to reach out in more accessible ways for young people they perceive as 'hard to reach'
2. Young people need role models in order to thrive
3. Experience should not be used as a measure of talent, instead employers should recognise diversity of talents
4. All young people need to be given the same support and advice for the workplace
5. Talent needs to be embraced regardless of background

