



# Pastoral care for young people in the workplace

A report commissioned and funded by Senta

International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS)

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Hooley, T. (2014). *The Evidence Base on Lifelong Guidance*. Jyväskylä, Finland: European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN).

Hooley, T. & Dodd, V. (2015). The economic benefits of career guidance. Careers England

Hooley, T., Devins, D., Watts, A. G., Hutchinson, J., Marriott, J. and Walton, F. (2012). *Tackling Unemployment, Supporting Business and Developing Careers*. London: UKCES.

Hooley, T., Matheson, J. & Watts, A.G. (2014). *Advancing Ambitions: The Role of Career Guidance in Supporting Social Mobility*. London: Sutton Trust.

Hutchinson, J., Beck, V. and Hooley, T. (2015). Delivering NEET policy packages? A decade of NEET policy in England. *Journal of Education and Work*. Online first.

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## Executive Summary

This research sets out to explore the range and type of support that employers have in place to support young people's transition from education to the workplace. As well as exploring the traditional support through induction and training we have also examined additional support which we have defined as pastoral care.

We define 'pastoral care' in this report as:

*A type of support given to individuals in the workplace to address personal issues. It stands alongside career, job and training oriented support and is built into the overall support package offered to young workers and apprentices.*

The report details the different phases of the research which comprise a literature review, panel survey of young people, a survey of employers and in-depth interviews with young people, employers and stakeholders.

Emerging from the panel survey and interviews with young people was a dissatisfaction with the preparation that they had received prior to leaving education. The grievances centred around two key areas: that schools often focus on academic achievement and transition to university rather than to employment; and topics such as making pension arrangements and dealing with tax and NI contributions were reported as not being adequately discussed at school/college. These activities are core parts of working life for everyone and need addressing so that young people understand and can make informed decisions about their financial futures.

Young people are generally happy with the support that they receive from employers. Almost one third of the young people surveyed had a mentor or buddy appointed when they started work and all young interviewees stated that they were aware of someone they could go to for pastoral and/or other kinds of support. Although most had not needed to access such support themselves. Sometimes the person offering support was doing so in an 'official' capacity, as someone who had been appointed by the employer or was someone in a managerial role. Sometimes, support was provided more informally, by a 'mate' or older colleague, which was often reported as the most valuable type of support.

Our engagement with employers has shown that many organisations do provide pastoral support to young people and others. Many examples of support, ranging from enabling flexible working when a particular need occurred to paying for counselling for an employee, have been highlighted.

Some organisations aim to minimise the potential for issues to arise in the workplace through the use of effective recruitment strategies which ensure that the 'right' people with appropriate behaviours and attitudes are recruited. It is considered important to 'know' the potential recruit if possible and employers had developed strategies to achieve this. These included developing good relationships with 'feeder' schools and

colleges, acting on word of mouth recommendations from current employees, and offering candidates a short period of work experience to identify if they 'fit' into the organisation. However, while word of mouth recommendations appear popular with some of the employers, this practice can be exclusionary for unnetworked young people.

Two projects: Investors in Young People (IYYP) and YouNG, were described as examples of effective practice as both support the care and development of young people in the workplace.

It can be concluded from the study that effective practice in the provision of pastoral support is multifaceted. There appear to be strategies which are effective such as having an open door policy and holding regular reviews. However, the research has highlighted a need to provide feedback on supporting activities and to ensure that actions are followed through. We conclude the report with 10 recommendations – some that target school based activities and some for employers to consider in order to better support young people so that they can successfully transition from education into the world of work. The ten recommendations are:

- **Schools** need to provide more support for young people around financial preparation for work. Young people consistently reported this as a gap in their knowledge and money and financial management is a significant skill required to successfully transition into work.
- Work-experience and Saturday jobs should be encouraged by **schools**, parents and young people themselves. They offer an insight into working life, help build confidence, work readiness, communication skills and demonstrate that that young people want to work.
- **Employers** should review and consider the pre-work activities they use. Preparatory activities are a useful way of making the young person feel part of the company and can be used to break up the induction programme and make it more manageable. Induction is an important part of helping young people to make the transition from education and settle into work.
- **Employers** should provide opportunities for new young employees to meet with other young workers, especially if it is predominantly an older workforce. These opportunities help to build informal networks and enable young people to benefit from people like them who may have a little more experience.
- Buddy schemes using buddies who are a year older/more experienced worked well for several employers we spoke to. They offer a formal system of support and prepare the younger worker for their future role. **Employers** should consider how they might use this approach within their own company.

- Mentoring or 'having a designated individual to go to' is important as it ensures that there is additional support available from someone more experienced in that particular workplace. **Employers** should review their approach, assess the take-up and effectiveness of current mentoring support, promote the benefits to all staff and consider how further improvements can be made.
- Young people sometimes need additional pastoral support for issues they have no previous experience of dealing with. All **employers** may not have the resources to provide in-house support but it is good practice to know where young people and other workers can be referred to for help for a range of personal issues.
- There are many benefits identified for employers to engage with schools, they raise awareness of career areas, can build a recruitment pipeline and help schools to better prepare young people for the transition. **Employers** and **schools** should engage with the Careers and Enterprise Company to find ways of working together.
- There were limited examples of training for Buddies or mentors. **Employers** should consider training to maximise the opportunities to help build the skills, knowledge and expertise of the young person more quickly.
- **Employers** do often provide a range of pastoral support for all staff. Younger workers, especially those 16-18 year of age, may have specific needs which employers should consider providing additional support for in the early stages of their first job.

## 1. Introduction

There has always been a need to ensure that young people are prepared for the transition from education into the workplace. This has often been a contentious issue with employers arguing that schools don't do enough (British Chamber of Commerce, 2014). There is now increased focus on schools to prepare young people for the workplace. After a number of years when career education and work-related learning have been neglected by the government, a new version of the statutory guidance has been released which strengthens schools' role in this area (Hooley, 2015). There has also been an announcement of new resources for the area with the launch of the Careers and Enterprise Company (Department for Education and Morgan, 2014). Ofsted has responded to this by emphasising career and work-related learning more strongly in its inspection framework. This states that education and skills providers must:

*Successfully plan and manage learning programmes, the curriculum and careers advice so that all children and learners get a good start and are well-prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment.*  
(Ofsted, 2015).

In order to realise this vision of an improved career education system there is a need to involve employers with schools and the education system. However, the CIPD (2012a) found that less than a third of organisations take part in visits to schools to highlight, among other things, the local career opportunities available to young people. The recent 'Resourcing and Talent Planning' survey of 520 employers by the CIPD found that over a third of employers (36%) believe that schools, colleges and universities are poor at equipping young people with the skills their organisation needs. Whilst just 16% of respondents agree that young people leave with realistic expectations about their career, four times as many disagree (65%), (CIPD, 2015)

The in-work support young people receive from employers once they are working is key to ensure the retention of young people within the labour market. Young workers often require different kinds of support than those with prior experience of the labour market. While many employers offer training and skill development, this fails to meet the needs of some young workers. For example, personal, financial or relationship issues may mean that young people require additional support, especially at the beginning of their transition into work. It is therefore important that the holistic needs of young people are considered to ensure that they are effectively supported in transitioning into work.

This research sets out to explore the range and type of support that employers have in place to support this transition. As well as exploring the traditional support through induction and training, we have also examined additional support which we have defined as pastoral care.

We define 'pastoral care' in this report as:

*A type of support given to individuals in the workplace to address personal issues. It stands alongside career, job and training oriented support and is built into the overall support package offered to young workers and apprentices.*

This is an important area as being able to offer additional help on issues outside of work-related activities may make the difference to whether a young person is able to stay in work. Employers can have concerns about the provision of this type of support and feel that it goes beyond their normal role. However, such support can be considered as part of the induction of the young person into the business and as something which enhances their relationship with their employer.

This report sets out the findings of the research and offers recommendations for the improvement of pastoral care as a means of addressing issues of staff turnover, early leaving and the consequent impact on employers' recruitment and retainment costs as well as promoting increased productivity and employee well-being.

### **Project aims**

The aims of the research were to:

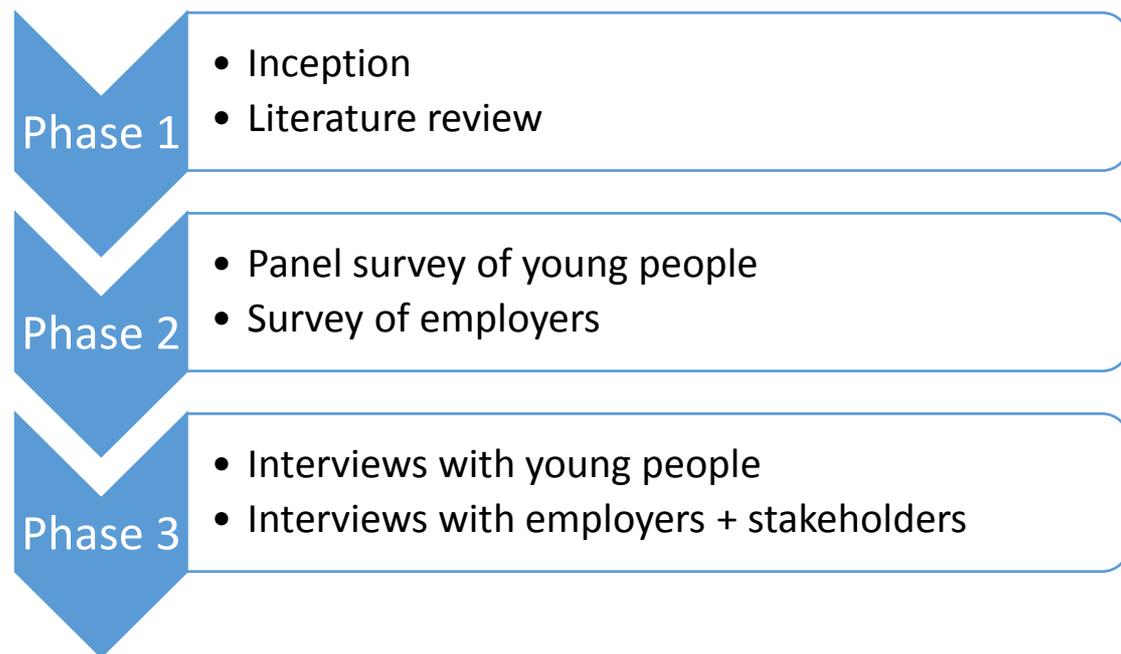
- identify and define what workplace pastoral care looks like;
- explore approaches adopted by a range of employers to support young peoples' transitions into work;
- explore with a group of young people their experiences of education/work transition; and
- identify examples of good practice and consider how this can be implemented within the workplace.

These research aims were explored using a mixed methods approach which is outlined in the following section.

## 2. Project approach

The methodology adopted for the project involved mixed methods, which ensured an in-depth exploration of the issues that affect young people during their transition into work and during their first six months in employment. The research focussed on the needs of mixed ability young people aged 16-24, (not including graduates). Figure 1 presents an overview of the approach used. The phases of the methodology are described in more detail below.

**Figure 1: Project methodology**



### **Panel survey of young people**

A market research company (JRA) was selected to undertake a panel survey of young people. This ensured that the data was collected from the target group of 16-24 year olds across England in a cost effective and timely manner. The survey was open between November and December 2015 and attracted completed responses from 509 young people. The focus of this survey was to explore the views of young people about the transition from education to employment and examined what support they have experienced from employers during the period of transition and in the early stages of work.

### **Employer survey**

A detailed survey was undertaken with employers to identify the range and types of transitional support that is provided to younger workers and apprentices. The survey was created using Survey Monkey and disseminated in a number of ways including through University contact databases and Semta databases. Further to this the survey was promoted using Semta newsletters. The survey combined different

question types to ensure both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The data was analysed using SPSS with the outputs produced in Excel. The survey was open between 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016. Semta circulated the survey to their contacts database and promoted it via online channels including social media to support the project. We received 112 responses to the survey but after data cleaning processes were carried out, the final number of completed responses was 84. We received responses from a wide range of sectors, with the largest proportion from manufacturing, engineering, science and technical, public administration and defence. We also had responses from both large multi-national companies and local SME's.

### **In-depth interviews with the engaged employers, stakeholders and young people**

A total of nine in-depth interviews with employers and seven in-depth interviews with young people took place during December 2015 and March 2016.

This was a 'convenience sample', selected to represent small, medium and large employers across a range of sectors and geographies. An invitation to participate in in-depth interviews was included in the employer survey and this resulted in a total of 13 contacts, eight of which were developed into interviews (another was identified through a contact at an employment event). Semta also supplied the names and contacts of some of the employers whom they felt represented a wide spread of employer and young people's experiences. Employer interviewees represented the following:

- One large multinational, one Local Authority, six SMEs.
- Engineering Science and Technology, Manufacturing, Food Manufacturing, Public Administration, and Real Estate.
- Job roles including: CEO, MD, Director, Technical Trainer, Resource Manager, and HR.

We have also carried out two stakeholder interviews with Investors in Young People (IIYP) and YouNG (a Nottingham based project) to gain a broader perspective of the issues that young people face when transitioning into work and effective practice in addressing them.

Eight employee (young people) interviews were planned but one was withdrawn due to perceived confidentiality issues as they were recruited through a third party who did not receive clearance from their line manager to pass on contact details to us. Therefore, we present the findings of seven interviews with young employees.

### 3. Overview of the literature

#### Review of the Literature

We present the main points of our literature review here in order to contextualise the empirical findings from the various data sources discussed later in this report.

#### Defining pastoral care

In order to adequately discuss the topic of 'pastoral care in the workplace' it is necessary to define 'pastoral care'. This has been problematic because there is no fully agreed definition in the literature and understanding of the term varied among interviewees.

Kendal *et al.* (2014), when discussing school-based contexts, cite Calvert's (2009) definition of pastoral care as '*the structures, practices and approaches to support the welfare, well-being and development of children and young people*'. While this definition could also be broadly appropriate to workplace pastoral care, it does not adequately take account of the contexts within which workplace support is provided.

Fatorre, *et al.* (2012) do address the topic of workplace pastoral care. The authors differentiate between pastoral care, which they call psycho-social mentoring, and other kinds of workplace mentoring which are designed to offer work, career, or educational support. Table 1 details the different types of mentoring support that Fatorre *et al.* (2012) discuss. Pastoral care (psycho-social mentoring) focuses on the individual and their psycho-social development rather than on career, work or education. However, it might be that the problems being addressed, family or relationship problems for example, impinge on all aspects of a young person's work life and therefore providing effective pastoral care can have wider benefits. Psycho-social mentoring provides young people in the workplace with someone to confide in, support with personal problems, roles models and personal development.

**Table 1: Types of mentoring support**

Type of Mentoring/Support	Example
<b><i>Career Oriented Mentoring</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help to complete apprenticeships/traineeships</li> <li>• Provide career advice</li> <li>• Focus on skills knowledge important for career development</li> </ul>
<b><i>Work Oriented Mentoring</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expose to work experiences needed to develop competencies</li> <li>• Focus on skills knowledge specific to current job</li> </ul>
<b><i>Education Oriented Mentoring</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe apprentices/trainees in workplace for learning and development purposes</li> <li>• Assist with assignments/technical knowledge</li> </ul>
<b><i>Psycho-Social Support</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide someone to confide in</li> <li>• Provide support on personal problems</li> <li>• Provide role models for apprentices/trainees</li> <li>• Guide personal development apprentices/trainees</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Fatorre, *et al.* (2012) p.17

Pastoral care for young people in the workplace can therefore be defined as follows:

*A type of support given to individuals in the workplace to address personal issues. It stands alongside career, job and training oriented support and is built into the overall support package offered to young workers and apprentices.*

### **Transition into work: roles of employers**

Jones, *et al.* (2015) observe that; ‘The policy push for closer ties between schools and employers has been primarily driven by an expectation that employer

engagement will enhance young peoples' labour market prospects. That policy push responded in part to a call from employers for 'oven-ready' (CIPD, 2014a) young people to emerge from school with a full range of personal employability skills and also from growing evidence of a labour market and wage premium for students who had work experience while in education (Jones, *et al.* 2015). Having some work experience, is therefore seen as enabling young people to better operate within the labour market. Young people, however, can find themselves in a 'catch 22' situation (UKCES 2015) in which employers' value work experience but many do not actually offer it.

Research for the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (2014) found that 131 employers from a sample of 301 (less than half) had or were engaged with schools. The CBI (2015) found that 73% of their sample of 310 employers engaged with schools or colleges but concluded that greater engagement by employers was necessary to prepare young people effectively. Reasons for non-engagement included a lack of interest from schools and concerns about the cost and resources necessary (BIS 2014; CBI 2015). These barriers to engagement are addressed in the fieldwork activities undertaken during this study and will be considered further later in this report.

It is encouraging that almost three-quarters (71%) of the employers surveyed by the CIPD in 2012 said that they believe they have a role to play in tackling youth unemployment (CIPD, 2012a). That role could include 'supporting the development of employability skills, creating work experience opportunities, providing taster sessions, offering apprenticeships and so on' (Green *et al.* 2015). Burge, *et al.* (2012) found that employers engage with schools at a number of levels (although providing work experience, school/workplace visits and apprenticeships/training and mentoring were the most often cited) including in school governance, providing professional development for teachers, supporting and developing relevant curricula, and working directly with students. Semta has previously been involved with an Education and Training Foundation programme tackling this issue which focused on engaging employers to support STEM training in the FE sector. The STEM Alliance programme led by Semta aimed to develop a higher level of competence, confidence and collaboration in the existing STEM teaching and training workforce and to improve the recruitment, retention and creation of new STEM teachers and tutors. Several platforms were developed including STEM experience which brings together STEM employers and young people interested in a career in STEM and allows them to participate in work experience placements. (for more information see: <http://semta.org.uk/stemalliance> and <http://www.stemexperience.co.uk> ).

Much of the research on young unemployed people suggests that many cycle in and out of the labour market (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2015). This suggests that there is a need to re-orientate strategies and help young people not just to find and get work, but also to hold onto work once they have found it. The role of the employer is likely to be key in helping young people to successfully transition to work and also to

successfully integrate them into workplaces, potentially through mentoring and the provision of support including pastoral care.

### **Support and pastoral care in the workplace**

Some young workers, particularly those from disadvantaged or 'at risk' groups, often require different kinds of support than those with prior experience of the labour market or from more stable and supportive backgrounds. As Fattore *et al.* (2012) point out, 'Psychosocial mentoring [i.e. pastoral care] is far more important in the literature that focuses on at risk groups'. While many employers offer training and skill development it is possible that this fails to meet all the needs of some young workers. For example, personal, financial or relationship issues may mean that young people may require additional support, especially at the beginning of their transition into work. Those young people who have had access to pastoral support and mentoring within the education system may find the loss of such support when they move into the workplace particularly challenging.

A barrier to providing effective support in the workplace identified by Fattore *et al.* (2012) is that effective mentoring requires that adequate resources are allocated, including adequate training, support and time allocation for mentors to operate successfully (see also Billet, 2003). The CIPD (2012b) found that employers felt that:

*'Managers have 'lost the skill to manage young people' and they worry about the level of pastoral care they need to provide', observing further that 'There seems to be a general employer appetite to receive more support (not necessarily financial) and more tailored advice and guidance on how to engage with young people'.*

This research report seeks to expand on the above and highlight further examples of good and effective practice drawn from interviews with employers, young people and other stakeholders.

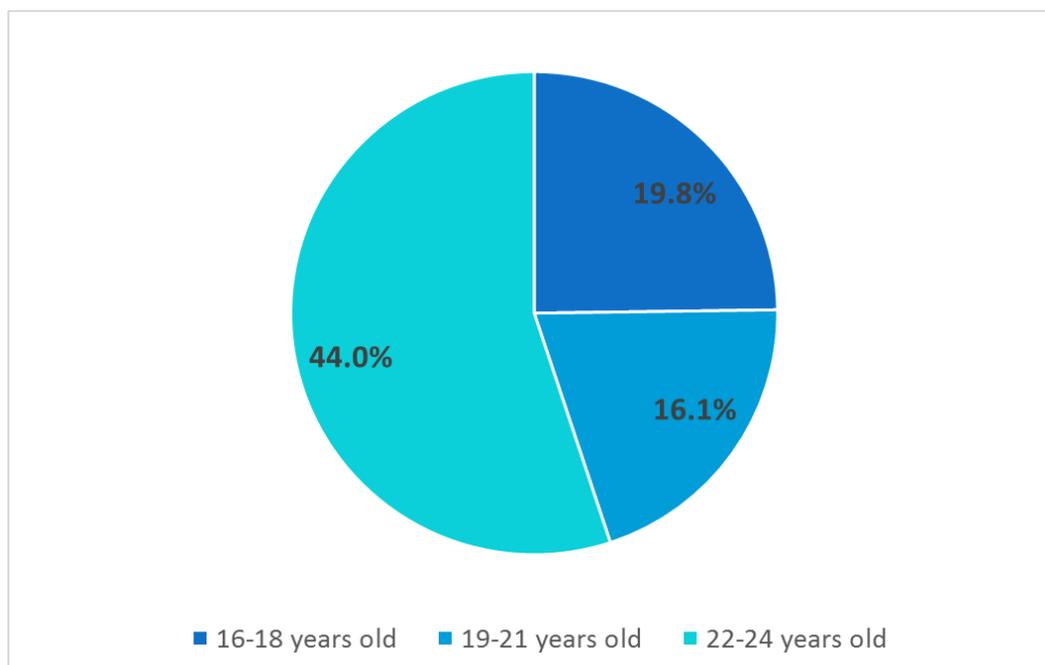
#### 4. An overview of pastoral care for young people in the workplace

This section presents the views of the young people who contributed to the research; we have combined the results from the panel survey with the qualitative interviews to present a thematic approach to the data. In addition, we have utilised recent research undertaken by the team with young people in Kent that examines their views on transitions and work-readiness. Here we present a number of themes that explore the following: preparation for the work place; transition support; work related support; pastoral support; and thoughts on additional support.

Research respondents included 509 panel responses and interviews with seven young people currently in work. All were aged 16-24. The average age of those interviewed was 20; all interviewees were employed in either an apprenticeship or job and all had had some previous part time work experience or 'Saturday job' but they were all currently in their first full time job, two were female and five were male.

Of the 509 panel respondents 85.7% are in employment, 13.2% are doing an apprenticeship and the remaining 1.2% are combining employment with studying. Whilst 57.4% of respondents are female, 42.6% are male. The survey was focused on the experiences of young people aged 16 to 24 years of age and, as Figure 2 reveals, the highest proportion of respondents were from the oldest age group, with 44% aged 22-24 years of age.

**Figure 2: Age distribution of survey respondents**



Source: Young people panel survey Sample: 509, 16-24 years old

The respondents represented a range of sectors and industries including: retail; engineering; accommodation and food services; health and social work; construction; administrative and support services; education and professional services. Other

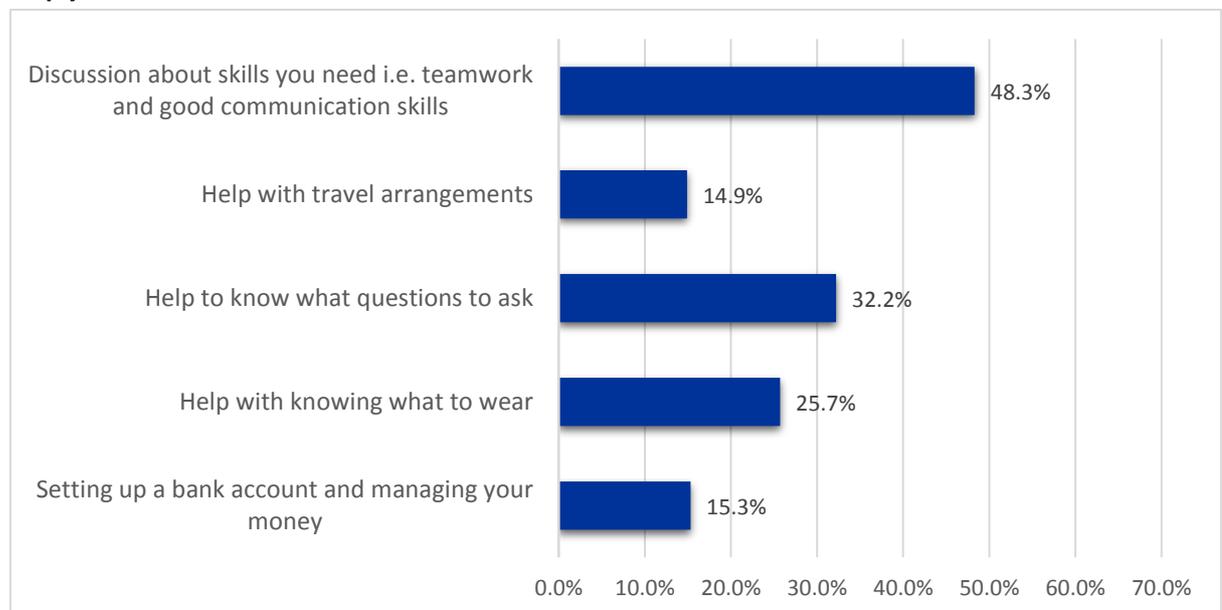
sectors that were identified include: Arts, entertainment and recreation; Engineering, science and technical; Real estate; Manufacturing; Financial and insurance; and Information, communication and technology.

### Preparation for the workplace

We asked both groups of young people about the support they received from either college or school to help them prepare for the wider world of work.

Figure 3 shows that the most common support from schools and colleges focused on skills needed for the workplace such as teamwork and good communication, with 48.3% of respondents reporting that they had received this. Help with travel arrangements was the least common type of support, with only 14.9% of young people reporting that they received support with this from school or college.

**Figure 3: Percentage of young people who identified support received from school or college. Responses to the question: ‘What support did your college and school provide to help you move into work?’**



Source: Young people panel survey Sample: 509, 16-24 year olds

The young people we interviewed presented a range of views concerning the pre-work support they received. Most of the comments were negative, feeling that the schools they attended were mostly geared towards academic career options, they therefore received little information or support concerning vocational opportunities.

*‘There was no guidance apart from continually trying to force you to apply for university’ (Apprentice, aged 21).*

*‘My school wasn’t big on apprenticeships. At all. They were always ‘sixth form, university’ (Apprentice, 21).*

The types of support that all young people who were interviewed experienced focused on preparation for university and general applications support such as developing CVs, most of which they found unhelpful to them in their search for vocational employment. An interviewee summed up the situation as: *'you either do university or you've failed at life'*.

We discussed work experience opportunities as preparation for work with those we interviewed; those who had access to it found it valuable in preparing them for work. Most had done work experience at school and all had had part time jobs. Most interviewees in particular identified part time jobs as helpful preparation because they helped with confidence and developed communication skills.

*'It gives you good people skills; you learn how to interact with people. You learn, you build your confidence basically so you've not got an issue with speaking to, say, people of authority or people that you might not know because you're so used to it!' (Apprentice, 19).*

For three of the interviewees, their work experience led directly to getting a job. When considering wider recruitment, we asked the interviewees how they had got their jobs i.e. the recruitment process and how well they felt school prepared them for this. A range of routes to finding employment opportunities including word of mouth, National Apprenticeship Service website and local newspapers were cited. Those applying for engineering apprenticeships undertook a number of recruitment activities including skype interviews, assessment centres/aptitude tests and face-to-face interviews, video presentation and face-to-face presentation. Interestingly, for a couple who had previously applied and failed, the experience of having already undertaken the activities prepared them for the second attempt.

Some of the companies provided preparation materials. In addition, one of the interviewees undertook an electrical engineering course after failing an initial interview so they would be better prepared for a later application. Most interviewees used the internet to prepare themselves for their interviews and assessment centres. Some interviewees suggested that school could have helped them better prepare for the recruitment process. Typical of this view is:

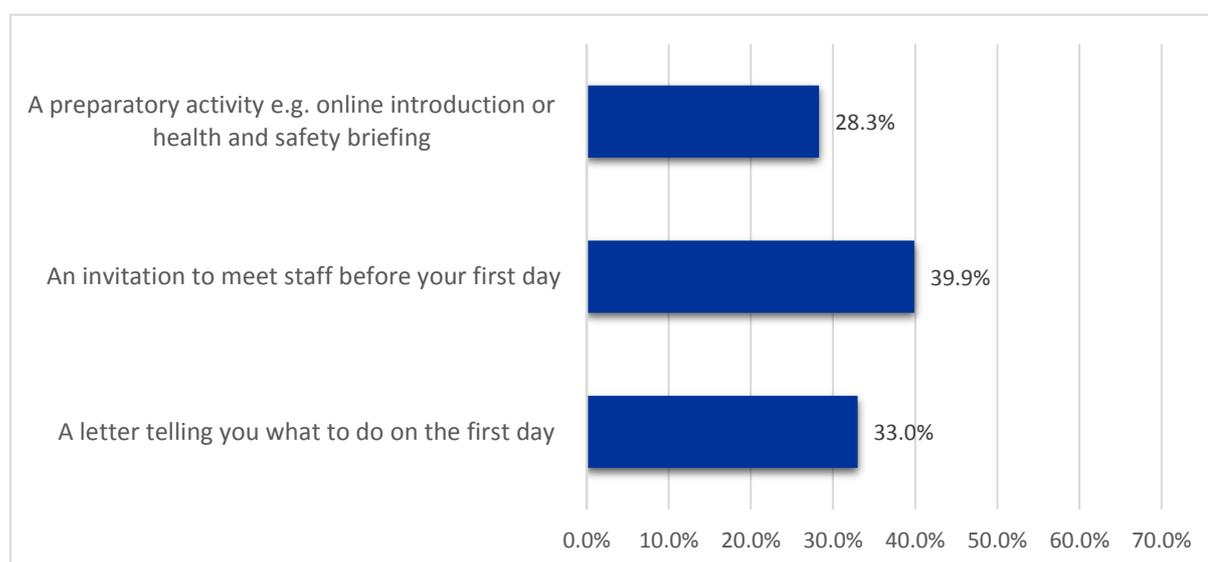
*'You don't get taught this stuff. You're just sort of expected to know it. Like interviewing, online testing and stuff like that. I mean it wasn't really a problem but it was just like, yeah, it was unknown. You're left to figure it out for yourself'. (Apprentice, 19)*

This interviewee added that it could be beneficial to apply for a post, even one that is not particularly interesting, just in order to gain experience of recruitment processes.

## Transition support

We asked the panel respondents about their transition into the workplace or an apprenticeship. To begin with we asked about the support provided before the commencement of work. Figure 4 reveals that just under 40% of respondents stated that they had been given an invitation to meet staff before their first day. The least common pre-work support was a preparatory activity, such as an online introduction, with only 28.3% of respondents identifying this as a type of support that their employer provided. Thirty-three percent of the young people stated that they were sent a letter telling them what to do on their first day.

**Figure 4:** Percentage of young people who identified support from their employer provided prior to starting work. Responses to the question: *'When you got your current job/apprenticeship but before your first day, did you receive any of the following support?'*



Source: Young people panel survey Sample: 509, 16-24 year olds

The interviewees also identified a range of support to help them in their transition into work; much of this mirrors that of the panel respondents. Some found the initial days frustrating and tedious as they spent a lot of time filling in paperwork.

*'It was a little bit, sort of sit in a room all day and fill out a lot of forms and read a lot of booklets about employee guidelines and stuff like that. Which was a little bit much for a first day. To be fair, we have actually fed that back to the company and since they have actually changed that, I believe'* (Apprentice, 22).

Another attended a two-day company induction with other apprentices and graduates; this was used to introduce all the new starters to each other, to tell them about the company and to issue them with protective clothing. This approach, although problematic because the mix of different categories of recruit whose needs

differed, was felt to provide a good introduction to colleagues. One apprentice noted that they were invited into the workplace before their actual start date to collect their clothing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This subsequently gave them a sense of belonging and work identity.

*'I turned up [on the first day], I was in all my correct PPE as soon as I got there at nine-o'clock...it was a case of you can crack straight on and start work straight away which I thought was really good'. (Apprentice, 19).*

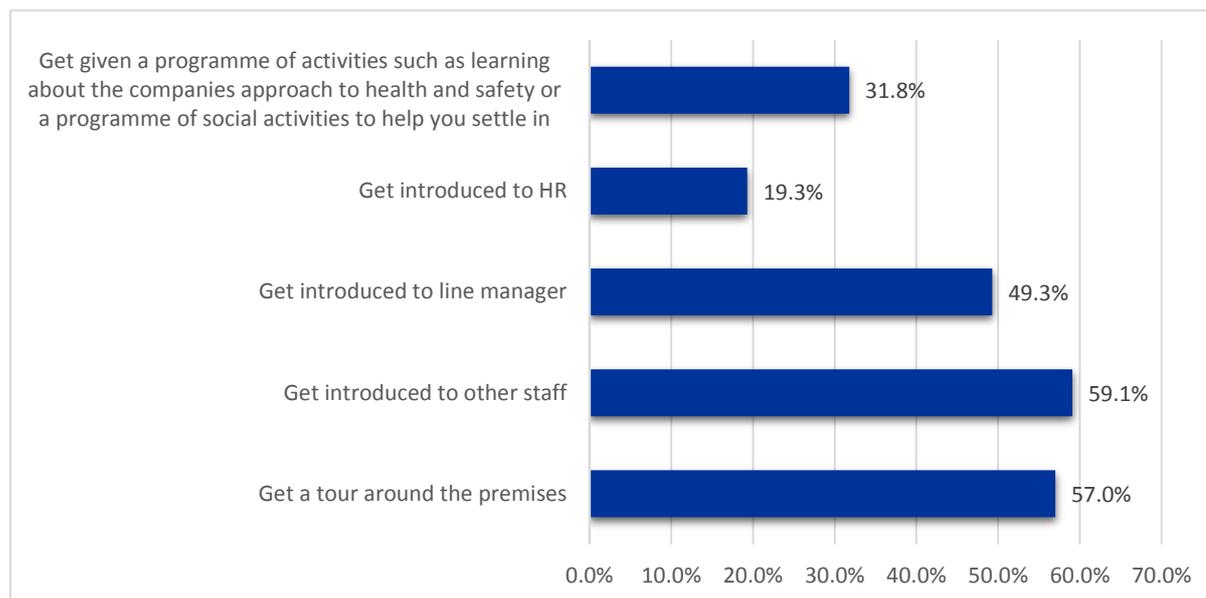
The first day and how new staff were treated is very important, most of the young people felt they had been expected and well supported with a structured programme. However, in one instance an apprentice had had a pre-start induction but when they arrived for their first day, their line manager was on holiday.

*'So, I sort of turned up and no one knew what to do with me. I just turned up out of the blue no one was expecting me. I spent the first couple of weeks not doing a lot really.'* (Apprentice, 19).

This young person's experience had a negative effect on their work identity and subsequently they feel they have not really fitted in and might not be in the right role. They feel they wouldn't choose to talk to their line manager about this but have discussed it with trusted colleagues and others. Although unrepresentative of the sample as a whole, this experience does highlight the importance of effectively supporting young people.

We asked the panel survey respondents about the different types of support they have received when transitioning into their job or apprenticeship. Figure 5 highlights the percentage of respondents that have received different types of support through their induction into the workplace. The most common types of support and preparation activities were; getting introduced to other staff members (59.1%), and getting a tour around the premises (57%). Only 29.3% of the young people were asked about their support needs when they started work, and only 19.3% were introduced to HR, although it must be noted that many SME's will not have a formal HR department.

**Figure 5: Percentage of young people who identified support from their employer at the start of their employment. Responses to the question: ‘When you started your new job did you..?’**



Source: Young people panel survey Sample: 509, 16-24 year olds

We asked the interviewees about the support they had had from school in preparing them for the transition into work.

The interviewees who had previous part time work experience felt better able to manage the practicalities of moving into work than those who had no previous experience. In terms of careers support young people wanted more help with the knowledge required to manage the practicalities of work, particularly around finance and money. The concern about pensions is particularly interesting, many people feel very confused about pensions generally, it appears to be particularly difficult for a young person who will still have potentially 40+ years in the labour market.

*‘We had work experience and stuff like that but it’s not like going into the real world. They don’t even teach you about tax, or mortgages, or anything like that. I mean I still don’t really have that much knowledge of what mortgages and taxes and insurance and all that really is. And you only get that when you walk into the real world from school and no way do they prepare you for that. No way... You’re not prepared at all, you just go to school, do your homework and bits and bobs like that and before you know it you’re in work, and paying bills and stuff like that.’*  
(Young worker, 19)

*‘I think stuff like your pension, and your taxes, I think all of that should definitely be part of your Personal Development, workplace pensions are becoming big now, I know everyone has to have one, and the different kinds, and... people just don’t know really what they’re talking about’* (Apprentice, 19).

The young people we interviewed felt that schools should have a greater role in preparing young people for the transition to work and helping them to become work ready. This connects very strongly with the results that emerged from work that we have carried out in Kent's coastal schools where we undertook eight focus groups with year 11 and 13 pupils (KCC, forthcoming). This research explored young people's expectations for the future and their ideas about future transitions and work readiness.

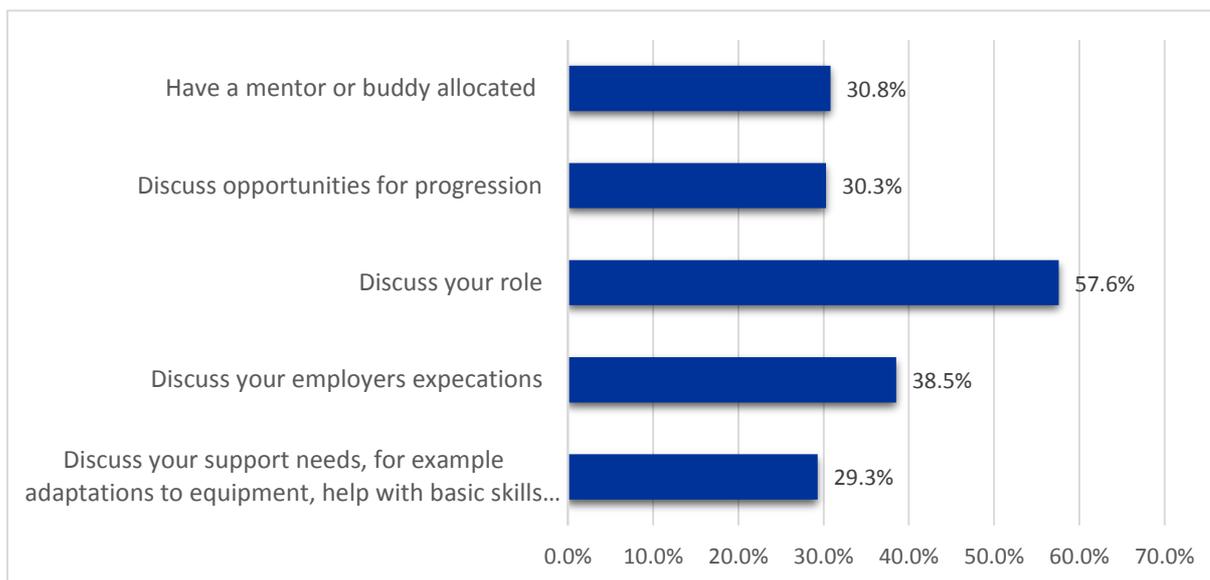
*'We've been told all about bullying and sexual health but I'd rather learn about more practical skills for the future like how to manage my money, pay bills and set up an account that sort of thing'. (Female year 11 pupil).*

*'We need to know about life skills not what they do now, I don't mean the life skills programme I mean like real life skills I remember we have had it from the very start like how to put on a condom, I don't need to know that, I need to learn how to pay my bills'. (Male year 13 pupil).*

### **Pastoral support**

Once they started in the workplace young people had access to a range of opportunities to meet their employer, discuss their role and any other support needs they felt they needed. Figure 6 highlights that the most common of these types of support was an opportunity to 'discuss your role' which 57.6% young people reported they had experienced. However, only close to 30% of the panel respondents were given the opportunity to 'have a mentor or buddy allocated', 'discuss opportunities for progression' and 'discuss their support needs, for example adaptations to equipment and help with basic skills'. This implies that many employers could improve the initial support that they offer to new young employees, although we will explore below different support strategies that employers have implemented.

**Figure 6: Percentage of young people who identified support from their employer at the start of their employment. Responses to the question: ‘When you started your new job did you..?’**



Source: Young people panel survey Sample: 509, 16-24 year olds

For those young workers we interviewed, most of the companies put a range of support in place which the young people valued: buddies, mentors, apprenticeship coordinators and colleagues were seen as important. However, interviewees’ experiences were different, with some having formal and others informal buddy or mentoring schemes. For example, in a workplace that was less structured i.e. the interviewee was not on a formal training programme, the young person tended to rely on mates and other people they identified who would be able to help them.

*‘If I’ve got a question or something I usually go to my mate [who also works at the same place] ...because he is knowledgeable, he’s good with money and answering questions and stuff like that.’ (Young worker, 19).*

Some interviewees had formal buddies who were more experienced trainees or apprentices who had recently gone through similar experiences. This was reported to have worked really well.

*‘Every week on a Wednesday, we get a phone call from the apprentices that have been in the company for a year longer than us and we get the chance to talk about how the week’s gone, if we have any questions, if we have any worries, which is really nice because, especially like we do a job where we have to stand up and talk in front of people, so I think we get little stressed out sometimes. And it’s getting that chance midweek to be like, ‘oh my God, this happened’ and to hear it from their experience is really nice because they’ve been through the same things.’ (Apprentice, 19).*

All the buddies within this company had mentor training as part of their personal development activities and the apprentice will also have this, enabling them to subsequently buddy a new recruit. This provides a strong cycle of support and also prepares the next year's apprentices for roles they will take on in the future but was the only example we found of formal training for mentors or buddies.

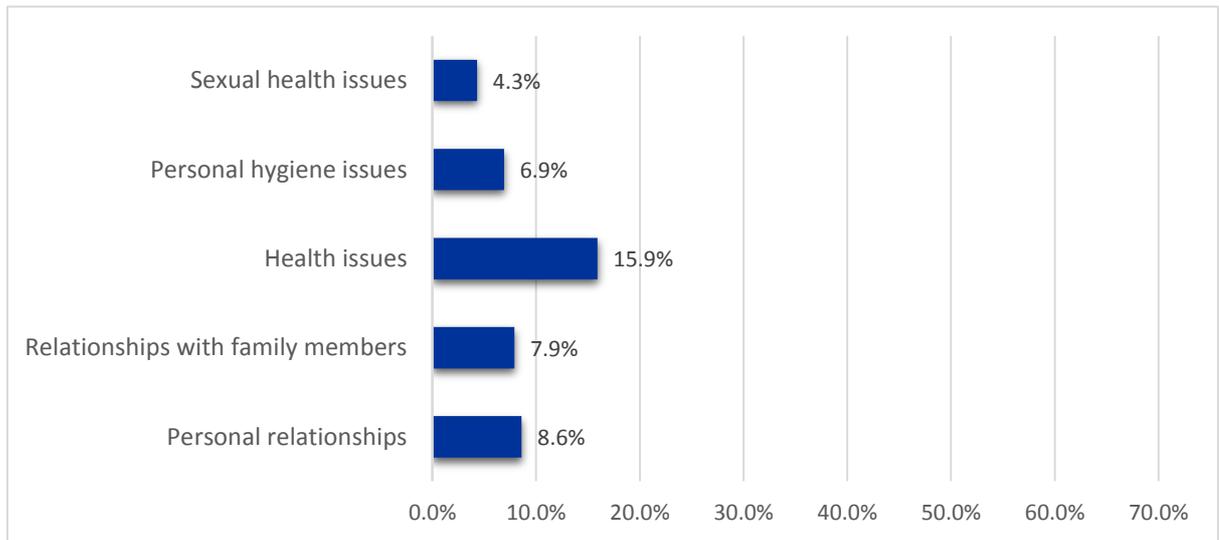
Generally, the young people we talked to felt confident that there was someone in the workplace they could talk to, whether it was a supervisor, manager or someone they identified themselves who would be helpful.

*'All the supervisors and the managers and stuff, they've all got an open door policy. So if you ever need to chat about anything or talk about anything, they're always there. One person in particular is the shift manager [...] he's absolutely incredible. If you ever need to talk to him or if you ever need help with anything, he'll always try his best for you and see what he can do.'*  
(Apprentice, 19).

The young people we spoke to knew there was a range of support available if they needed it (none of them had), they were aware of who to talk to and financial and medical support, for example, was available, as was counselling if required.

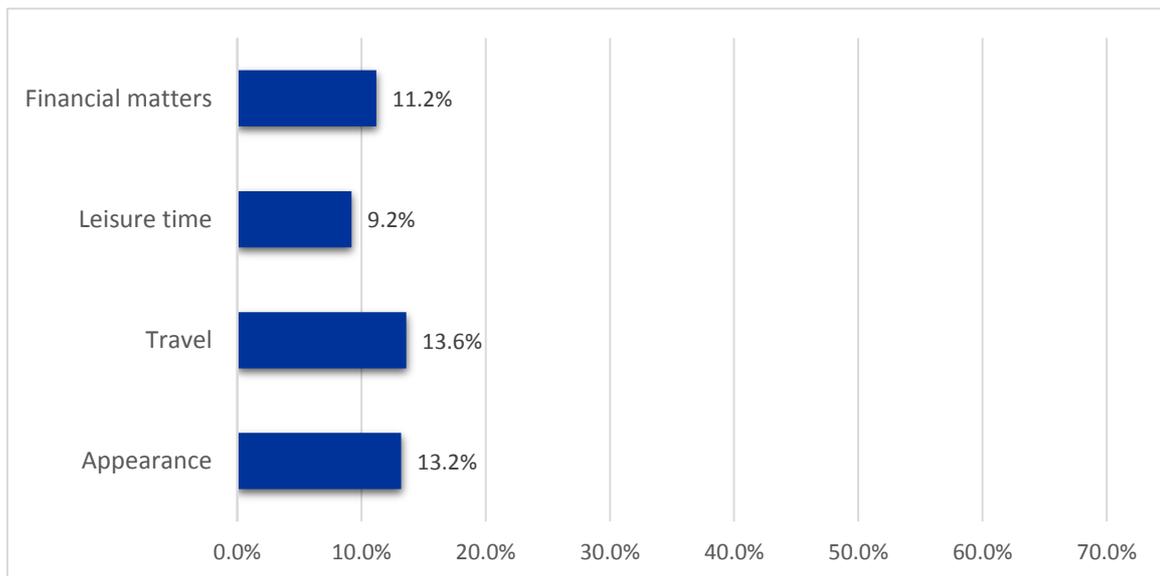
We asked the panel survey respondents about specific topics of pastoral support that they have received assistance with or have had a discussion with their employers about in the early stages of their jobs. Figure 7, Figure 8 and Figure 9 summarise the young people's responses.

**Figure 7: Percentage of young people who identified pastoral support from their employer at the start of their employment. Responses to the question: ‘Early on in your job did you ever discuss or receive help for any of the following personal issues?’**



Source: Young people panel survey Sample: 509, 16-24 year olds

**Figure 8 Percentage of young people who identified pastoral support from their employer at the start of their employment. Responses to the question: ‘Early on in your job did you ever discuss or receive help for any of the following personal issues?’**



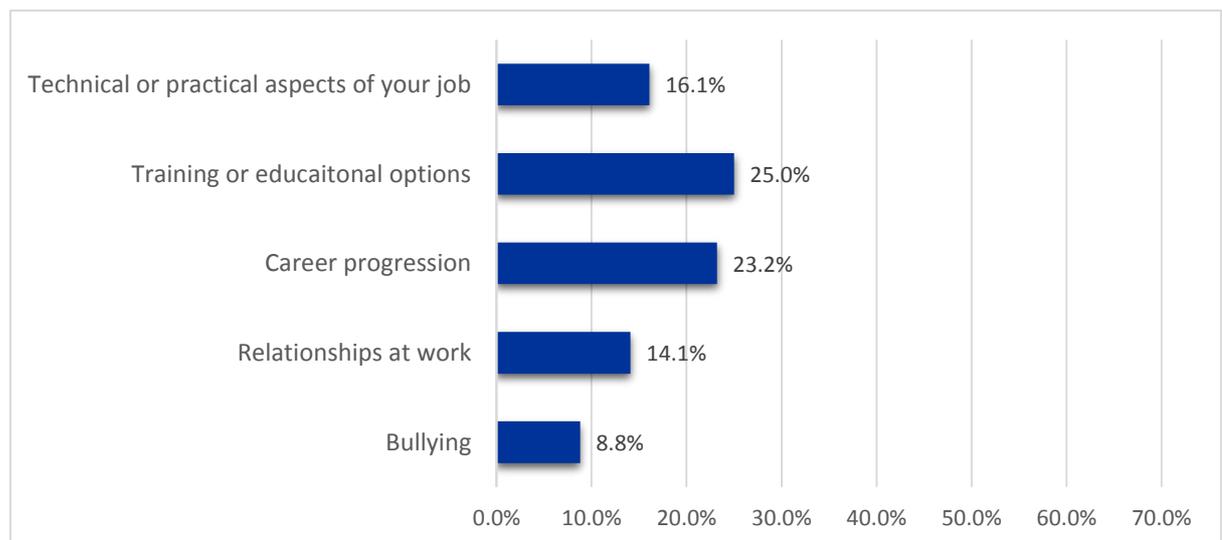
Source: Young people panel survey Sample: 509, 16-24 year olds

Few of the respondents had discussed personal issues with their employers, with less than 10% of respondents stating that they had discussed or received support

with sexual health issues, personal hygiene, relationships with family members, personal relationships and leisure time. Of the more personal topics of pastoral support health issues were the most likely to have been discussed with employers, with 15.9% of respondents identifying this issue as something that they have received support with. Although these are small numbers it does indicate that these are issues for some young people and employers may need to be aware of them.

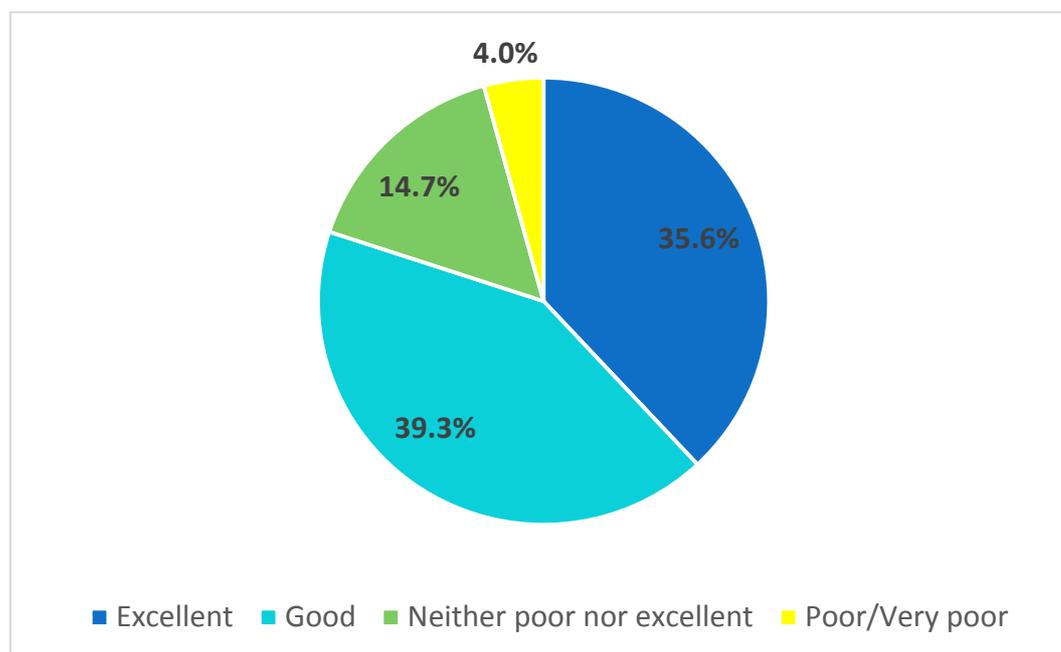
The more traditional work focused support were more commonly identified as topics that the young people had received help with or discussed with their employers than more personal issues. As Figure 9 shows 25% of respondents had discussed or received help with training or educational options, 23.2% had discussed or received help with career progression and 16.1% had discussed or received help with technical or practical aspects of their job. Whereas just 8.8% had experienced support or had a discussion with their employer about bullying.

**Figure 9: Percentage of young people who identified pastoral support from their employer at the start of their employment. Responses to the question: ‘Early on in your job did you ever discuss or receive help for any of the following personal issues?’**



Source: Young people panel survey Sample: 509, 16-24 year olds

**Figure 10: Young people’s overall rating of support received from their employer.**  
Response to the question: ‘How would you rate the support that you received from your employer to help you settle in?’



Source: Young people panel survey Sample: 480, 16-24 year olds (29 respondents stated that they have not received support).

The majority of survey respondents reported that their overall perception of the support provided by employers was positive with 74.9% of respondents describing it as either ‘excellent’ or ‘good’, as Figure 10 reveals. Only 4% reported that support was ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’.

### **Additional support**

We also asked the young people in the panel survey an open ended question ‘**How could the support you received have been improved?**’ The responses have been thematically coded by keywords that the young people used. The most frequent response, cited by 9.2% of the young people, was that they would like ‘*more support and help*’ from employers. Other examples of suggested improvements by multiple respondents were: provision of a ‘*job description*’ about their specific job role; an explanation of ‘*policies*’ or ‘*do’s and don’ts*’; a list of ‘*written down instructions*’; an explanation or ‘*introduction of what the company does*’; and for inductions to be individualised and ‘*more relevant to me*’ or ‘*more relevant to the role*’.

## Section summary

Many survey respondents reported that they had had transitional support from schools and colleges but the quality of that support was not assessed. The interviews with young people enabled us to investigate this in some depth and interviewees were almost unanimously negative about the support received from schools. Two main topics emerged:

- There tended to be a focus on academic achievement and transition to university rather than to employment for our interviewees.
- Topics such as making pension arrangements and dealing with tax and NI contributions were reported as not being adequately discussed at school/college but are very important in working life.

It will be seen in the next section that the employers we interviewed also had negative perceptions of some young people's preparation for employment.

Work experience, in the form of a part-time or 'Saturday' job, can be seen as important in helping to prepare young people for applying for full-time employment. Benefits include the increased confidence that comes from interacting with others and the experience of utilising and developing skills such as customer care skills. Again, it will be seen in the next section that some employers also value the benefits of this type of work experience.

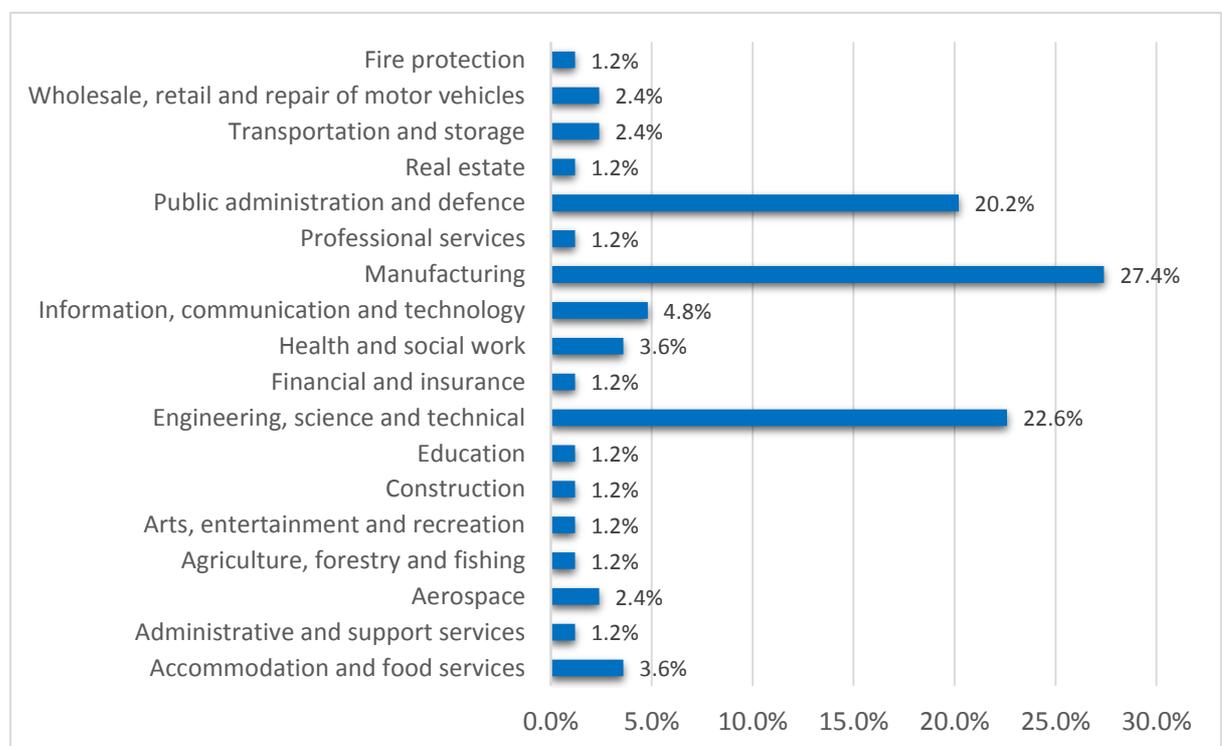
Almost one third of survey respondents had a mentor or buddy appointed when they started work. All interviewees stated that they were aware of someone they could go to for pastoral and/or other kinds of support, although most had not needed to access such support themselves. Sometimes the person offering support was doing so in an 'official' capacity, as someone who had been appointed by the employer or was someone in a managerial role. Sometimes, support was provided more informally, by a 'mate' or older colleague. We identified only one workplace where training had been given for this role. In the following section, we investigate the benefits of employers offering this type of support.

## 5. How do employers support the transitions of young people?

In this section we combine the views gathered from the employer survey participants and from those who participated in interviews. We explore a number of themes, which include: recruitment of young people and strategies for recruitment; work preparation and transition support; and pastoral support.

There were 84 completed responses to the employer's survey, of which 69% stated that they are currently recruiting young people aged 16-24 years old. The employers were from a range of sectors but the majority were involved with manufacturing, engineering, science and technical and public administration and defence. See Figure 11 for the full distribution of employment sectors that were represented in the survey.

**Figure 11: Percentage of employers by sector. Responses to the question: *Please select one of the sectors which broadly describes the nature of your business.***



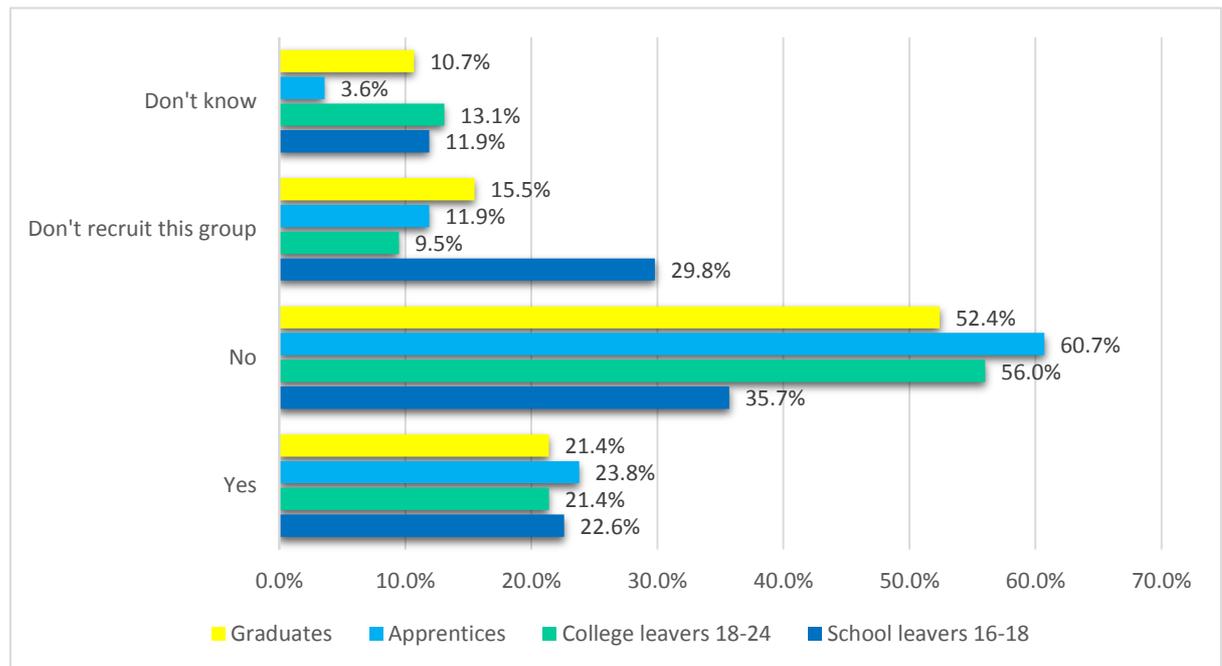
Source: Employers survey, Sample: 84 employers

### Recruitment of young people

The survey asked employers about their recruitment of young people and whether particular groups were more difficult to attract than others, or if they don't recruit certain groups of young people at all. Figure 12 shows that employers appear to have the least difficulty in recruiting apprentices, with 60% responding 'no' their company does not have difficulty recruiting apprentices and 56% do not find it difficult to recruit college leavers. Whereas when employers have stated that they did have

difficulties in recruiting young people, this was broadly a similar proportion of employers for each group of young people. In addition, 30% state that they do not recruit school leavers aged 16-18 at all; this could be the result of the raised school leaving age, further research would be needed to understand employers' recruitment motivations.

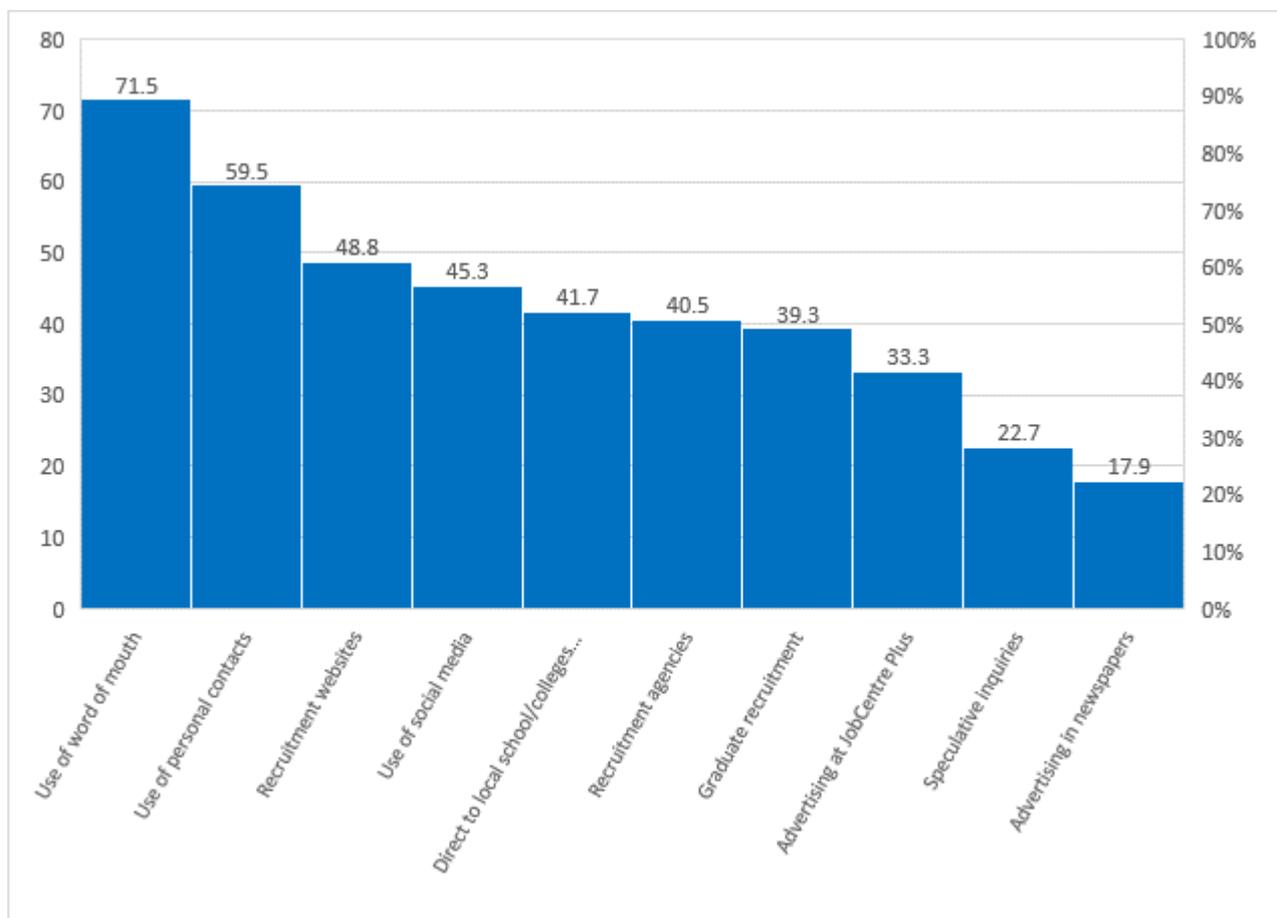
**Figure 12: Percentage of employers having difficulty recruiting graduates, apprentices, college leavers and school leavers. Responses to the question: *Does your company have difficulty recruiting the following groups?***



Source: Employers survey, Sample: 84 employers

We asked the employers which recruitment strategies were the most important for their organisation. Figure 13 shows that over 90% of respondents described 'use of word of mouth' as important or very important and similarly just under 80% state that 'use of personal contacts' is important or very important as a recruitment strategy, suggesting that more informal approaches to recruitment are often preferred. 'Advertising in newspapers' was only considered important or very important by 20% of employers.

**13: Percentage of employers who report recruitment strategies as 'Important' or 'Very important'. Responses to the question: *How important to your company are the following recruitment strategies?***



Source: Employers survey, Sample: 84 employers

The employers we interviewed also indicated that 'word of mouth' was an important recruitment strategy for them. Some companies particularly valued recommendations from existing employees

*'We tend to use Jobcentre Plus but the best recruitment we've had is where it's from word of mouth. Where people currently working for us know of someone who might be looking. And that tends to be more productive' (MD, Manufacturing).*

Some reported that they like to build relationships with local schools and colleges in order to build word of mouth to promote opportunities that they have available, often through providing work experience.

*'We've got one good relationship with a school, which seems to be coming through to fruition. We've got one trainee going through who's in the upper sixth form now of last year at school, so there's a hope there. There's another*

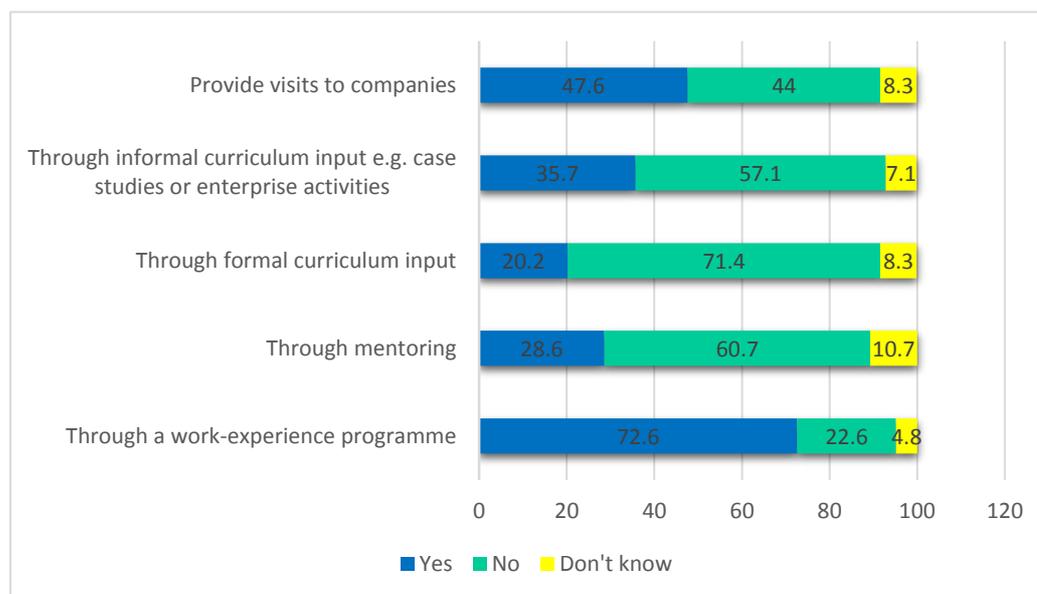
*one due to come for work experience next year who seems quite promising. They're feeding from the same school, so word of mouth is being passed down the school and people are saying, "well I can go there for training, work experience." (Resource manager, Manufacturing).*

Engaging schools has been seen by some interviewees as a positive way to promote sectors such as engineering.

*'We do a phenomenal amount of work with schools. I mean, me personally and other people in the organisation, right down to primary school level ... talking about what a fantastic career engineering is.'* (CEO, Manufacturing).

The online survey asked employers about how they interact with schools and colleges in their local area. Figure 14 shows the survey responses from employers about the different approaches to school engagement and reveals that if employers are engaging it is most likely 'through a work-experience programme' with 72.6% providing work experience placements.

**Figure 14: Percentage of employers that engage with schools. Responses to the question: Do you engage with schools and colleges in the following ways?**



Source: Employers survey, Sample: 84 employers

Just under half of surveyed employers stated that they invite school visits to their company, but only 20.2% engage with schools 'through formal curriculum input'. Whilst just over a third of surveyed employers get involved with schools 'through informal curriculum input e.g. case studies or enterprise activities'.

However, some interviewees observed that, with regard to engaging with schools, there is a conflict of interest because on the one hand, schools are expected to work with employers to meet Ofsted requirements but at the same time schools want to

keep young people in school post-16 who they perceive will do well academically. There is a tension then between supporting young people vocationally, e.g. through apprenticeships, and more academically, e.g. through continuing education in schools such as A-Levels or B-Techs. However, one employer observed that *'when I get the opportunity to speak to employers, I always say, you know, 'don't moan that young people aren't coming to you prepared if you're not prepared to offer them some kind of work experience' (CEO, Manufacturing).#*

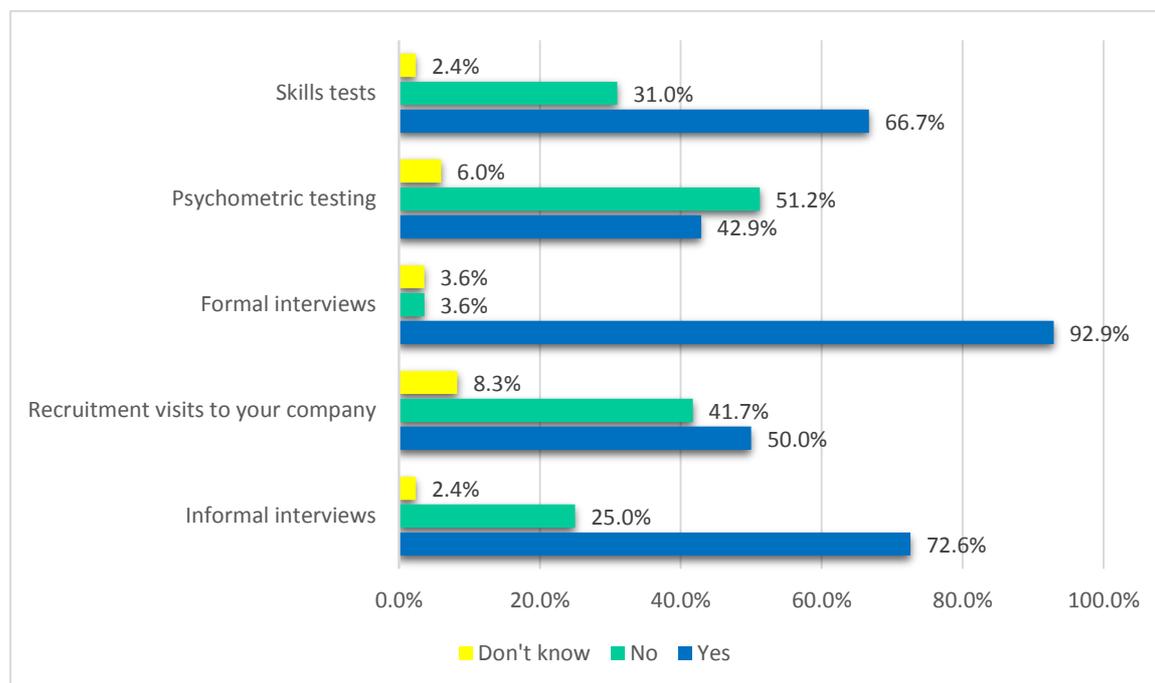
Yet another employer thought that schools can view employer engagement as something of a 'tick box' exercise: *'I just feel schools and colleges have got to find somewhere [for students to undertake work experience] ... we've said, 'look, what are they interested in?' and, I know it's difficult but it's been a case of 'just put them anywhere' (HR Manager).*

There was a sense from some interviewees that colleges were less responsive in working with employers to help them fill their vacancies and they would welcome more opportunities to provide work experience to college students: *'FE colleges aren't particularly proactive in coming back to us and saying, 'we've got this really good young person, you want to take him?' Or even for work experience' (HR Manager).*

Another employer asked rhetorically what the motivation of colleges is, wondering whether it is *'to deliver knowledge'* or *'to develop well rounded individuals'* or: *'is there a drive to ensure that actually 'we [the college] get someone out at the end of it 'cos only then we get paid our funding' (Plant manager, Manufacturing).* The employer proposed that it is the latter.

The online survey asked employers about their recruitment process and Figure 15 shows that formal interviews were the most commonly cited process for assessing candidates with 92.9% of employers using them. Psychometric testing was used by 42.9% of respondents.

**Figure 15: Percentage of employers that use recruitment approaches. Responses to the question: *When recruiting do you use any of the following?***



Source: Employers survey, Sample: 84 employers

Interviewees discussed different methods of recruiting young employees. One indicated that they had had some success using a recruitment company that used Facebook because they could directly target potential candidates. This employer further indicated that when candidates had successfully gone through the majority of the recruitment process, they would:

*‘Invite them back in to do a work-based assessment. That is normally inviting that delegate in for a morning and they will be asked to, obviously, just integrate with the team in the office.’ (Director, Real Estate)*

Some employers we interviewed focused on the aims of recruitment as well as the methods, often indicating that recruiting the ‘right person’ with the ‘right behaviours and attitudes’ was most important to them. There was focus on strengths-based approaches rather than competence-based ones.

*‘We’re not really just looking for how good they are with spanners; we are looking at behaviours and attitudes. You can have the best engineer in the world but if they don’t want to learn or can’t be bothered, you’re gonna struggle. You get the right people who are keen when they come in, and they want to learn and do well.’ (Trainer, Food Manufacturing)*

Another employer observed that the challenge is *'finding the right people with the right skills and right attitude. Yes, it is, it's the right attitude'* (Resource manager, Manufacturing). For some employers, examples of extracurricular activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, Scouts and Saturday jobs were evidence that young people 'want to do something' and demonstrates that they want to work. They indicated they were interested in what young people do in their personal lives, how they conduct themselves, if they have researched the company. It was identified that people who were recommended by existing employees were more likely to have an appropriate work ethic. There was a concern by some employers that 'getting up in the morning' was an issue for some young people and graduates. This was addressed with young workers and was often but not always, effectively managed.

*'I think, some of them will get told off two or three times and then it 'clicks' and they're there. Others, it never clicks and unfortunately recently we've had to let somebody go because he just couldn't do it. It is a shame but particularly when you've got a team of workers waiting to go out and they're waiting for one person, it's just not fair. In those situations, it's a bit of a 'three strikes and you're out' really'.* (HR, Local Authority).

In an attempt to understand the psychology of young people better, one employer found a seminar about 'millennials' i.e. those born around the time of the millennium, really useful:

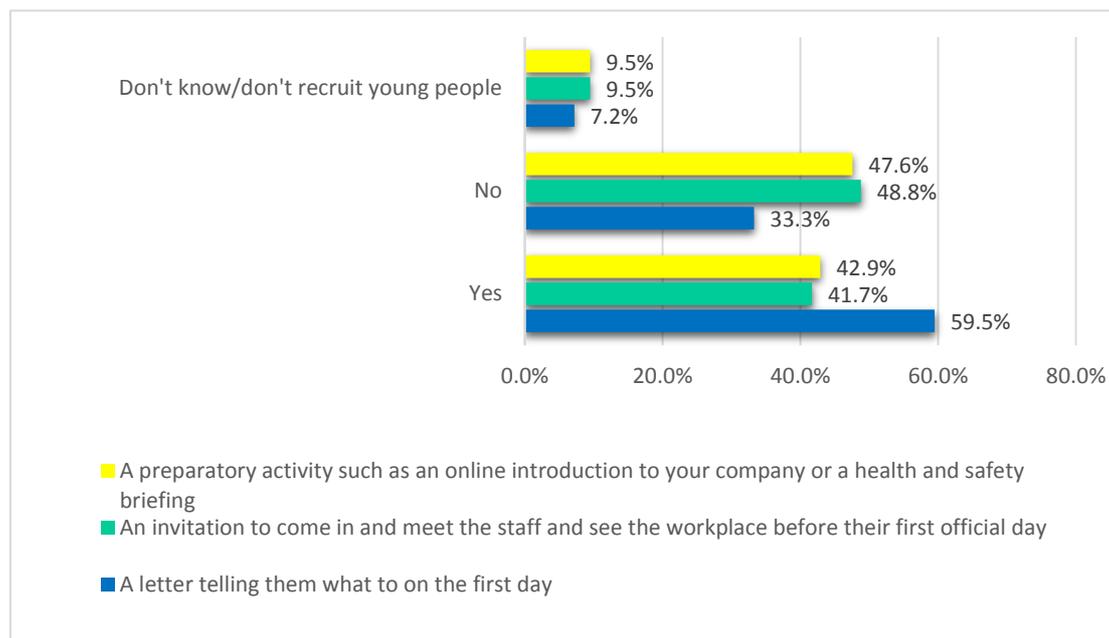
*'I was really glad I went on [the seminar] because it made you see things from their point of view and the fact that a lot of the late teenagers, early 20s now, have this opinion that they are owed something and it's 'you owe me a job' rather than 'I'm gonna work hard for you'.'* (Director, Engineering, Science and Technical).

This employer thought that the seminar helped them understand young recruits' attitudes and therefore helped them to address them.

### **Work preparation and transition support**

The online survey asked the employers about the information that they provide to young employees before they commence work. Figure 16 shows that the most common preparatory information was 'a letter telling them what to do on the first day' with just under 60% of respondents stating that their organisation provides this. Almost 43% provide 'a preparatory activity such as an online introduction to their company or a health and safety briefing' and 41.7% provide 'an invitation to come in and meet the staff and see the workplace before their first official day'.

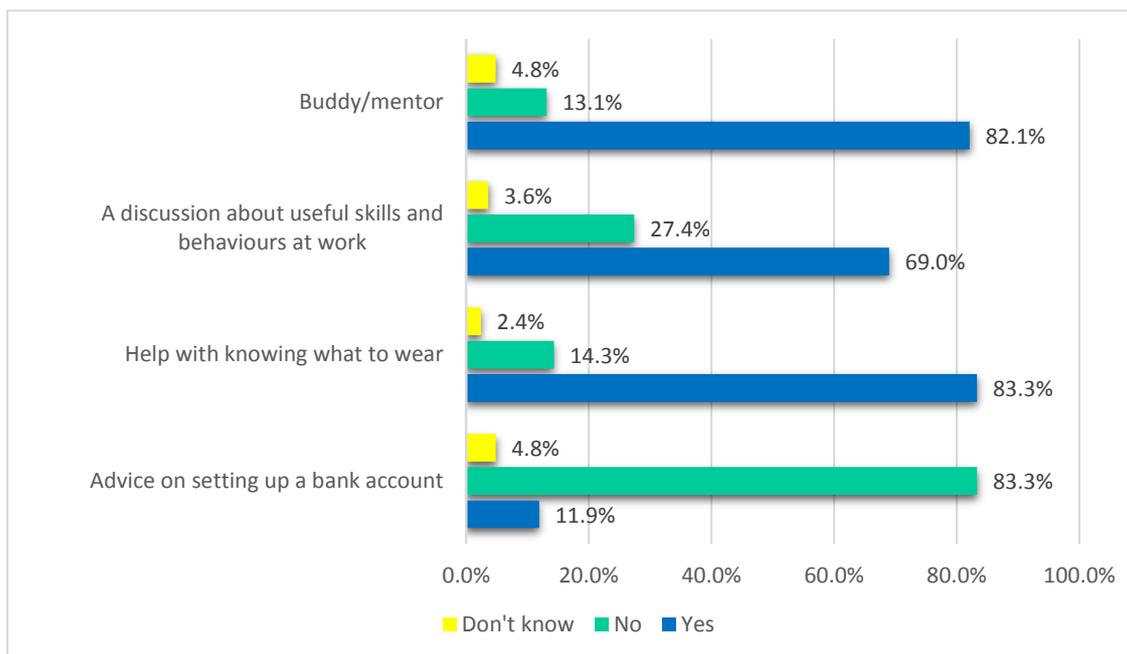
**Figure 16: Percentage of employers that provide information to young employees before they begin work. Responses to the question: *When you recruit a young person do you offer any of the following?***



Source: Employers survey, Sample: 84 employers

Figure 17 shows what types of support employers offer young employees before they start work. 83.3% state that they provide ‘help with knowing what to wear’. Encouragingly, in terms of this research project, just over 81% connect the young people with a ‘Buddy or mentor’, and 69% have a discussion with the young employee ‘about useful skills and behaviours at work’. Just 11.9% of employers offer young employers ‘advice on setting up a bank account’ before they begin work. This is interesting as finance and having a better understanding of money was something that young people wanted more information.

**Figure 17: Percentage of employers that provide pastoral support to young people before they have started work. Responses to the question: *Before a young person starts their new job do you offer any support for the following?***



Source: Employers survey, Sample: 84 employers

All of the interviewed employers reported that their organisation had implemented a buddy or mentoring system, although sometimes this was through informal and/or management channels. One company provided all new apprentices with a buddy. This was especially important for those recruits who were not office based and may be working with teams out in the community or on site.

*'We've just found that rather than just stick them with the team and that's it, it works far better if they have an individual who can be there to help guide them. Somebody that they can go to if they've got any issues within that workplace or within that team, so they don't feel isolated. They tend to have somebody whose office based who has responsibility for them per se but if they're out and about they need somebody to buddy up with.'* (HR, Local Authority).

Sometimes the mentor was someone who was senior, in small companies this was often a manager, while in others it was someone on the shop floor who could provide support and advice around technical activities related to the job.

*'What we've tended to do in the past is to get someone who's a bit older, a bit more wise, somebody who's seen everything. But somebody who has not got an actual link with them, not actually part of their management system so if they've got an issue with anyone, they can talk to them. So they understand it's done on a confidential basis.'* (Trainer, Food Manufacturing).

Although the previous, young people, section discussed an organisation which provided training for apprentices to act as buddies, the research with employers did not find any examples of such training. One employer commented:

*'I think if we had had put these [mentors] into... [if we said] 'we're going to stick you in a classroom and teach you how to be a teacher', it wouldn't have worked. So we built on their world, life experience'. (Plant Manager, Manufacturing).*

Similarly, another employer noted;

*'We give them a bit of a brief overview of what mentoring is, of what a mentor is, but we don't actually do any training. It's the guys on the shop floor really, somebody they can just go to'. (Trainer, Food Manufacturing)*

Nonetheless, employers reported that care was taken to get the right mentor. For example, in one company, because female engineering apprentices are in a minority, they aim to ensure that each had a female mentor as they felt this would be most appropriate.

Employers were asked what the benefits of mentoring are. A number stated that the company benefits from having happier employees. Typical of this view is the following:

*'The advantages are that employees are happier at work. Any employee who is happy at work will work better, more effectively, more efficiently' (MD, Manufacturing).*

Another employer concurred:

*'We give them training, we pay them well, we show them respect. And by giving them this personal attention, we've found that they're really willing to work hard and dedicated to be part of the team' (MD, Engineering, science and technology).*

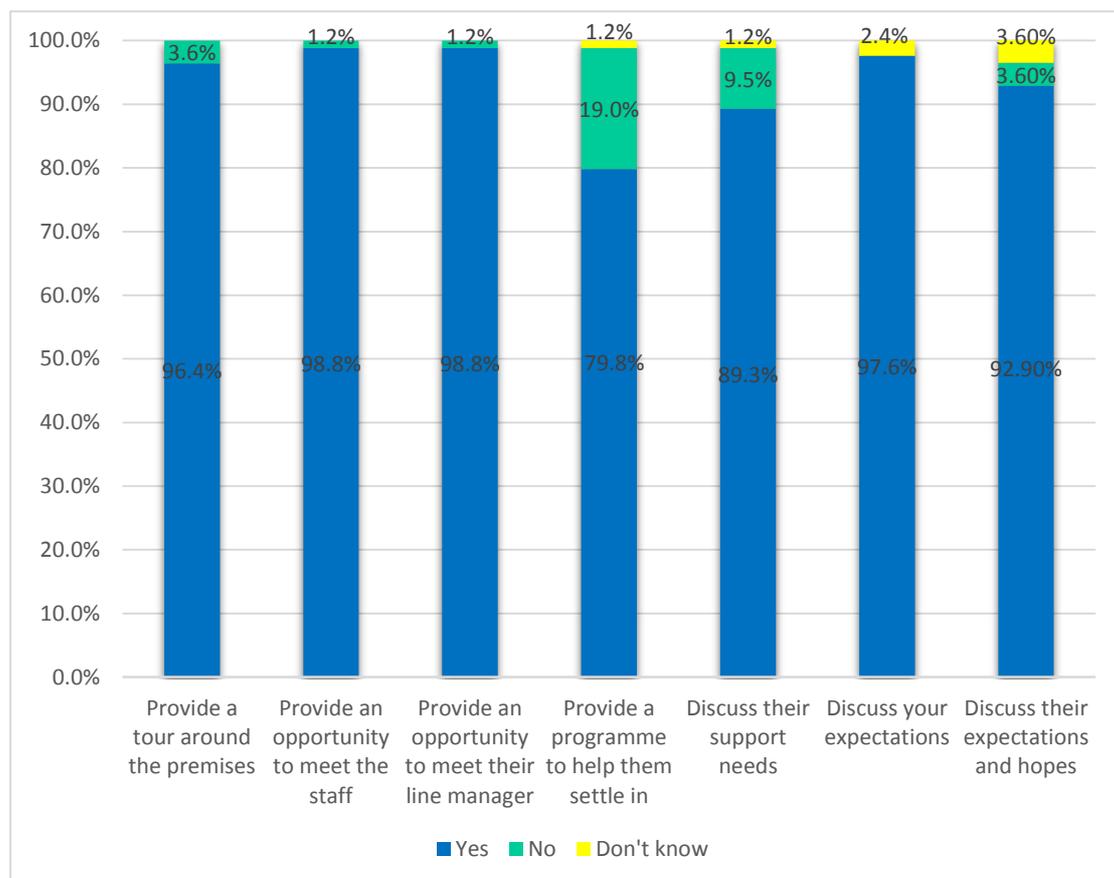
Some employers noted that mentors also benefit from their activities:

*'Those individuals we chose as mentors, it was almost like a recognition of our trust in those individuals ... and actually what I found was that those mentors learned so much from mentoring those youngsters. It became a pride thing. We saw huge changes in those individuals' (Plant Manager, Manufacturing).*

Some employers suggested that although mentoring or buddy schemes were made available, many young people informally chose to talk to a more experienced staff member who they thought would be of most use to them rather than an 'official' mentor.

The survey asked about the support that employers offer young people once they have commenced employment. Figure 18 highlights that most employers do provide a range of opportunities during the first six months of a young employee's employment. The least common support, which is still provided by 79.8% of respondents, was providing 'a programme to help them settle in', with the most common support, which was provided by 98.8% of employers, 'an opportunity to meet the staff'.

**Figure 18: Percentage of employers that provide pastoral support to young people once they have started work. Responses to the question: *During the first six months of a young person's employment do you offer any of the following?***



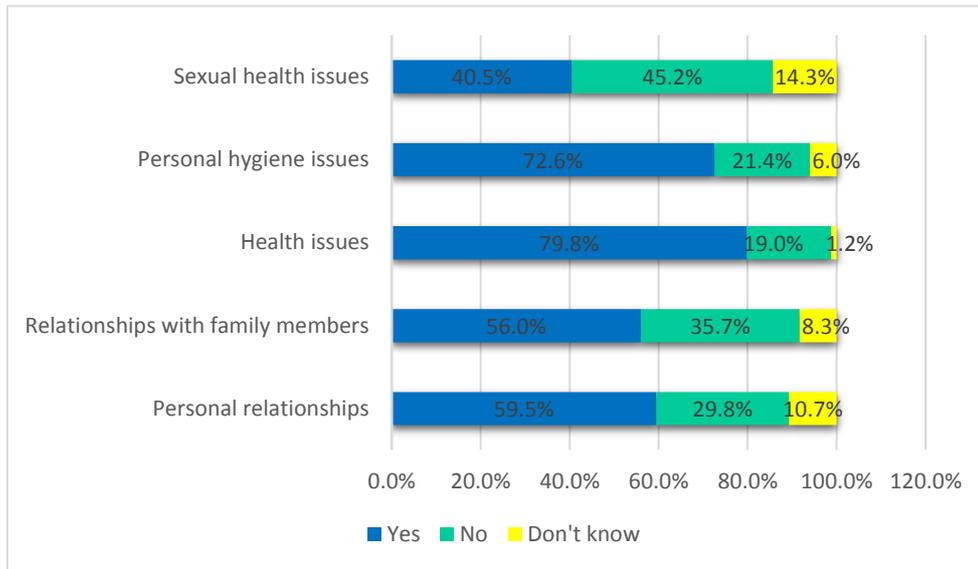
Source: Employers survey, Sample: 84 employers

### Personal pastoral support

The survey also asked about more specific personal issues of pastoral support. Figures 19, 20 and 21 summarise the employers' offer of support for a range of personal issues that young people might need some support with. In Figure 19 it is clear that a high majority of employers, just under 80%, would be able to provide support with 'health issues' whilst 72.6% would provide support if a young employee had 'personal hygiene issues'. Furthermore 40.5% would offer assistance if a young person had an issue related to 'sexual health', and just under 60% stated that they

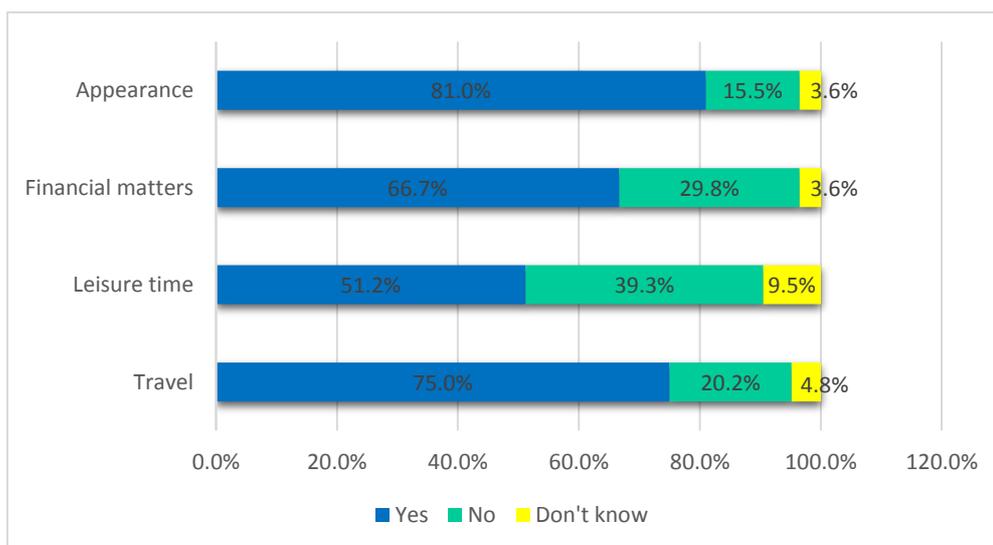
would provide support to a young employee dealing with 'personal relationship' issues.

**Figure 19: Percentage of employers that employ someone specifically to support young people with specific issues. Responses to the question: *If a young employee needed to discuss or receive support for the following personal issues would your company be able to provide assistance?***



Source: Employers survey, Sample: 84 employers

**Figure 20: Percentage of employers that employ someone specifically to support young people with specific issues. Responses to the question: *If a young employee needed to discuss or receive support for the following personal issues would your company be able to provide assistance?***



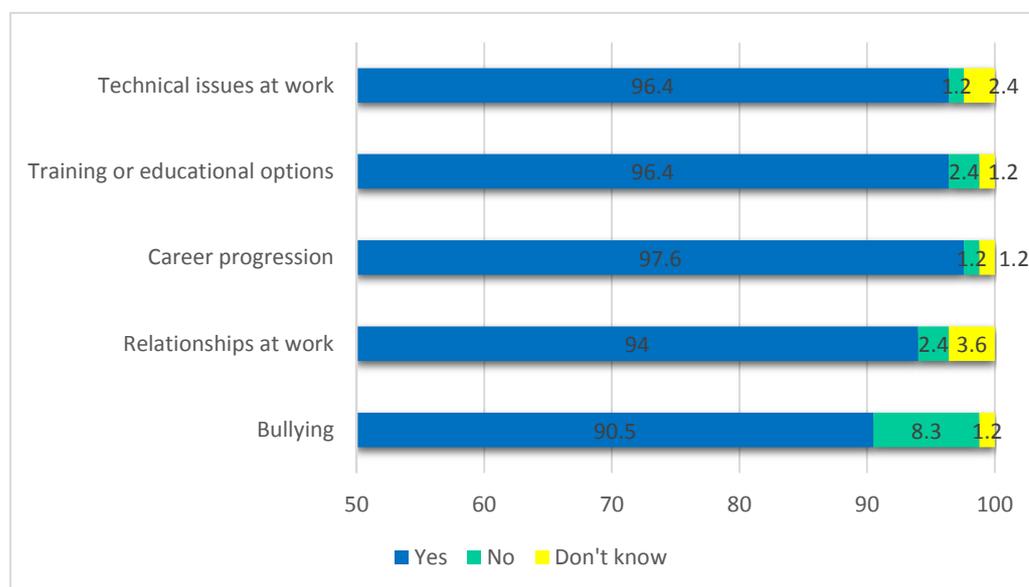
Source: Employers survey, Sample: 84 employers

Figure 20 presents further responses from employers on a range of support issues and it is encouraging that employers state that they would offer support on a broad range of issues. 'Appearance' for example is the most common personal issue, with 81%, of employers reporting that they would be willing to provide support. Financial matters were considered by 66.7% of employers as an issue that they would provide young people with support.

We also asked employers about other issues which might arise in the workplace that they would offer support with. Figure 21 shows that 97.6% responded that they would be able to provide assistance with issues related to 'career progression' whilst 96.4% would help with 'technical issues at work' and 'training or educational options'. Support with 'relationships at work' and 'bullying' is offered by over 90% of respondents, overall most employers are prepared to offer support on a wide range of issues. Employers who were interviewed suggested that it was important for their workforce to be happy and as such if they could help with this they were prepared to put in the effort. One employer commented:

*'I would say people [employers] get the biggest benefits when people are happier at work. I think they feel cared for'. (Director, Engineering, science and technical).*

**Figure 21: Percentage of employers that employ someone specifically to support young people with specific issues. Responses to the question: *If a young employee needed to discuss or receive support for the following personal issues would your company be able to provide assistance?***

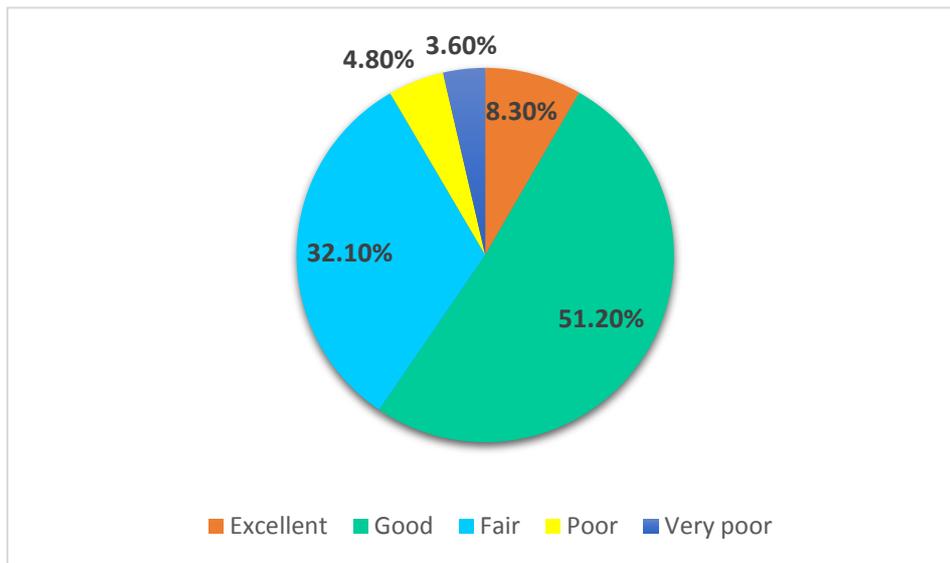


Source: Employers survey, Sample: 84 employers

## Overall support

The online survey asked employers about how they would rate their overall support for young people who are transitioning from education to employment. As Figure 22 displays 59.5% of surveyed employers rate their current support for young people as 'excellent' or 'good', whilst 32.1% rate it as fair and 8.4% perceive it as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

**Figure 22: Employers rating of their support to help young people transition from education to work. Responses to the question: *How would you rate the support (for example about financial or personal issues) that your company provides to help young people make the transition from education to work?***



Source: Employers survey, Sample: 84 employers

We also asked the survey respondents how they might improve their support of young people and the qualitative comments were very insightful. For example, several suggested that personal issues, such as financial management, were outside the remit of their responsibility and should have been addressed when young people were in school or college. One survey respondent asked:

*'We'll provide support but really you want me to sort out sexual health issues in an SME? Talk about opening bank accounts? Skills for life should have been provided by the school, isn't that what PSHE is meant to do?'* (Survey respondent).

There were other comments that suggested that young people should take responsibility for themselves, especially for their own financial management as two employers state:

*'We would not employ someone who isn't able to adapt to the workplace environment. While we're supportive and helpful in work, I expect a young person to be responsible and show initiative. We're a small company of 3 and busy, so don't have time or inclination to hand hold a young person into work. I don't mean to sound harsh but we're a business, not a nursery'. (Survey respondent).*

*'We do not offer this, I would expect them to be able to manage a bank account and not have to support them with these issues. We deal with relationships if they come under grievance or disciplinary but they are given clear guidelines on expected behaviour in the interview and also at induction'. (Survey respondent).*

Other employers did recognise that they could do more to support young people with different aspects of their provision as they explain:

*'We could do more, we could offer more assistance with financial matters, e.g. saving, pensions, etc.' (Survey respondent).*

*'Currently support is offered on an informal basis but we could consider putting training courses in place if we employed more young people but at this time we need people with higher skills'. (Survey respondent).*

*'Increase awareness regarding the support opportunities available to a young person so that these resources are clear to the individual from day one'. (Survey respondent).*

Employers who were interviewed were able to provide examples of the range of support they can offer to young people. Many of the examples of support discussed in interviews with employers focused around the job role and training but there were also many examples of the provision of pastoral support:

*'We had a recent instance where [a colleague] seemed to have been underperforming a little bit and struggling. As we delved a little bit deeper we've found that he's been struggling at home financially and that's impacting in the workplace. And as we've managed to uncover that and talk through it we've offered advice and things.'*

*'We had a guy here, he got married and then his wife was ill and we spoke to him and made his work more flexible'.*

*'We've had key people whose partners might be suffering ill health and we've paid for the partner to go and see a consultant because we want the person here, not having to go to the hospital or worrying that their partner might be ill.'*

*'We've had people with financial issues that we've got some professional help for'.*

*'I've had two members of staff who, well they just needed counselling, they needed help quite desperately it turned out and we paid for them to have counselling'.*

*'We've had one who had particular financial problems and we helped him with those'.*

*'One chap found that he had a young child that he didn't know about that he had to help to look after because the mother no longer could and we gave him time off to speak to social services and things'.*

A number of employers observed that they provided pastoral support for all staff regardless of age. Typical of this is the view that: *'older workers can go through difficult times as younger workers can'* (HR, Local Authority). The need to treat everyone the same also emerged in some of the qualitative responses in the survey, as one employer's response exemplifies:

*'We treat everybody the same. Young people get the same wage as older people (we are not using reduced minimum wages) based on performance. That said we treat all staff really well, so no real need to make special allowances for young people.'* (Survey respondent).

Nonetheless, some employers thought that young people had particular needs because of their age. For example, one employer observed that although all staff might need pastoral support at some stage in their career:

*'For the younger staff, I think having someone, an adult, although typically they're young adults, that they can talk to, that's not their parents, can make a big difference.'* (Director, Engineering, science and technical).

However, another employer noted that some young people are very mature as a result of the experiences they have had in life while others might be less so. This employer observed further:

*'There are some eighteen and nineteen year olds that are having children, there are some eighteen and nineteens that are still, you know, mum takes them a cup of tea in the morning in bed, gets them up. And those people cope with things very differently.'* (Plant Manager, Manufacturing).

The employer's role, this interviewee remarked, is to recognise the type of support different young people might need, observing that *'one size doesn't fit all'* and that support should be individualised.

Employers who were interviewed were asked what they thought constituted good practice in supporting young people in the workplace. The responses tended to focus

on employer attitudes and behaviours that supported the concrete practices. For example, having an open door was considered effective but it was noted that:

*'You've got to follow through with what you said you were going to do. It's easy to say, 'if ever you want to talk, come in and talk' but if every time they knock on the door you're too busy ... they're not going to come again because you're clearly showing you're not willing to do it.'* (MD, Manufacturing).

Another employer observed that it is necessary to provide feedback confirming what action has been taken. This employer also observed that maintaining confidentiality is important. Some employers stressed the importance of holding regular reviews in order to ensure that people have an opportunity and are encouraged to discuss any problems or concerns they have.

### **Section summary**

Our engagement with employers has shown that many organisations do provide pastoral support to young people and others. Many examples of support, ranging from enabling flexible working when a particular need occurred to paying for counselling for an employee or family member, have been highlighted.

Some organisations aim to minimise the potential for issues to arise in the workplace through the use of effective recruitment strategies which ensure that the 'right' people with appropriate behaviours and attitudes are recruited. It is considered important to 'know' the potential recruit if possible and employers had developed strategies to achieve this. These included developing good relationships with 'feeder' schools and colleges, acting on word of mouth recommendations from current employees, and offering candidates a short period of work experience to identify if they 'fit' into the organisation. However, while word of mouth recommendations appear popular with some of the employers, this practice can be exclusionary because many young people will not have the necessary connections.

The research as a whole only identified one example of mentors being trained. However, we found no evidence suggesting there was a need for such training. Employers appear to take their mentoring and support responsibilities seriously, recognising the benefits for business from the effective provision of mentoring support as well as benefits for the individuals concerned.

It can be concluded from the study that effective practice in the provision of pastoral support is many faceted. There appear to be strategies which are effective such as having an open door policy and holding regular reviews. However, the research has highlighted a need to provide feedback on supporting activities and to ensure that actions are followed through.

Two examples of projects which support the care and development of young people in the workplace were identified during this research which it was felt should be

highlighted in the report. One is Investors in Young People (IIYP). The other is YouNG, both are briefly summarised below:

### **Investors in Young People (IIYP)**

*What is it?* A recognition framework much like the well-known Investors in People. It is currently only available in Scotland.

*Why was it developed?* It was launched in 2014 in response to high levels of youth unemployment identified in the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce.

*What does it do?* Employers are supported to attract and recruit, support and develop and retain young employees. They can be supported through three levels of award.

#### Stage 1 – Developed

- Appropriate principles and practices are in place and communicated. Young people and Leaders know what is expected of them.

#### Stage 2 – Established

- Young People and Leaders are actively engaged in ensuring the appropriateness and consistency of the principles and practices.

#### Stage 3 – Advanced

- Young People and Leaders actively drive positive outcomes, taking ownership of the principles and practices.

*Where can I get more information?* <http://www.investorsinyoungpeople.scot/>

### **YouNG**

*What is it?* A project that employs one Year 9 pupil from each of the seven secondary schools in Rushcliffe, Nottingham for 2 hours per week for 15 months in paid youth development employment. The project has developed to include the employment of an apprentice and an intern. The ethos is: For YouNG. By YouNG. Be YouNG.

*Why was it developed?* YouNG had a number of formative influences including the Olympic legacy and a desire to improve the employability of young people in Rushcliffe Borough.

*What does it do?* Young people apply for a job as YouNG Ambassadors and are recruited as the result of a formal interview. They work in social media and, with the

help of other young people, help with employer engagement, the development of work experience opportunities, and community activities such as a recent Young Market in which young people made and sold items and showcased young entertainers.

*Where can I get more information?* <http://www.weareyoung.org.uk/>

## 6. Discussion

The research has provided an opportunity to compare and contrast the views of young people and employers about the range and type of support which is required in the workplace to ensure effective transition. Young people are generally happy with the support that they receive from employers but feel that schools could have done more to help them, particularly around some of the issues that will be new to them such as managing their finances and understanding and making decisions about pensions. These activities are core parts of working life for everyone and need addressing so that young people can make informed decisions about their financial futures.

Although young people can have and do experience a number of issues when transitioning into work many of the comments focused more on job related issues than personal issues. They were aware of the formal and informal support available to them but often selected whom they wanted to talk to about their particular issues. The young people usually had access to a range of support, but often most valuable was that of peers, young people slightly older and more experienced than themselves.

Employers provided a great deal of support to schools to help raise and build young peoples' awareness of what the world of work was like. They felt that schools could do more to help young people with this and were critical of work readiness that young people were bringing to the workplace.

There were some employers who had given great thought to the needs of young people and were exploring generational issues and focusing on how 'millennials' might need different support.

Most employers provided buddies or mentors, these could be formal or informal. This suggests that employers value these types of activities and recognise that additional support is important, especially that from someone who is not a manager. Many smaller companies have close relationships with all their staff and provide an 'open-door' approach to help. Generally, employers do not differentiate between the pastoral needs of younger and older workers, many offered extensive help to those that needed it on an as and when basis. Although not all provided the support in house, they were aware of experts they could bring as needed.

The examples above of YouNG and Investors in Young People are good examples of strategies that can be used to encourage employers to recruit and invest in young people. There will be many more projects such as this, but it has not been in the scope of the project to map these more extensively.

Below are recommendations that we have drawn from the research. These recommendations attempt to conceptualise the key findings and represent them as a top ten list of activities that can support young peoples' transition into work.

## 7. Recommendations: Ten activities that can help young people to transition into work

- **Schools** need to provide more support for young people around financial preparation for work. Young people consistently reported this as a gap in their knowledge and money and financial management is a significant skill required to successfully transition into work.
- Work-experience and Saturday jobs should be encouraged by **schools**, parents and young people themselves. They offer an insight into working life, help build confidence, work readiness, communication skills and demonstrate that that young people want to work.
- **Employers** should review and consider the pre-work activities they use. Preparatory activities are a useful way of making the young person feel part of the company and can be used to break up the induction programme and make it more manageable. Induction is an important part of helping young people to make the transition from education and settle into work.
- **Employers** should provide opportunities for new young employees to meet with other young workers, especially if it is predominantly an older workforce. These opportunities help to build informal networks and enable young people to benefit from people like them who may have a little more experience.
- Buddy schemes using buddies who are a year older/more experienced worked well for several employers we spoke to. They offer a formal system of support and prepare the younger worker for their future role. **Employers** should consider how they might use this approach within their own company.
- Mentoring or 'having a designated individual to go to' is important as it ensures that there is additional support available from someone more experienced in that particular workplace. **Employers** should review their approach, assess the take-up and effectiveness of current mentoring support, promote the benefits to all staff and consider how further improvements can be made.
- Young people sometimes need additional pastoral support for issues they have no previous experience of dealing with. All **employers** may not have the resources to provide in-house support but it is good practice to know where young people and other workers can be referred to for help for a range of personal issues.

- There are many benefits identified for employers to engage with schools, they raise awareness of career areas, can build a recruitment pipeline and help schools to better prepare young people for the transition. **Employers** and **schools** should engage with the Careers and Enterprise Company to find ways of working together.
- There were limited examples of training for Buddies or mentors. **Employers** should consider training to maximise the opportunities to help build the skills, knowledge and expertise of the young person more quickly.
- **Employers** do often provide a range of pastoral support for all staff. Younger workers, especially those 16-18 year of age, may have specific needs which employers should consider providing additional support for in the early stages of their first job.

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