

**CAREER CHOICES: A report into Northern Ireland's
young people and their perceptions of careers,
choices and future prospects**

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"A career is a sequence of life and work experiences over time. Everyone has a career of some kind. By making time to complete this survey you have given us all insight to the things that matter most to you. May your career journey be fulfilling and rewarding. Always remember to take chances, exploit opportunities, discover new skills and continually learn and grow throughout life". (Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE)

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Executive summary

Aims and objectives

This research piloted for the first time an approach designed to find out more about young people's perceptions of careers, choices and their future prospects in Northern Ireland. The aim was to connect with young people in schools and colleges between the age of 14 years old to 19 years old to find out more about their views of the world of work, the opportunities available to them, and what they think their future might look like.

The objectives were as follows:

- To explore young people's career decisions and preferences, including sources of information used
- To identify their expectations of earnings and perceptions of employers' expectations
- To assess their levels of confidence in gaining employment, how this compares to previous generations and concerns about securing a career after post-primary education
- To review the length of time they might spend in their first job and subsequently, how many jobs they expect to have in their lifetime.
- To investigate young people's perceptions on the potential impact of Brexit.

The findings are designed to inform government policymakers, the Education Authority, Area Learning Communities and other allied bodies, education leaders and teachers, employers and careers practitioners on what matters to young people when it comes to careers, choices and future prospects.

Overview of the chosen approach

The focus for the research is young people aged 14 -19 who are currently engaged in post-primary schooling in Northern Ireland. In this context, 'post-primary' encompasses 199 schools¹, of which 133 are secondary and 66 are grammar schools. In addition, there are 39 Special Educational Needs (SEND) Schools, 15 EOTAS centres², 1 hospital school and 14 independent schools. Northern Ireland has six further education colleges³ and an agri-food and land based college. It also has three universities⁴ and two university colleges⁵.

In the first year, between June 2018 and September 2018, a piloting approach was adopted. The survey can be refined and built upon in subsequent years. This involved designing and disseminating an online survey targeted at current learners aged 14 -19. Feedback was received from 575 young people in Northern Ireland representing 27 schools and colleges. The online survey was issued as part of Skills NI 2018⁶. It provides a brief insight to young people's views of the world of work, the opportunities available to them, and what they think their future might look like.

¹ www.education-ni.gov.uk

² Education Other Than At School and Youth Work (EOTAS)

³ This includes: Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC); Northern Regional College (NRC); Southern Regional Colleges (NRC); South Eastern Regional College (SERC); North West Regional College (NWRC); and South West College (SWC) which operate across 40 campuses across the country. Department for the Economy (DfE) (2017) - www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/further-education-activity-fe-colleges accessed on 18 October 2018

⁴ This includes: Queens University, Belfast; Ulster University and the Open University.

⁵ St Mary's University College, Falls Road, Belfast and Stranmillis University College, Belfast

⁶ Skills NI is an annual interactive and inspiring skills show held in Belfast for two days in November organised by the Prospects (Shaw Trust) Events team with its key partners – visit:- <https://prospectsevents.co.uk/our-events/skills-northern-ireland/northern-ireland-2018/>

Key findings

Young people's career choices and preferences

- The top ten career preferences stated were (i) Engineer; (ii) Teacher; (ii) Nurse; (iv) Architect; (v) Programmer; (vi) Technician; (vii) Midwife; (viii) Psychologist; (ix) Lawyer; and (x) Therapist. It is notable that none of the respondents mentioned occupations in the agriculture, food and hospitality industries.
- 42% (n=185) of respondents stated that “the variety and interest in the job” is what influences them most in their career choices. 18% (n=78) identified “salaries” as the next important factor and 16% (n=69) indicated they valued “doing something that helps others”.
- These young people most commonly turn to careers teachers 62% (n=270) and careers advisers 58% (n=255) for careers information, advice and guidance. This was followed by talking to “someone in a job” 48% (n=209), and 47% (n=204) turn to their parents/guardians for careers advice. But we do not know from this survey, the frequency of contact and/or how helpful these interventions might have been.

Sources of information used

- Over two-thirds of young people 69% (n=302) access careers information online. However, around a third 31% (n=134) do not use online sources for careers information. Young people from lower socio-economic groups often lack the social capital and networks that help to facilitate access to these opportunities.
- There are a plethora of tools and resources available to support young people's career choices but many of these are seemingly not being used. The analysis reveals that there are five groups of resources that young people typically use: *Google* was reported as the most frequently used browser 51% (n=224). This was closely followed by *NI Direct* cited as the most used website 35% (n=152). Approximately 17% (n=75) use Facebook and the Skills NI website (n=74). 7% of respondents (n=31) stated they use other sources which include employer and/or university websites, for example, UCAS, NHS and/or recruitment websites such as: Youtube, Bing, Instagram, Cascaid, NI Jobfinder, Edmodo, Indeed.com, Job Education Database, Job Centre, Pinterest, and www.useful.com.
- The main factor that worried young people about securing work after they completed their post-primary education was there may “*not be enough jobs*” identified by 33% (n=143) of the respondents. The second most worrying factor was that they would “*not have enough experience*” which was a concern raised by 23% (n=100) of respondents. 19% (n= 83) worried they might “*not earn enough to pay rent and bills.*” Of least concern was “*not having the right contacts or knowing the right people*” reported by 11% (n=48)⁷.
- The findings suggest that more needs to be done to raise awareness and provide access for young people, particularly (though not exclusively) those from lower socio-economic groups and those with special educational needs (SEN) to help with their use of careers information and career decision making skills.

⁷ This may be due to the 48 respondents already having social capital and strong networks including family support.

Anticipated earnings and perceptions of employers' expectations

- In their first year of work after leaving education the majority of the respondents 48% (n= 211) indicated they think their salaries will range between £10,000 - £20,000. A further 32% (n=139) believed their salary would be between £20,000 and £29,999.
- After five years in work, young people anticipated their salaries to rise, with 26% (n = 115) expecting to earn a salary of between £30,000 - £40,000. At least half of the respondents 50% (n= 219) believed their salaries would exceed £40,000, with one in five (n=85) expecting their earnings to be circa £50,000. A further 18% (n=79) indicated a salary expectation of between £50,000 - £100,000. At least 12% (n=55) reported they hoped to be earning salaries in excess of £100,000.
- Young people ranked "Good Qualifications" to be most important to employers. Only 17% (n=72) identified "Transferrable skills" such as being reliable and being a good team worker as important. 16% (n=71) reported that having "Connections and Knowing the right people" was important, while 14% (61) thought work experience is important. Only 8% (35) believed that having "Charisma and personality" would be relevant. This finding highlights the significant gap that exists between young people's perceptions and employer expectations.

Levels of confidence in gaining employment, how this compares to previous generations, and concerns about securing a career after post-primary education

- 33% (n=146) of respondents indicated that they were either "*confident*" (24% n=105) or "*very confident*" (9% n= 41) in gaining employment in their ideal job. However, 45% (n= 196) were "*unsure*" and 16% (n= 69) "*not really confident*". This was followed by 6% (n=25) who were "*not confident at all*".
- The findings suggest low levels of confidence in gaining employment in any job. In contrast, 53% (n= 233) are confident when it comes to securing any job after they finish their post-primary education. Of the remaining 47%, just over a quarter (26% n=114) report significantly low levels of confidence.
- When asked which generation found it easiest to find a good job, 43% (n= 188) felt their parents' generation found it easier, closely followed by grandparents 40% (n= 172), with only 17% (n=76) of young people believing that securing a good job is easier for them to achieve today.
- The main factor that worried young people about securing work after they completed their post-primary education was there may "*not be enough jobs*" (33% n=143 of respondents). The second most worrying factor was they would "*not have enough experience*" (23% n=100 of respondents), followed by concerns that they might "*not earn enough to pay rent and bills*" (19% n= 83 of respondents). Just over 14% (n=62) indicated they *do not have the right 'soft skills' including interview practice etc.* Of least concern was "*not having the right contacts or knowing the right people*" reported by 11% (n=48).
- The findings indicate the majority of young people have serious concerns about their future prospects and they do not have enough experience of the world of work. 48% (n=210) cite barriers to gaining employment as either not having enough experience, limited interview practice and not having the right contacts or knowing the right people. Some question their ability in the long-term to earn enough to pay rent and other bills.

Length of time they might spend in their first job and the number of jobs they expect to have in their lifetime

- 45% (n=198) of the respondents expect to be working in their first job between 2 - 4 years. The second highest response 18% (n= 77) was for 1 year only.
- 75% indicated they would have 5 or less jobs in their lifetime. Of this 36% (n=156) believed they would have between 3 to 5 jobs throughout their career. Preparation for working life is essential and today's young people need to prepare for a career that might necessitate multiple job and changes in tasks, including in newly emerging industries. Also, young people need to be educated to develop career management skills and to recognise that some jobs will disappear, for example, as a result of automation.
- The highest response to jobs that might disappear included *"cashier either in a shop or bank"* (54% n=234). This reflects a continuing trend for online shopping and banking. The second highest response 38% (n=167) was *"newspaper/magazine journalist"*, followed by *"taxi driver"* 34% (n=148). The question posed was designed to stimulate thought and discussion on jobs of the future and to identify those that might disappear. Some of the young people's suggestions included: *"factory workers"*, *"postal workers"*, *"builders and low paying maintenance"*, and *"cleaners and janitors"*. There is significant scope for schools and colleges to do more on this and to include parents/guardians in 21st century career dialogue. This has implications for teacher training.
- The findings suggest labour market intelligence/information (LMI) and greater employer engagement is also essential within schools, colleges and local communities to help young people understand the relevance and connectivity between their learning and work. This is highly relevant in the context of young people having access to experiences of the world of work.

The potential impact of Brexit

- Young people were asked "Do you think that the UK's decision to leave the EU (Brexit) will have an impact on your future job opportunities?" 46% (n=200) stated they *"Don't know"* and 40% (n= 173) thought *"It will make it harder to find a job"*. Only 5% (n=23) believe *"It will be easier to get a job"* and 9% (n=40) of respondents thought there would be *"No change"*.

Conclusions: Implications for policy and practice

The Careers Advisory Forum in Northern Ireland⁸, the Education Authority and Area Learning Communities have an ideal opportunity to consider the findings from this report. Also, schools, colleges, universities, employers and employer representative bodies such the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Institute of Directors (IoD), the Federation of Small Businesses and sector specific organisations may wish to compare the findings to their own experiences. The report should stimulate conversations between teachers, parents/guardians, careers advisers and young people on perceptions and myths surrounding careers, routes to progression and the future world of work.

Young people's perceptions of learning and work vary significantly. We have learned that not all young people use the internet to access careers information. This has implications for both policymakers and practitioners in the design and delivery of services. The growth of technological devices has rapidly expanded. Employers have new ways to contact, manage and surveil workers at all times (Buchanan,

⁸ This was established to advise both the Department for the Economy and the Department of Education on current and future careers provision in the context of 'Preparing for Success 2015-2020' - <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/careers-advisory-forum>

2018)⁹. Young people need to be supported to build digital career management skills and to create their own e-portfolio that captures and celebrates achievements. The Education Authority is developing an ICT strategy to drive collaboration through data, planning, and pedagogy. Careers and learning should be a key strand within the strategy. Vocational education and training must have parity of esteem with academic pathways - with easily understood qualifications and progression routes. Careers education and guidance needs to be strengthened in close collaboration with business.

There is an obvious gap between what young people perceive as important to employers and what employers' value i.e. employers expect more than just exam results. Young people reported their concerns with regard to securing employment centred around their lack of experience and interview skills. This indicates that more needs to be done on employer engagement in schools and colleges to give young people greater exposure to and experience of the world of work. This can be achieved through attendance at careers fairs, skills shows, virtual learning e.g. use of ICT and games, work shadowing, paid internships, and volunteers from business coming into the classroom. Also, consideration needs to be given to empowering young people and enabling them discuss jobs now and in the future with emphasis on developing 'soft skills', alongside qualifications. Parents/guardians must also be reached.

It is crucial to recognise that the steps a disadvantaged young person has to take in order to participate in post-16 course choice and decision-making can be quite profound, compared to more advantaged young people. Overall, many young people reported they are worried about securing work, not having enough experience and, in the long term, not earning enough to pay rents and bills.

This research shows careers teachers and careers advisers are key influencers. Other international research findings indicate that parents/guardians are major influencers in young peoples' career decision making. There is a weak evidence base in Northern Ireland on the extent to which parents/guardians are sufficiently equipped to provide this support. There is also a need to broaden horizons and raise awareness of opportunities from an early age starting in primary schools upwards.

Supporting young people to access and make good use of labour market intelligence/information (LMI) is essential for them (and their parents/guardians) to have meaningful career conversations linked to learning and work. Broadly speaking, the majority of young people in this research appear to be fairly realistic about starting salaries. There is no magic answer to how long individuals stay in a job or how frequency they might switch jobs. Similarly, the issue of Brexit introduced young people to a major external factor that may well change the world in which they live. The rationale behind these two issues is simply to encourage young people to develop careers resilience and adaptability. Lessons learned from this can be applied in careers education programmes.

Strategic leadership is essential, particularly in the context of divergent new vocation education and academic pathways. Young people must have the right level of support through to the point at which key decisions post-16 options are made. This requires investment training and continuous professional development for both teachers, careers advisers and employers.

Further research is needed to evaluate specific approaches that support young people's career decision-making over time e.g. more longitudinal tracking. There is a need to connect with young people in schools and colleges between the age of 14 years old to 19 years old to find out more about their views of the world of work, the opportunities available to them, and what they think their future might look like. Labour market intelligence/information and its usage has significant implications for the 'specialist' role of the practitioner alongside the introduction of AI, including chatbots. This will necessitate new forms of communicating with and supporting young people both online and offline. There is scope to carry out further research on this topic and the methodology can be refined drawing on experience from this pilot survey.

⁹ Buchanan, R. (2018). Social media and social justice in the context of career guidance. Is education enough? In Hooley, T., Sultana, R. & Thomsen, R. (Eds.) *Career guidance for social justice: Contesting neoliberalism* (pp.109-124). London: Routledge

Main Report

Background and context

It is vital to ensure that every young person in Northern Ireland (NI), regardless of their personal circumstance, is fully aware of all pathways open to them at key transition points throughout their schooling. Failure to do so means wasting their talent and missing out on what they have to offer all sectors in the UK economy and wider society. Evidence suggests that in NI (and other parts of the UK) the range of courses and qualifications, particularly in Apprenticeships and in Further and Higher Education can be confusing for many 14-19 year olds. A report by the Social Mobility Commission (June 2017)¹⁰ found that “nearly half of people (48%) believe that where you end up in society today is mainly determined by your background and who your parents are. This compares with 32% who believe everyone has a fair chance to get on regardless of their background” (p.6). It is generally acknowledged that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds (and certain other groups) face particular barriers and are less likely to benefit from support to make informed decisions. Clearly, this is a challenge for many individuals, families and the NI economy.

There are 199 post-primary schools¹¹ in NI, of which 133 are secondary and 66 are grammar schools. In addition, there are 39 Special Educational Needs (SEND) Schools, 15 EOTAS centres¹², 1 hospital school and 14 independent schools. It has three universities¹³, two university colleges¹⁴, six further education colleges¹⁵ and an agri-food and land based college¹⁶, all of which offer opportunities to study for and attain various higher education qualifications. The educational system in NI is divided in many ways with the majority of children attending Protestant (controlled), Catholic (maintained) or Integrated (controlled and maintained) schools. With academic selection still in place, schools are also divided by ability and, in many cases, by gender¹⁷.

Preparing for Success 2015-2020: A strategy for careers education and guidance¹⁸ (DfE & DoE, March 2016) sets out the current strategy for Careers Education and Guidance, taking into account recommendations arising from an earlier Independent Careers Review, chaired by Brian Ambrose CBE (2014). Alongside this a range of government strategies and priorities include: ‘Success through Skills’¹⁹, ‘Pathways to Succeed’²⁰ (aimed at preventing exclusion and promoting participation amongst young people that are not in education, employment or training (NEET), or at risk of becoming so), the apprenticeship focus on ‘Securing our Success’²¹ and ‘FE Means Success’²² each maintain a strong focus on employability and business development. The latter strategy aims to ensure that the curriculum offered meets the needs of employers in Northern Ireland, particularly those small- to medium-sized employers (SMEs) which

¹⁰ Social Mobility Commission (2017) *Social Mobility Barometer Public attitudes to social mobility in the UK*, London. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/618627/Social_Mobility_Barometer.pdf Accessed on 10th October 2018

¹¹ www.education-ni.gov.uk

¹² Education Other Than At School and Youth Work (EOTAS)

¹³ This includes: Queens University, Belfast; Ulster University and the Open University.

¹⁴ St Mary’s University College, Falls Road, Belfast and Stranmillis University College, Belfast

¹⁵ This includes: Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC); Northern Regional College (NRC); Southern Regional Colleges (NRC); South Eastern Regional College (SERC); North West Regional College (NWRC); and South West College (SWC).

¹⁶ CAFRE is a College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise - <https://www.cafre.ac.uk/>

¹⁷ Smith, A. (2010) *The influence of education on conflict and peace building: Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011*, UNESCO

¹⁸ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/preparing-success-2015-2020-strategy-careers-education-and-guidance>

¹⁹ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/success-through-skills#toc-2>

²⁰ <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/pathways-success>

²¹ Department for Employment and Learning (2014) – renamed the Department for Economy.

<https://www.researchonline.org.uk/sds/search/download.do%3Bjsessionid=D552B3ED4318AC7826E57D527CF5ABF3?ref=B38107> Accessed on 11th October 2018

²² Department for the Economy (DfE) (2016) Further Education Means Success: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Further Education [Online] available from: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/further-education-means-success> Accessed on 11th October 2018

dominate the employment market. The strategy also sets out to provide much greater support to employers in areas such as business development and ideas generation as well as providing a qualified and skilled workforce necessary for economic growth.

The 'Northern Ireland Skills Barometer'²³ has been conducted by Ulster University's Economic Policy Centre to identify the key and priority skills necessary to rebalance and rebuild the economy up until 2025. The Skills Barometer is also intended to act as a driver for the further development of careers education, information, advice and guidance and for the planning of student intakes. Colleagues in the Economic Policy Centre are currently in the process of updating the Skills Barometer which will be published shortly.

Aims and objectives of the research

This research piloted for the first time an approach designed to find out more about young people's perceptions of careers, choices and their future prospects in Northern Ireland. The aim was to connect with young people in schools and colleges between the age of 14 years old to 19 years old to find out more about their views of the world of work, the opportunities available to them, and what they think their future might look like.

The objectives were as follows:

- To explore young people's career decisions and preferences, including sources of information used
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The findings are designed to inform government policymakers, the Education Authority, Area Learning Communities and other allied bodies, education leaders and teachers, employers and careers practitioners on what matters to young people when it comes to careers, choices and future prospects.

Focus

The focus for the research is young people aged 14 -19 who are currently engaged in post-primary schooling in Northern Ireland. In this context, 'post-primary' encompasses 199 schools²⁴, of which 133 are secondary and 66 are grammar schools. In addition, there are 39 Special Educational Needs (SEND) Schools, 15 EOTAS centres²⁵, 1 hospital school and 14 independent schools. Northern Ireland has six further education colleges²⁶ and an agri-food and land based college. It also has three universities²⁷ and two university colleges²⁸.

In the first year, between June 2018 and September 2018, a piloting approach was adopted. The survey can be refined and built upon in subsequent years. This involved designing and disseminating an online

²³ Department for the Economy (DfE) (2015) NI: Skills in Demand [Online] available from <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/del/ni%skills%barometer> Accessed on 13th October 2018

²⁴ www.education-ni.gov.uk

²⁵ Education Other Than At School and Youth Work (EOTAS)

²⁶ This includes: Belfast Metropolitan College (BMC); Northern Regional College (NRC); Southern Regional Colleges (NRC); South Eastern Regional College (SERC); North West Regional College (NWRC); and South West College (SWC) which operate across 40 campuses across the country. Department for the Economy (DfE) (2017) - www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/further-education-activity-fe-colleges accessed on 18 October 2018

²⁷ This includes: Queens University, Belfast; Ulster University and the Open University.

²⁸ St Mary's University College, Falls Road, Belfast and Stranmillis University College, Belfast

survey targeted at current learners aged 14 -19. Feedback was received from 575 young people in Northern Ireland representing 27 schools and colleges. The online survey was issued as part of Skills NI 2018²⁹. It provides a brief insight to young people's views of the world of work, the opportunities available to them, and what they think their future might look like.

Methodology

The pilot survey questionnaire was distributed to every school and college in Northern Ireland. A total 575 young people from 27 educational institutions responded to the survey. Sixteen key questions were presented in a Survey Monkey online questionnaire, most of which were multiple choice questions designed to generate responses from young people in schools and colleges (refer to Appendix 1). There was good geographical spread amongst the respondents. The results were analysed by DMH Associates and presented to a CBI Employers Business Forum held in Belfast on 7th November 2018. In addition, schools and colleges across Northern Ireland and exhibitors at Skills NI 2018 received a copy of the full report

Limitations of the approach

There has been very little research into young people's careers, career choices and their perceptions of employer expectations and the changing world of work. The research was therefore intended to be a pilot study to provide evidence and bridge the knowledge gap that exists when it comes to capturing the views of young people aged 14 -19 years old. This was study undertaken in a compressed timescale and, on reflection, it would be most advantageous to conduct the survey earlier in the year to avoid summer holidays and to maintain momentum. The use of Survey Monkey worked well; however, for some reason 139 young people did not continue after the first question and this requires further investigation. There were some key domains in the questionnaire that were missing, for example, a breakdown of gender, ethnicity, attainment levels, and socio-economic background and a breakdown of responses according to types of schools and colleges in geographical areas. We did not probe on the frequency and quality of careers support available to young people. Young people's answers given to the questions about what they perceived as important to employers and what concerns they had about gaining employment lead to the need to explore further the issues raised. On reflection, it would have been helpful to probe more fully into employer engagement career activities, interview experiences, applications, coaching and CV preparation. Nevertheless, the findings are sufficiently robust given a total of 436 respondents completed all of the questions from 27 schools and colleges across the province.

The 'pro bono' research was undertaken in response to a growing need to capture the views and experiences of young people in Northern Ireland. It highlights the need and scope for more in-depth funded research to build an evidence-base on what matters most to young people in the short, medium and long-term. It also can inform policymakers, employers and practitioners on finding smart solutions to equip Northern Ireland's young people with the necessary, skills, attitudes and qualifications required to improve their life chance and the economy. Research evidence shows that there are social and economic benefits to be gained from investment in high quality careers work.

Career decision making theory

²⁹ Skills NI is an annual interactive and inspiring skills show held in Belfast for two days in November organised by the Prospects (Shaw Trust) Events team with its key partners – visit:- <https://prospectsevents.co.uk/our-events/skills-northern-ireland/northern-ireland-2018/>

Within academic literature, there is a significant body of research that examines young people's strategies in relation to career decision-making. For example, as cited previously by CfE & Hughes (2017)³⁰, Harren identified three decision-making styles: rational, avoidant, and dependent³¹. The sample on which this typology was derived was restricted to college students and was conducted nearly four decades ago. Since then, some academics argue that a young person's mindset will shape their choice behaviour. For example, in a study of the decision-making of 14-year olds, different mindsets were identified, including: determined realist, indecisive worrier, comfort seeker and unrealistic dreamer³². Gati and Amir (2010)³³ suggest that young people may be described more accurately as using a combination of approaches in career decision making and it may be more informative to consider 'a broad set of decision dimensions' including:

1. Information gathering reflects the degree of involvement in the collection and organisation of information
2. Information processing refers to the extent of analysis of career information
3. Locus of control is the degree of one's perceived control over career opportunities³⁴
4. Effort invested in the process reflects the time and effort devoted to career decision making
5. Procrastination is the delay in involvement in decision-making tasks
6. Speed of making the final decision reflects the time needed to make a final career decision
7. Consulting with others refers to the extent to which help is sought from other people during the decision-making process
8. Dependence on others is the extent of reliance on others for making the career decision
9. Desire to please others reflects attempts to satisfy the expectations of others
10. Aspiration of an ideal occupation is the desire to find a perfect occupation
11. Willingness to compromise refers to flexibility in one's career aspirations.

Career transitions can be viewed through the lens of Schlossberg's transition theory³⁵ in terms of four S's: situation, self, strategies, and support. Raffo and Reeves³⁶ emphasise that the process of developing social capital through 'trustworthy reciprocal relations with individualised networks' is crucial, along with 'everyday practical knowledge created through interaction, dialogue, action and reflection on action within individualised and situated social contexts'. Social reproduction theorists argue that the patterns identified in young people's choices and career trajectories reflect the differentiated levels of social, cultural and economic capital possessed by different social classes³⁷. Other empirical research suggests many young people (and adults) experience happenstance events³⁸ that have a significant impact on their career decision-making. In contrast, some academics argue that emotional and personality-related aspects of career decision making³⁹ should be given greater attention. Few young people, particularly at age 14, make the link between career decisions and the relevance of curriculum to the changing world of work. This

³⁰ CfE & Hughes, D. (2017) *User insight research into Post 16 choices*, Leicester: on behalf of the Department for Education. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664227/User_insight_research_into_post-16_choices.pdf

³¹ Harren, V. A. (1979). A model of career decision-making for college students, *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 14 (2), pp.119-133

³² Blenkinsop, S., T. McCrone, P. Wade, and M. Morris. (2006). *How do young people make choices at 14 and 16?* Research Report 773. London: Department for Education and Skills

³³ Gati, I., & Amir, T. (2010). Applying a systemic procedure to locate career decision-making difficulties. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 58, pp.301-320

³⁴ It is argued that students with an internal locus of control are less oriented to the opinions of others and therefore less likely to delay the process of gathering and analysing career information, and less likely to report general decision difficulty.

³⁵ Schlossberg, N. K. (2011). The challenge of change: The transition model and its applications. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 48(4), pp.159-162

³⁶ Raffo, C. and Reeves, M. (2000). Youth transitions and social exclusion: Developments in social capital theory. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 3(2), 147-166

³⁷ Bourdieu, P. 1986. The forms of capital. In *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*, ed. J. Richardson, pp. 241-58. New York, NY: Greenwood

³⁸ Bright, J., Pryor, R.G.L., & Harpham, L. (2005) The Role of Chance Events in Career Decision Making, *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 66(3):561-576

³⁹ Saka, N., Gati, I., & Kelly, K.R. (2008). Emotional and personality-related aspects of career decision making difficulties. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 16 (4), pp. 403-424

suggests the need for more explicit connections to be made in schools and colleges with direct support from employers.

Changing career pathways

The NI economy currently has “total employment levels of approx. 840k people, which is forecast to increase to approx. 924k people by 2026. Furthermore, it is estimated that over the next 10 year period approx. 80,000 job opportunities will become available each year (annual average gross demand). However, most of the 52,000 job opportunities will be filled by people already in the labour market (i.e. people moving from one job to another), but the additional 29,000 people must be filled from the education system. If the supply from education is insufficient to meet demand, then the balance would typically have been met by inward migration. Looking forward, the potential for greater immigration controls post-Brexit could reduce this potential supply of labour and put greater pressure on local education institutions to supply labour with the appropriate skills” (NI Skills Barometer, 2017, p. 5). Broadly speaking, the mismatch between supply and demand in the labour force in Northern Ireland is defined by the following characteristics:

- large numbers of low-skilled workers, either without any qualifications or with a very low level of qualifications and skills
- a reasonable supply of graduates, but with issues linked to the mix of skills being supplied
- an oversupply of graduates in some fields, most notably teaching
- a significant undersupply of graduates in key fields, most notably science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and ICT (IPPR, 2018, p.22).⁴⁰

The Edge Foundation (July 2018)⁴¹ reports the direct cost of skills shortages as estimated by the Open University in their Business Barometer survey⁴². When taking into account additional recruitment, increased salaries, retraining and temporary staffing, the total annual direct cost to the UK economy is £6.3 billion. The true cost though is even higher in terms of lost GDP. Equally important is the high social cost – while hundreds of thousands of job vacancies remain unfilled, the number of unemployed 16-24 year olds in the UK in April to June 2018 stood at 492,000 (p.5).⁴³

City & Guilds in partnership with Emsi (June 2018)⁴⁴ reveal that nine in 10 UK employers already struggle to recruit the skilled staff they need. With most industries expected to grow between now and 2024, a significant number of skilled workers will be needed to meet demand. However, they found that two thirds of UK employers think that the skills shortages and gaps in their businesses are likely to get worse or remain the same in the next 3-5 years. They consider which job types are likely to grow in the coming years to see where competition is going to intensify. They also considered which jobs are likely to decline and some of the reasons for this. It comes as no surprise that many of the jobs making up the top 20 high growth jobs in 2016 were towards the lower end of the spectrum in terms of skills and wages, as these types of role are “typically higher volume than higher skilled, more specialist roles. For example, cleaners and domestics, elementary storage occupations, kitchen and catering assistants, waiters and waitresses and bar staff as well as caring, leisure and other service job classifications.” (p.8) In terms of job growth, “although care workers and home carers is the second largest occupation in terms of job numbers, growth in this area is expected to outstrip all others with over 44,000 new jobs being created between 2016 - 2024. Elsewhere, sales and retail assistants, which was by far the biggest occupation in terms of overall job numbers in 2016 (over 1.2 million), is set to see only very slight growth between 2016 and 2024 (17,110

⁴⁰ <https://www.ippr.org/files/2018-07/ni-skills-july18.pdf> Accessed on 1st October 2018.

⁴¹ Edge Foundation (2018) *Skills Shortages in the UK Economy Edge Bulletin 2*, London http://www.edge.co.uk/sites/default/files/publications/skills_shortage_bulletin_2_final.pdf Accessed on 1st October 2018.

⁴² <https://www3.open.ac.uk/media/fullstory.aspx?id=31527> Accessed on 1st October 2018.

⁴³ Edge Foundation (2018) *Towards 21st Century Education System: Edge Future Learning*, London.

http://www.edge.co.uk/sites/default/files/documents/edge_future_learning_report_final.pdf Accessed on 1st October 2018.

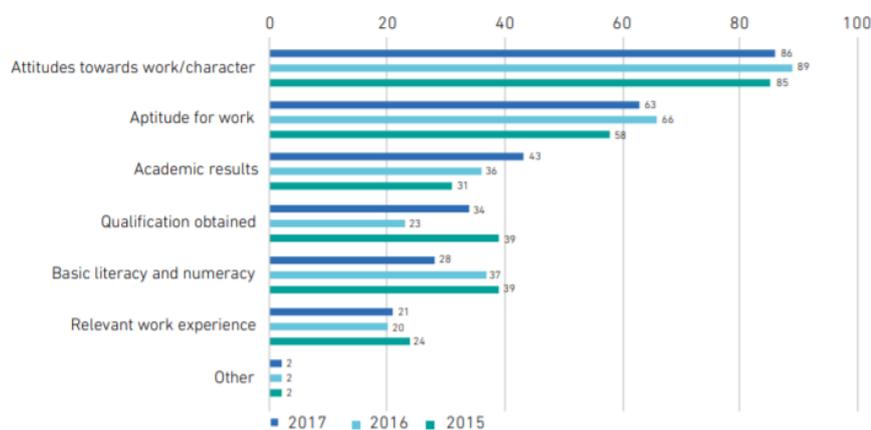
⁴⁴ <https://www.lepnetwork.net/media/1900/people-power-city-guilds-group.pdf> Accessed on 20th October 2018

jobs) and this growth will be in largely non-retail related areas, reflecting the decline seen in high street shopping” (p.9). The largest falls are in some middle management occupations such as bank managers and clerks and in those areas that are already being overtaken rapidly by automation and online activity, such as shops, postal services and printing.

Employer expectations

When it comes to recruiting school and college leavers, the CBI (2017)⁴⁵ indicate that by far the most important factor employers consider is their attitude to work (86%), followed by their aptitude for work (63%) and general academic ability (43%). Businesses believe that as well as helping young people after the age of 11 years old to develop core competences of self-management (37%) and literacy and numeracy (36%), schools and colleges could be doing more to enable them to develop technical skills (25%) by applying science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) knowledge. Despite differences in the school systems, businesses in the devolved nations hold a shared view on the need for more engagement with business to raise young people’s work awareness, to raise the quality of careers advice, and to improve young people’s self-regulation. Formal qualifications are valuable indicators of achievement and ability. But businesses are clear that the biggest drivers of success for young people are attitudes and attributes such as resilience, enthusiasm and creativity. Year after year, the CBI survey of employers show the importance of young people’s attitude to work in determining their job prospects and future success. More than four out of five employers (86%) rate this as one of their three most important considerations. Indeed, it ranks as the single most important factor for half (51%) of businesses when recruiting school and college leavers as shown in Exhibit 2.1 below – extract taken from the CBI survey.

Exhibit 2.1 Most important factors in recruiting school/college leavers (%)



There is a need for more engagement with business to raise young people’s work awareness, to raise the quality of careers advice, and to improve young people’s self-regulation. Formal qualifications are valuable indicators of achievement and ability. But businesses are clear that the biggest drivers of success for young people are attitudes and attributes such as resilience, enthusiasm and creativity. This finding is in stark contrast to young people’s perceptions of employer expectations.

⁴⁵ <http://www.cbi.org.uk/index.cfm/?method=inline&fileID=DB1A9FE5-5459-4AA2-8B44798DD5B15E77>

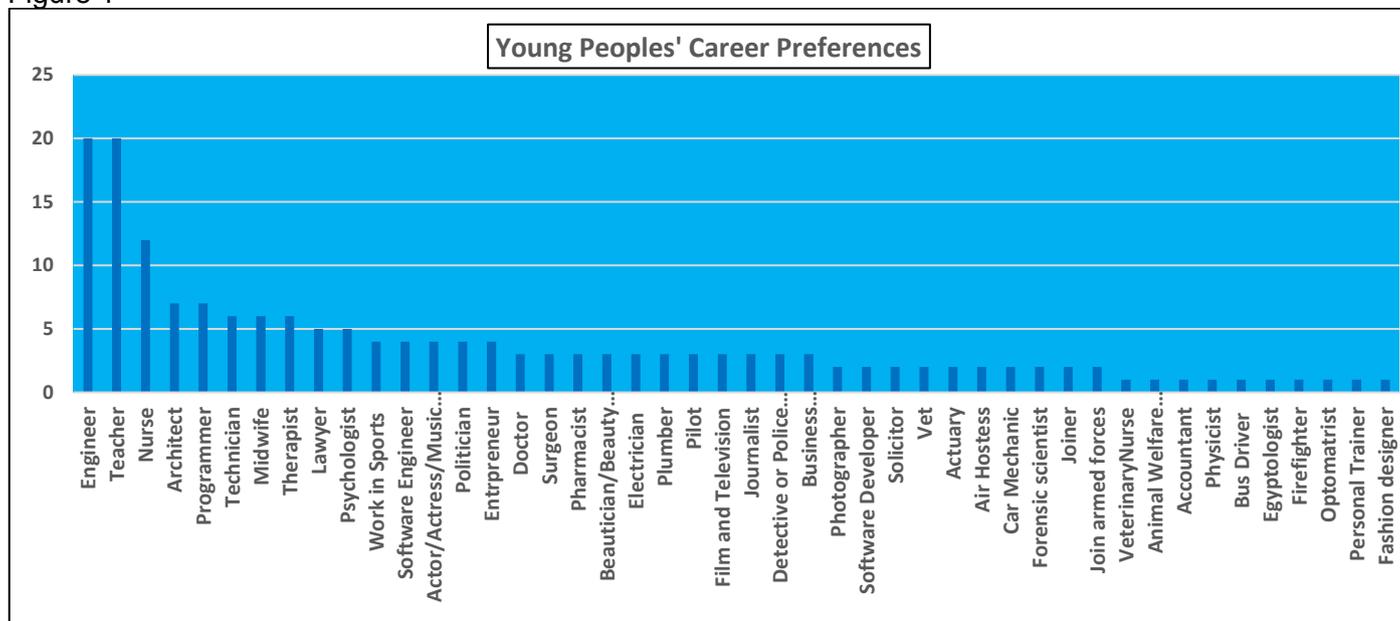
Key Results

Careers and career choices

Of the 575 responses to the question “Do you know what career you would like after you have finished your education?” 51.5% (n = 296) replied “Yes” and the remaining 48.5% (n =279) replied “No”. From this, 24% (n=139) did not continue with the survey. Therefore, the analysis outlined below is based on 436 full responses received from young people.

The second question was open-ended “I want to be ...” From this, 38% (n= 220) respondents mentioned a variety of differing job titles. Figure 1 below shows young people’s stated career preferences within a broad range of occupational areas⁴⁶. The top ten career preferences include: (i) Engineer; (ii) Teacher; (iii) Nurse; (iv) Architect; (v) Programmer; (vi) Technician; (vii) Midwife; (viii) Therapist; (ix) Lawyer; and (x) Psychologist. It is notable that none of the respondents mentioned occupations in the agriculture, food and hospitality industries.

Figure 1



Northern Ireland is trying to build an innovative economy for the future with significant investment in high-skilled, rapid growth sectors like financial technology (fintech), precision medicine and engineering. The CBI/ Pearson Education Skills Survey (2017)⁴⁷ indicate “securing a steady supply of talent will be essential if we want to make this a reality and steal a march on our international competitors”. Companies in Northern Ireland see greater need for intermediate skilled (46.2 per cent) and low (25.4 per cent) workers in the coming years than their UK counterparts, at 20 per cent and 43.2 per cent respectively (op.cit).

Influencing factors on job choice

Young people were asked to rank “What influenced your ideal job choice the most?” To help them with this question they were given six options and asked to rank these according to which was the most influential. There were 436 responses.

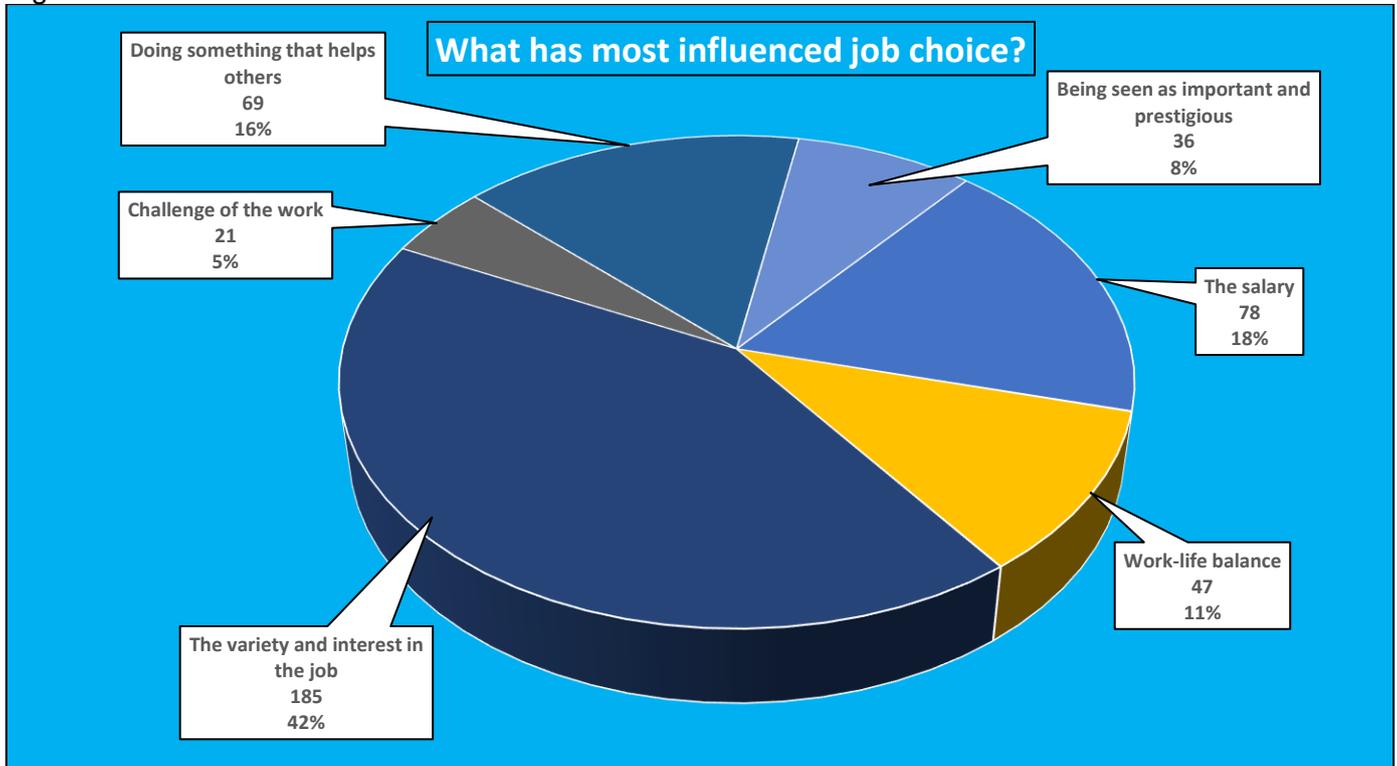
It can be seen from Figure 2 that the most influential factor recorded was “**the variety and interest of the job**” which was ranked highest by 42% (n = 185). Second highest was “**salary**” which was rated as most

⁴⁶ A more detailed breakdown of specific job titles is available upon request.

⁴⁷ <http://www.irishnews.com/business/2017/07/25/news/skills-shortages-still-holding-back-the-northern-irish-economy-1091484/>

important by 18% (n= 78). The third most popular selection was “**doing something that helps others**” which was chosen by 16% (n=69) of respondents. The “**challenge of the work**” was ranked as the lowest with only 5% (N=21) choosing this option.

Figure 2



What is interesting to report is that “**Work life balance**” while only being ranked as the most important by 11% (N=47) of the respondents this was chosen as second most important by 25% (N = 87) and “**Variety and interest in the job**” was ranked second by 19% (N= 83) as illustrated in figures 3 and 4. Also figures 5 and 6 illustrate the same ranking for “**Salary**” and “**Doing something that helps others**”

What this shows is that those factors ranked as highest or second highest were 61% - “**The variety and interest of the job**”; 42% “**Salary**”; 36% “**Work life balance**”; 30% - “**Doing something that helps others**” and the lowest ranked factor was 14% - “**Being seen as important or prestigious**”

Figure 3

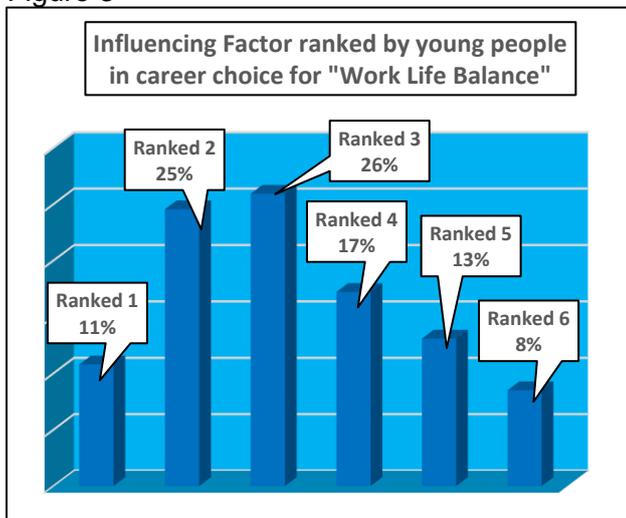


Figure 4

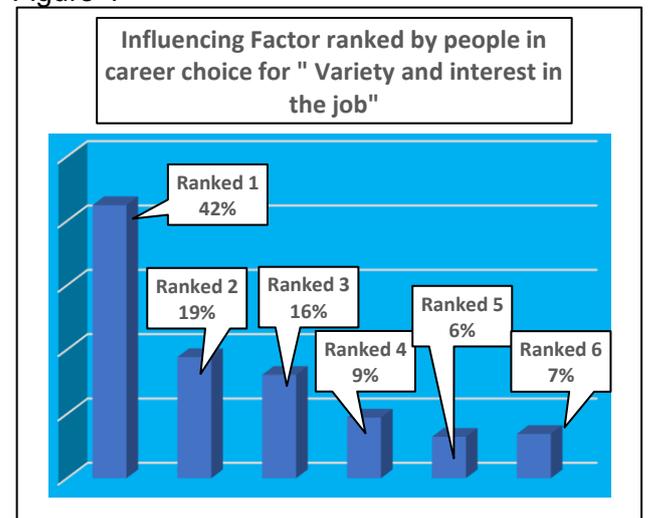


Figure 5

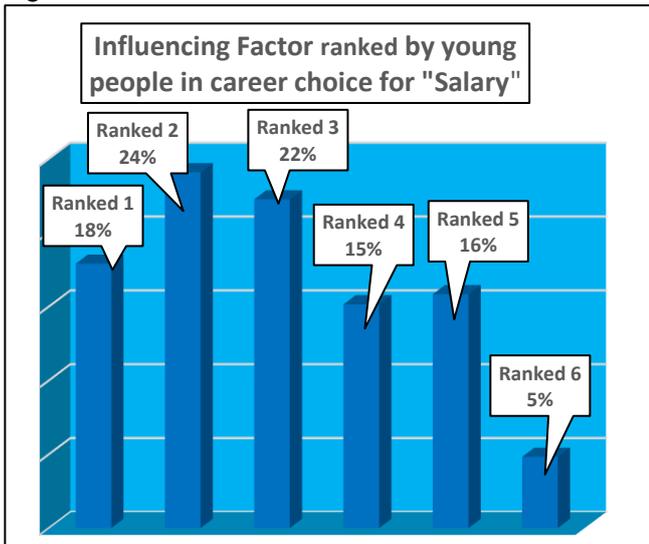
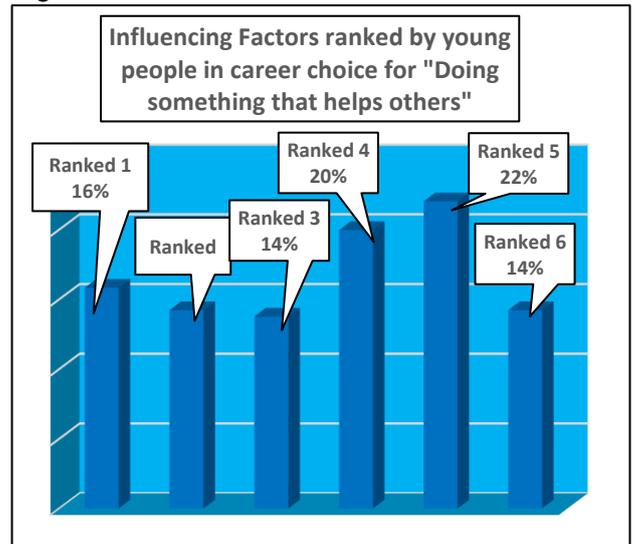
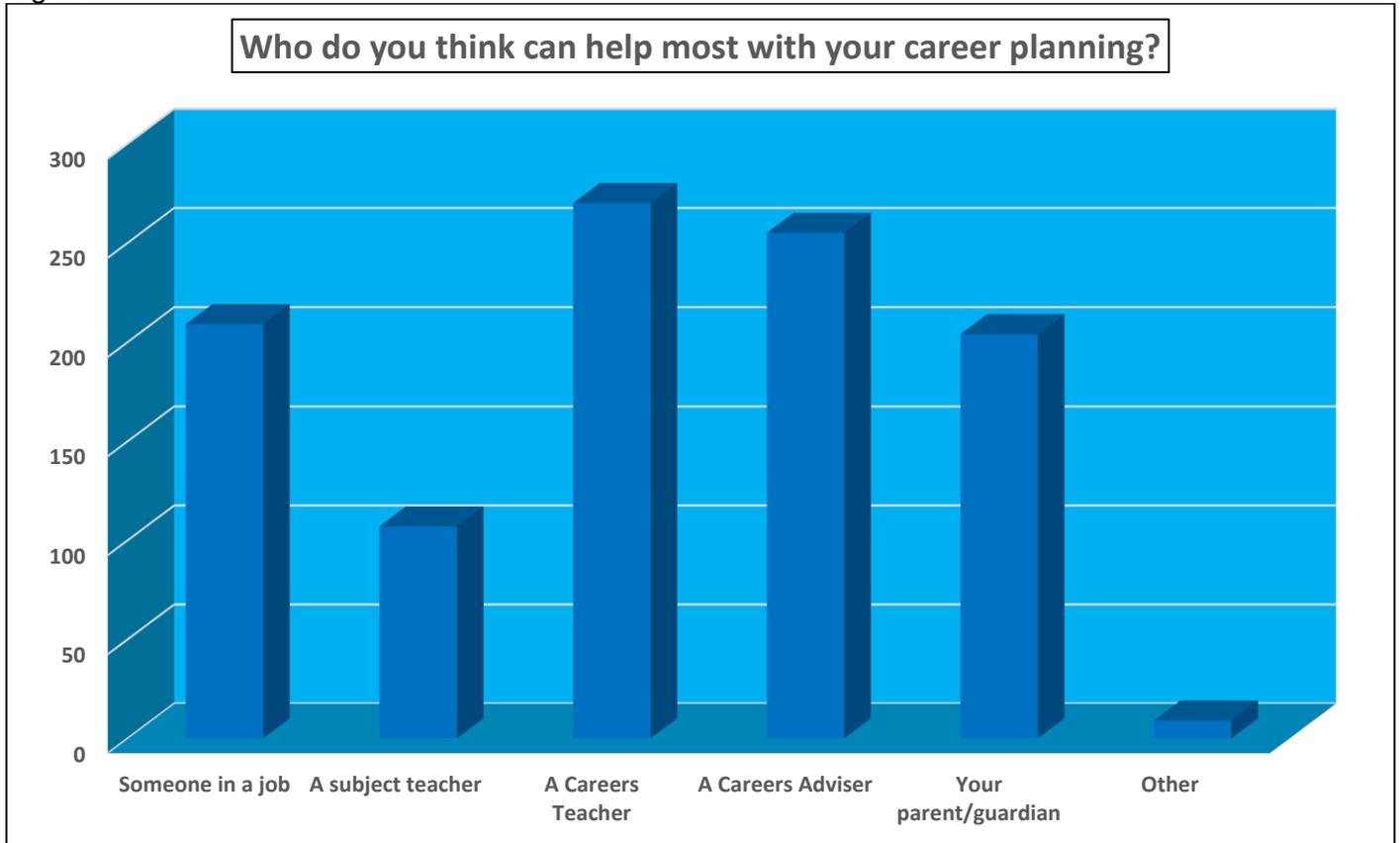


Figure 6



Young people were asked “Who do you think can help most with your career planning? (tick all boxes that apply)”. They most commonly turn to “**careers teachers**” 62% (n=270) and “**careers advisers**” 58% (n=255) for careers information, advice and guidance. This was then followed by talking to “**someone in a job**” 48% (n=209), and 47% (n=204) turn to their “**parents/guardians**” for careers advice.

Figure 7



This question does not ask young people to indicate how much careers advice they receive or how helpful or otherwise this might be.

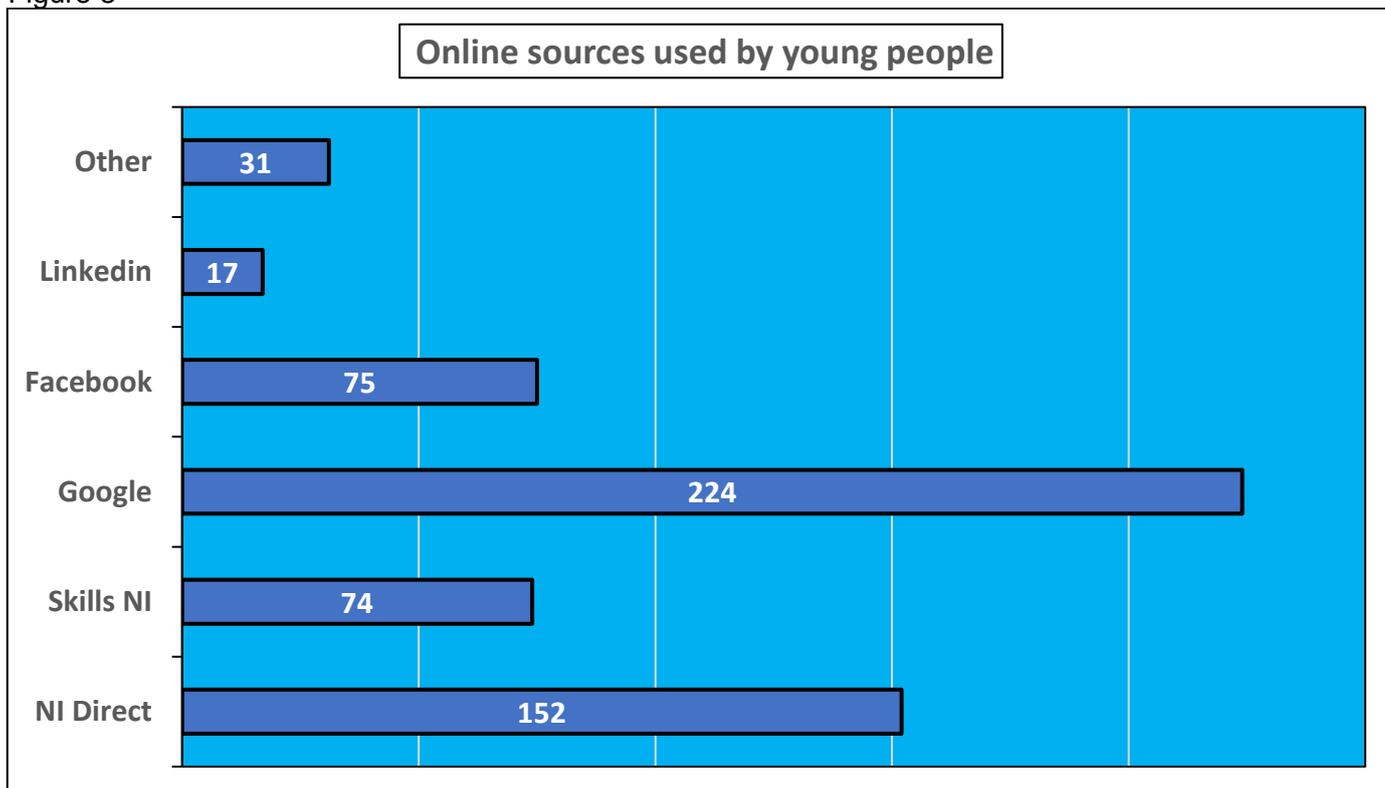
Sources of information used

This was a two-part question which asked young people (i) “Do you ever go online to access careers information?” This was followed by (ii) “If yes, which one of the following do you use?”

Over two-thirds of young people 69% (n=302) access careers information online. However, around a third 31% (n=134) do not use online sources for careers information. Young people from lower socio-economic groups often lack the social capital and networks that help to facilitate access to these opportunities.

Figure 8 below highlights **Google** was reported as the most frequently used browser 51% (n=224). This was closely followed by **NI Direct** cited as the most used website 35% (n=152). However, we do not know how frequently this occurs and/or how helpful this might be. It was interesting to note approximately 17% (n=75) use Facebook and the Skills NI website (n=74). The least used online platform is LinkedIn 4% (n=17). 7% of respondents (n=31) stated they use “**Other**” sources. A further breakdown of this highlighted young people access employer and/or university websites, for example, UCAS, NHS and/or recruitment websites such as: Youtube, Bing, Instagram, Cascaid, NI Jobfinder, Edmodo, Indeed.com, Job Education Database, Job Centre, Pinterest, and www.useful.com.

Figure 8

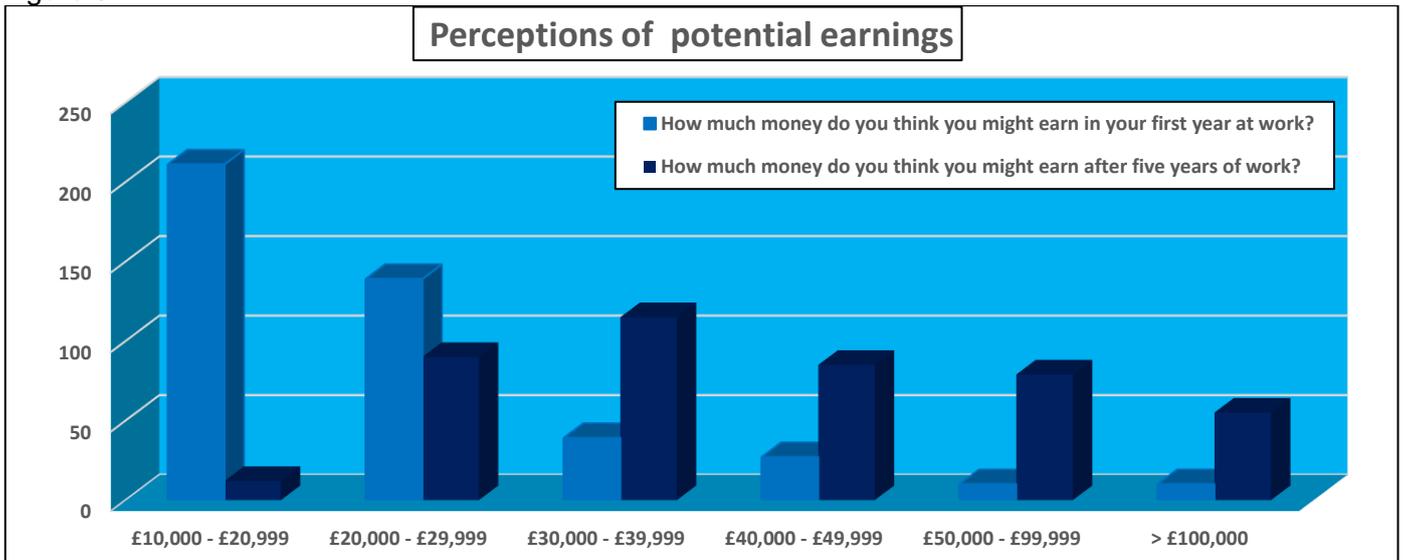


There are a plethora of tools and resources available to support young people’s career choices but many of these are seemingly not being used.

Anticipated earnings and perceptions of employers’ expectations

Young people were asked “How much money do you think you might earn in your first year of work?” They were provided with a multiple choice selection of potential earnings. The results are shown below in Figure 5. The chart highlights that in their first year of work after leaving education the majority of the students 48% (n= 211) indicated they think their salaries will range between £10,000 – £20,000. A further 32% (n=139) believed their salary would be between £20,000 and £30,000.

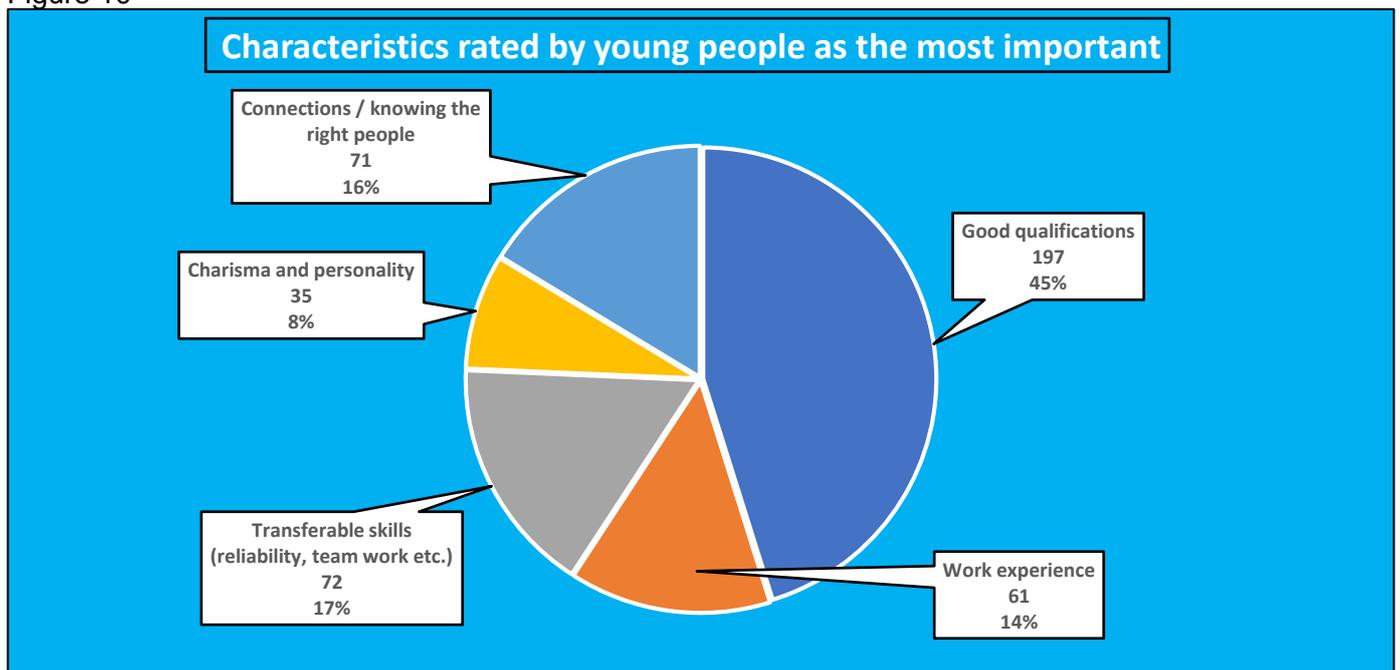
Figure 9



They were also asked “How much money do you think you might earn after five years of work?” Young people expected their salaries to rise, with just over a quarter 26% (n = 115) expecting to earn a salary of between £30,000 - £40,000. At least half of the respondents (n= 219) believed their salaries would exceed £40,000, with one in five (n=85) expecting their earnings to be circa £50,000. A further 18% (n=79) indicated a salary expectation of between £50,000 - £100,000. At least 12% (n=55) reported they hoped to be earning salaries in excess of £100,000.

Young people were asked to rank from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important) the criteria they believed to be important to employers. Figure 10 shows 45% (n=197) of the 436 respondents identified “**Good Qualifications**” to be most important to employers. This was followed by “**Transferrable skills**” such as being reliable and being a good team worker with only 17% (n=72) of respondents identifying this as important. 16% (n=71) young people reported that having “**Connections and Knowing the right people**” was important, while 14% (n=61) of respondents thought “**Work experience**” is important. Only 8% (n=35) believed that having “**Charisma and personality**” would be relevant.

Figure 10

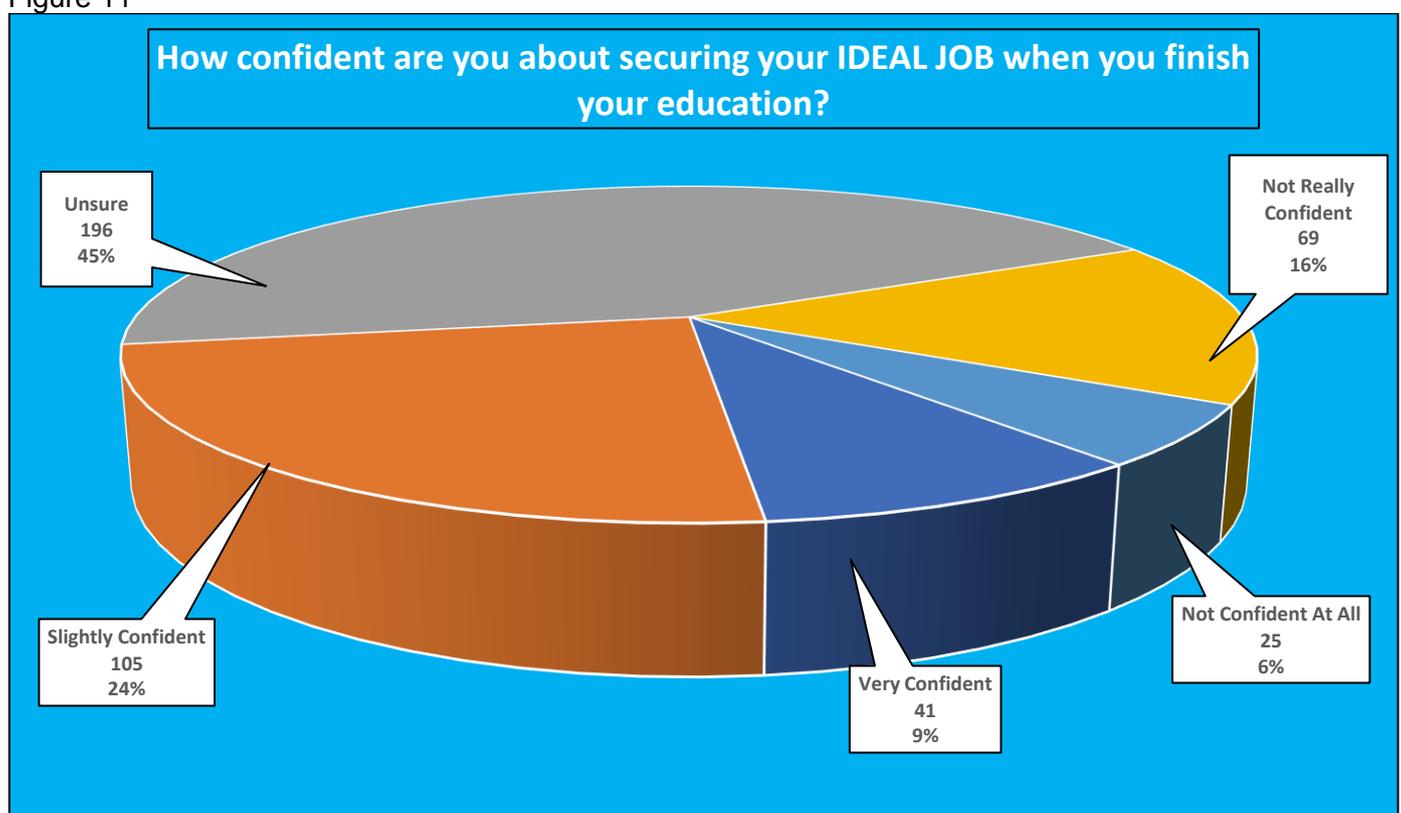


This finding highlights the significant gap that exists between young people’s perceptions and employer expectations.

Levels of confidence in gaining employment, how this compares to previous generations, and concerns about securing a career after post-primary education

Young people were asked “On a scale of 1– 5 rate your level of confidence in securing your IDEAL job after you have completed your education” (1 is very confident; 5 is not confident at all). Figure 11 shows that 33% (n=146) of respondents’ reported that they are either “**confident**” 24% (n=105) or “**very confident**” 9% (n= 41) but that 45% (n= 196) are “**unsure**”, while just over a fifth 22% (n=94) are either “**not really confident**” 16% (n= 69) or “**not confident at all**” 6% (n= 25).

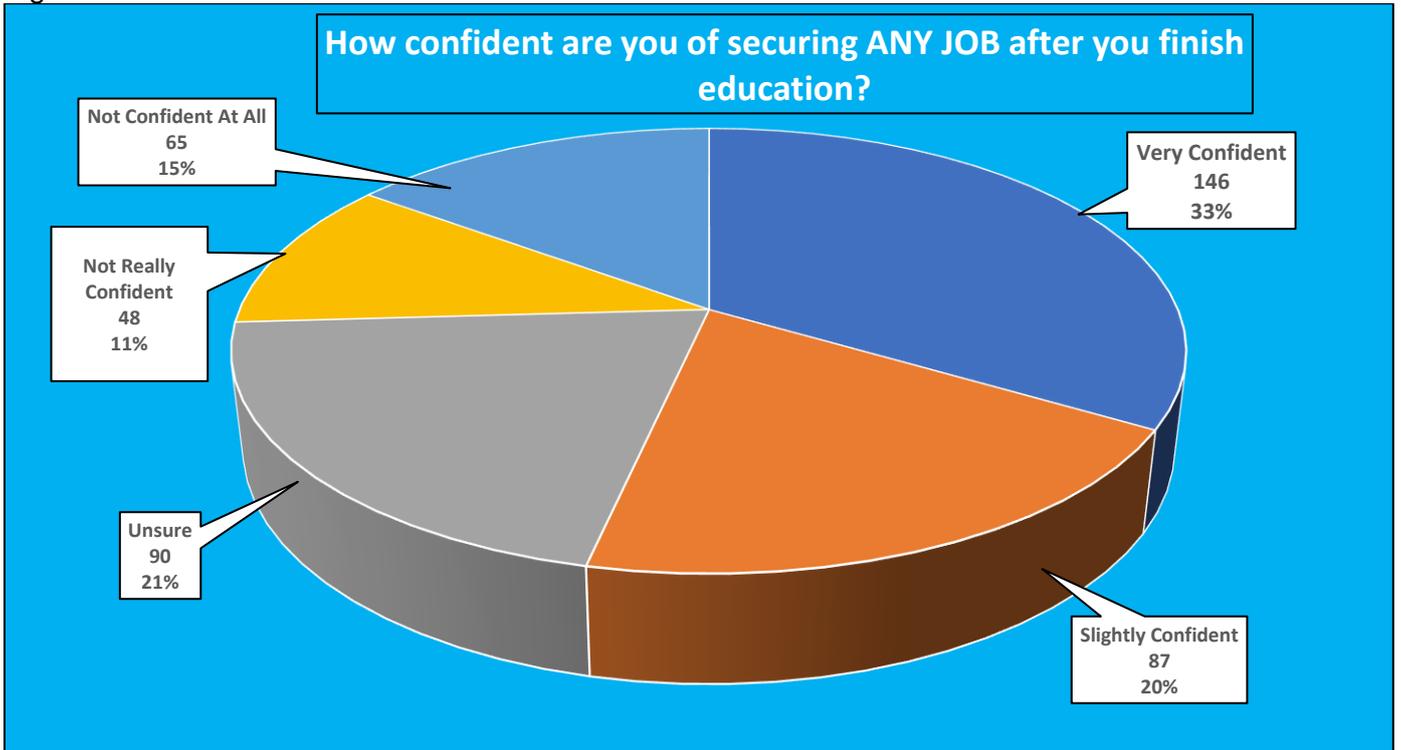
Figure 11



The follow up question was related to this and asked young people to rank their levels of confidence in “securing ANY job after completing their education”.

Figure 12 illustrates a more optimistic set of replies from 436 respondents with 53% (n=233) of the young people expressing a level of “**slightly confident**” 20% (n= 87) or “**very confident**” 33% (n=146). This is compared to 22% of the respondents either being “**not really confident**” 11% (n=48) or “**not confident at all**” 15% (n=65). In response to this question a much lower number of students were “**unsure**” 21% (n= 90).

Figure 12



The findings suggest low levels of confidence in gaining employment in their ideal job. In contrast, 53% (n= 233) are confident when it comes to securing any job after they finish their post-primary education. Of the remaining 47%, just over a quarter (26% n=114) report significantly low levels of confidence.

Young people were asked “Which generation do you think found it easiest to find a good job?” This was designed to assess their perceptions of their job prospects compared to those of their parents/guardians and grandparents before that. In Figure 9 below, the consensus was 43% (n= 188) their parents’ generation found it easier closely followed by the grandparents 40% (n= 172), with only 20% (n=76) believing that securing a good job is easier to achieve today.

Figure 13

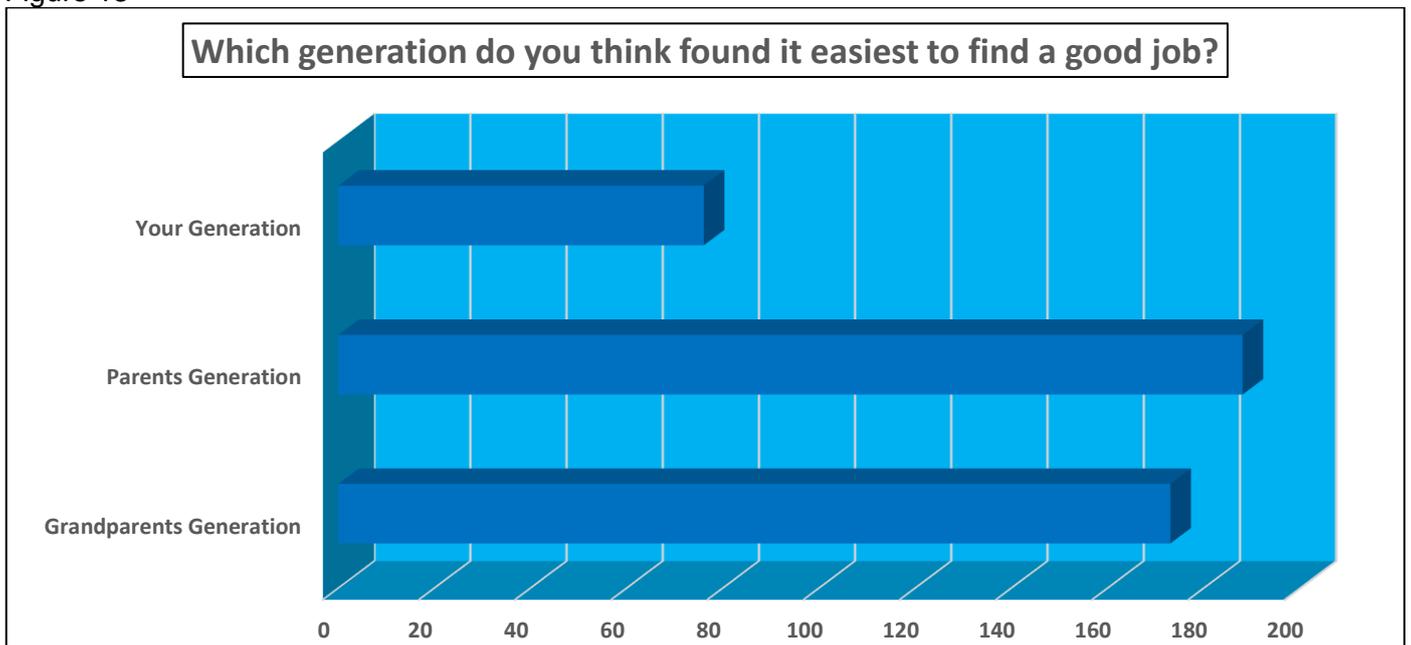
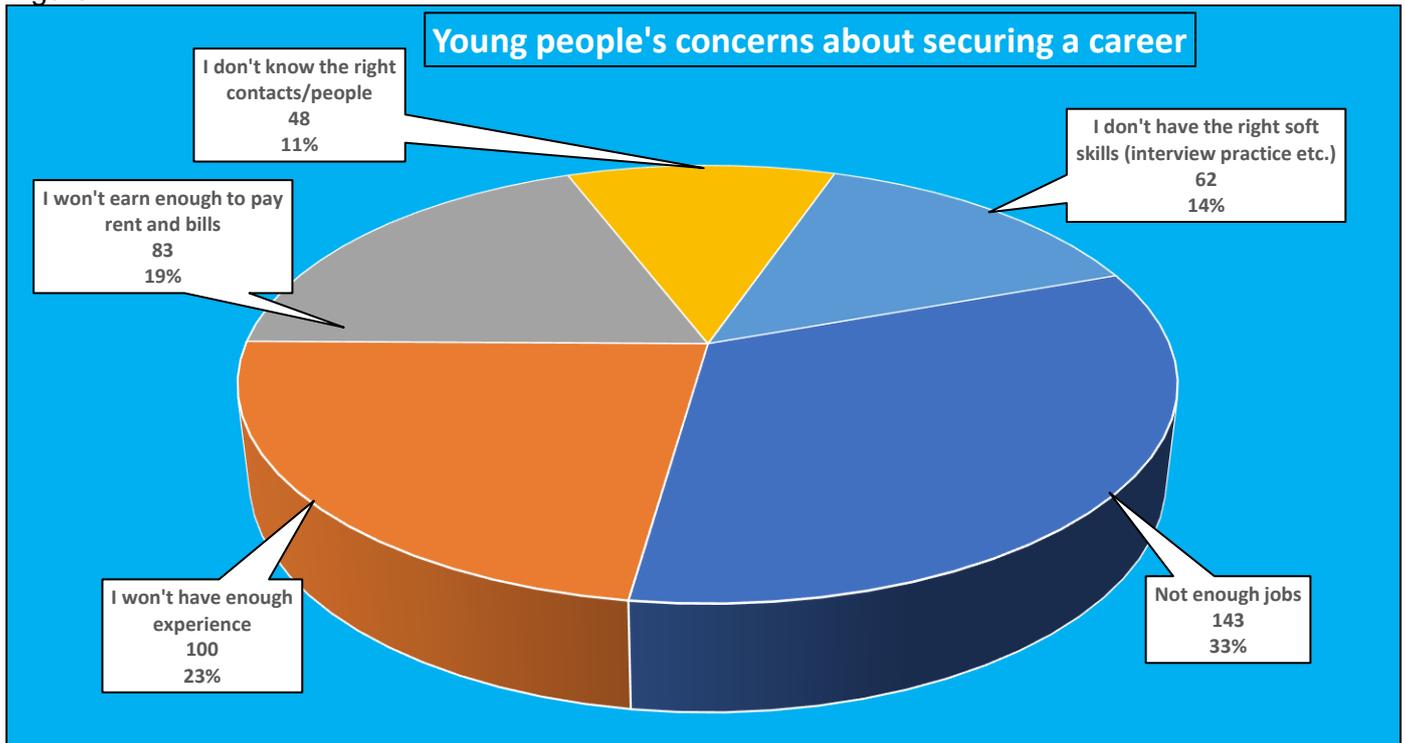


Figure 14 below shows how young people responded when asked to rank “What worries you most about securing a career when you leave education?” They were given five options to consider. The main factor that worried young people about securing work after they completed their post-primary education was there may **“not be enough jobs”** which was identified by 33% (n=143) of the respondents. The second most worrying factor was that they would **“not have enough experience”** which was a concern raised by 23% (n=100) of respondents. 19% (n= 83) worried they might **“not earn enough to pay rent and bills.”** Of least concern was **“not having the right contacts or knowing the right people”** reported by 11% (n=48) of those who answered this question.

Figure 14

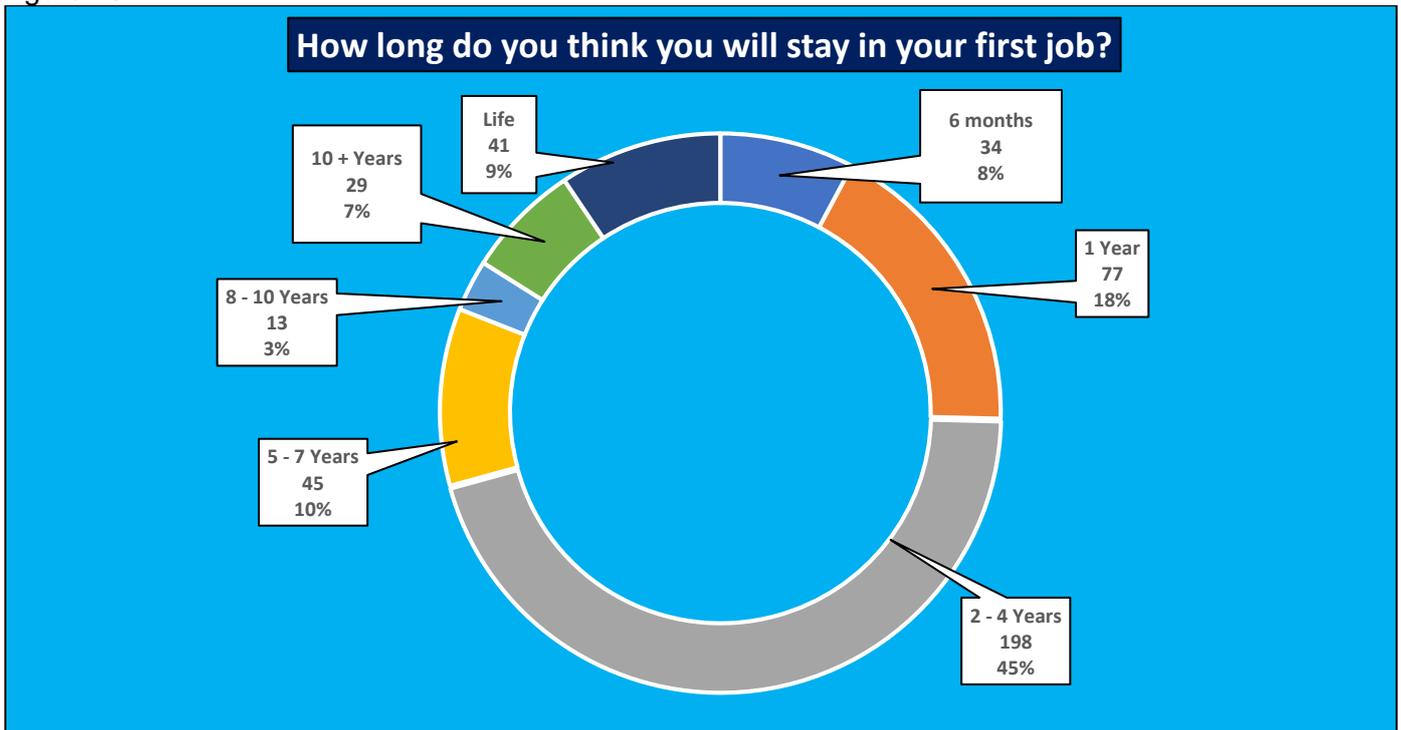


The findings suggest that more needs to be done to raise awareness and provide access for young people, particularly (though not exclusively) those from lower socio-economic groups and those with special educational needs (SEN) to help with their use of careers information and career decision making skills. They also show the majority of young people have serious concerns about their future prospects and they do not have enough experience of the world of work. 48% (n=210) cite barriers to gaining employment as either not having enough experience, limited interview practice and not having the right contacts or knowing the right people. Some question their ability in the long-term to earn enough to pay rent and other bills.

Length of time they might spend in their first job and the number of jobs they expect to have in their lifetime

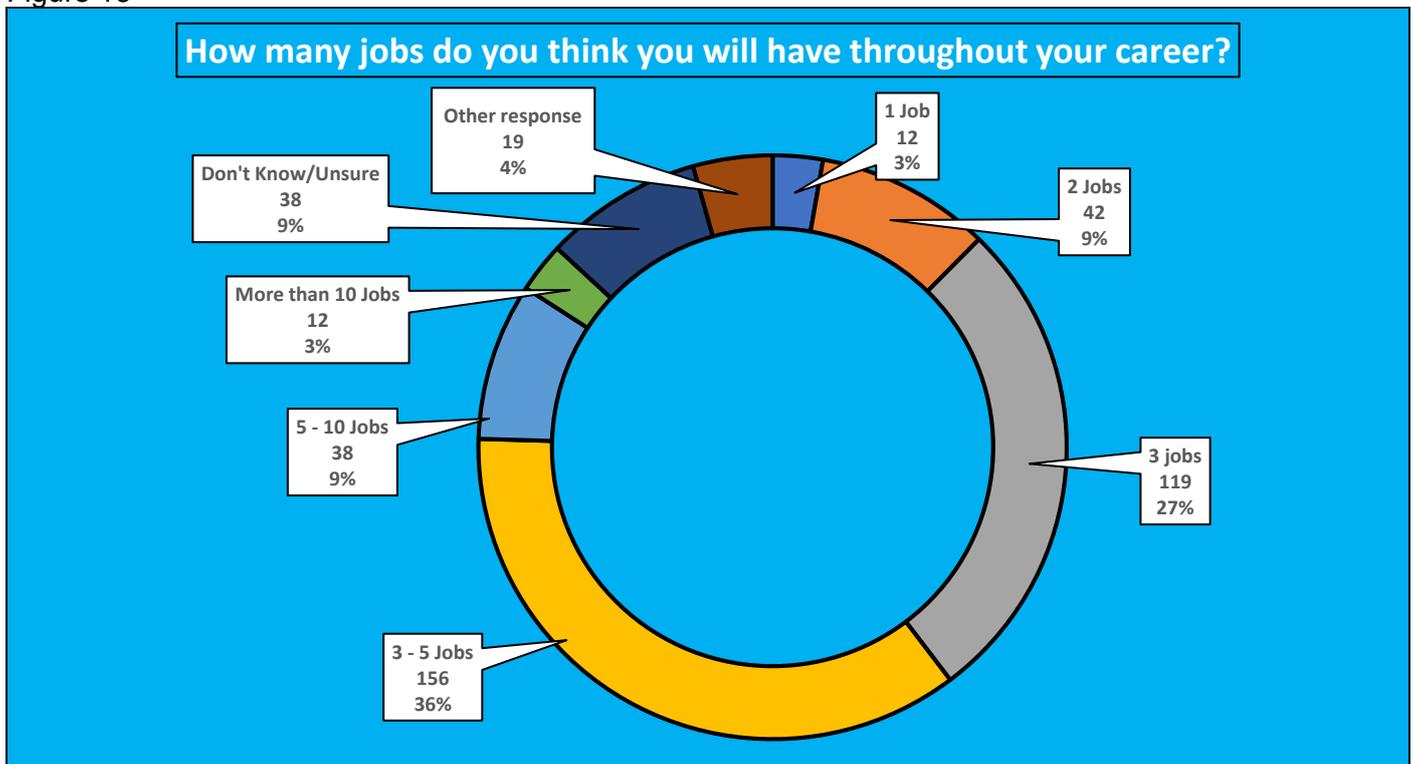
Young people were asked “How long do you think you will stay in your first job?” Figure 15 shows 45% (n=198) of the respondents expect to be working in their first job for between 2 and 4 years. The second highest response 18% (n= 77) was for 1 year only.

Figure 15



This was followed by “How many jobs do you think you will have throughout your career?” In Figure 16 below the most popular response by 36% (n=156) believed they would have between 3 and 5 jobs throughout their career. A further 27% (n =119) believed they would have 3 jobs. Only 16% (n=69) believe they will have more than 5 jobs throughout their career.

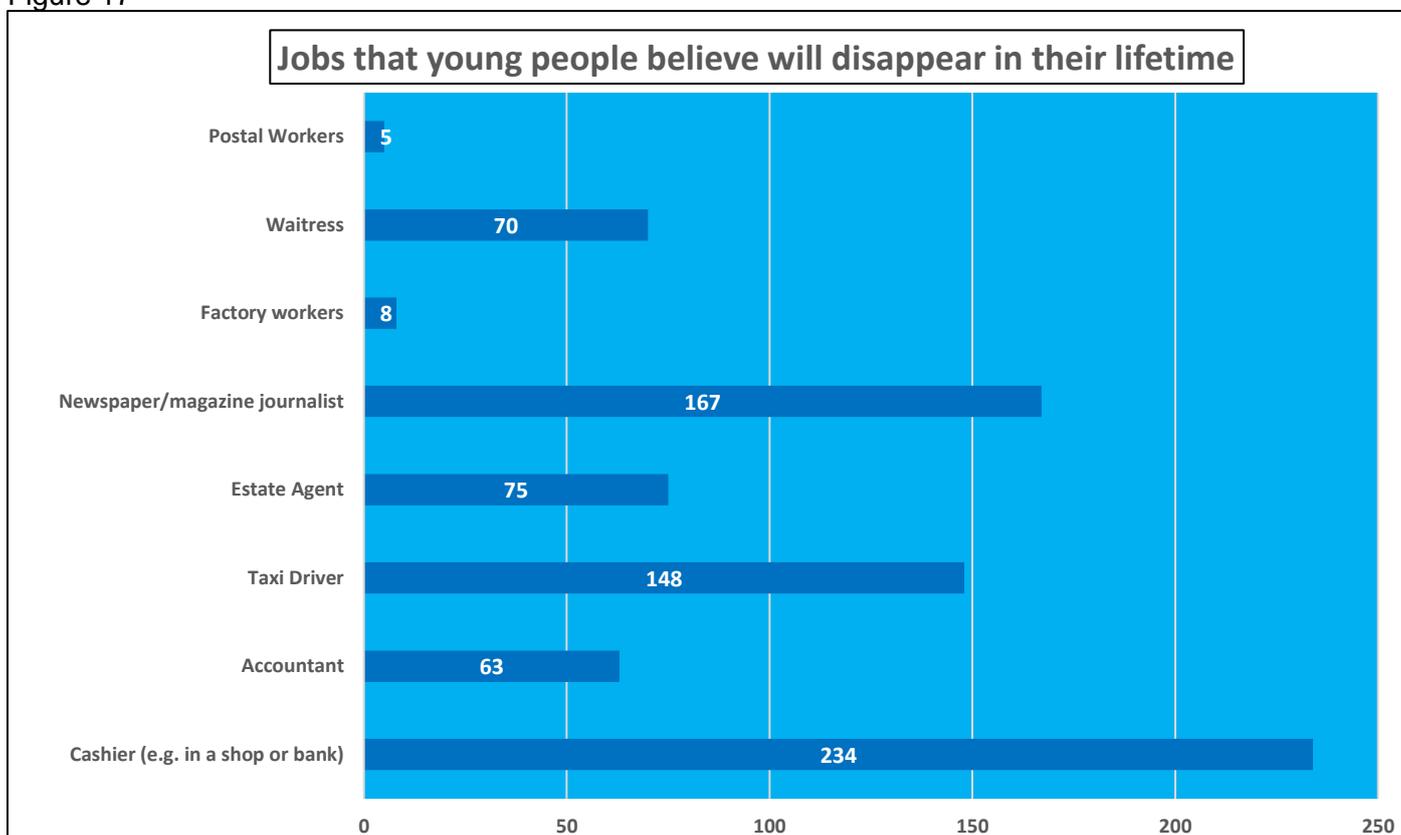
Figure 16



75% (n=329) indicated they would have 5 or less jobs in their lifetime. Of this 36% (n=156) believed they would have between 3 to 5 jobs throughout their career. Preparation for working life is essential and today's young people need to prepare for a career that might necessitate multiple job and changes in tasks, including in newly emerging industries. Also, young people need to be educated to develop career management skills and to recognise that some jobs will disappear, for example, as a result of automation.

Young people were then asked to consider "Which jobs do you think will disappear in your life,?" They were asked to choose from six categories including, waitress, cashier either in a shop or bank, accountant, taxi driver, estate agent, newspaper/magazine journalist and other (please specify). The highest response of 54% (n=234) was "**cashier either in a shop or bank**". This reflects a continuing trend for online shopping and banking. The second highest response 38% (n=167) highlighted "**newspaper/magazine journalist**" as a disappearing occupation. The third highest response 34% (n=148) selected "**taxi driver**". Figure 17 below illustrates these choices. The young people offered their own thoughts to this selection with small number indicating that "Factory workers" (n= 8) and "Postal workers" (n=5) are also jobs which in their opinion may also be at risk.

Figure 17



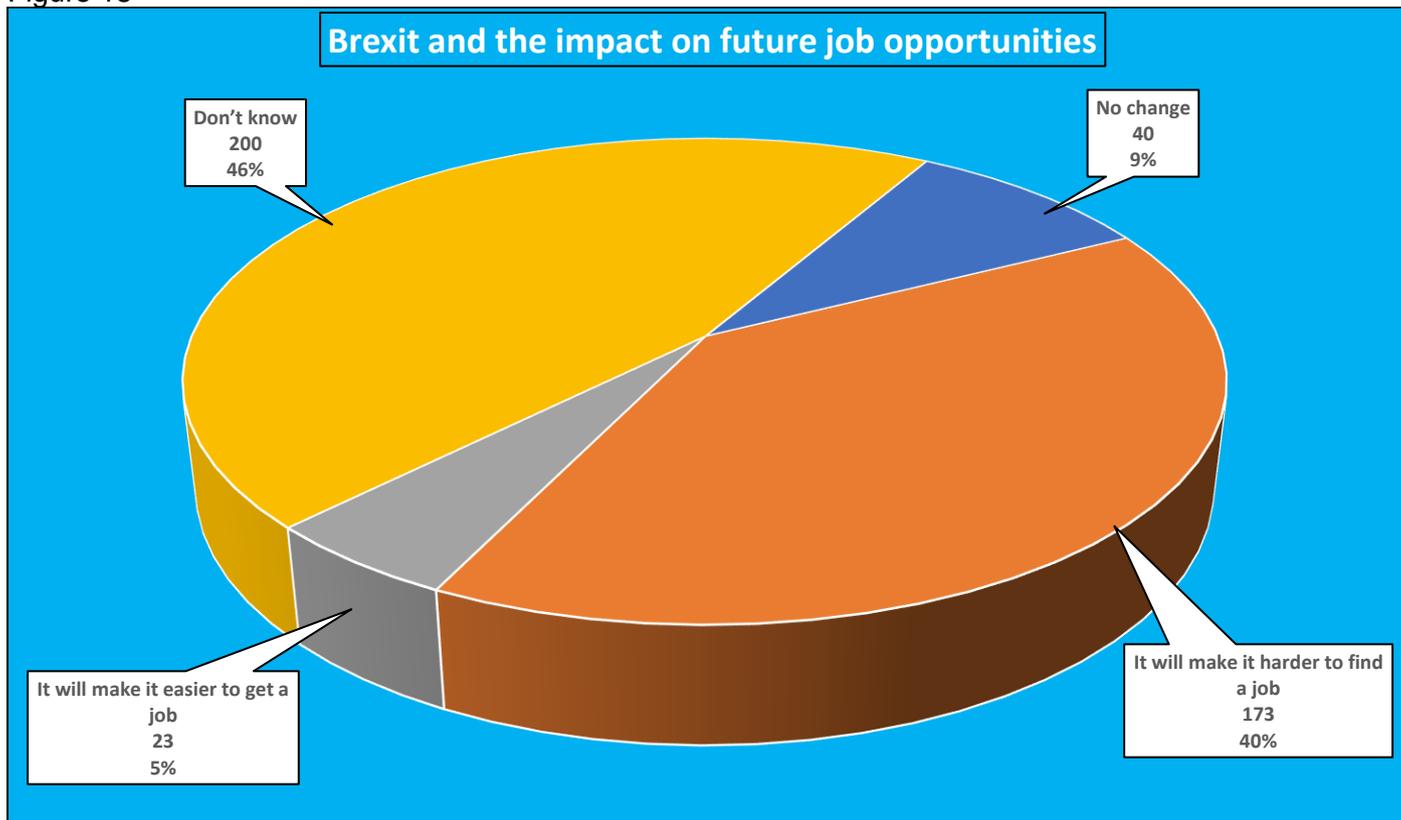
There is significant scope for schools and colleges to do more on this and to include parents/guardians in 21st century career dialogue. This also has significant implications for teacher training.

The findings suggest labour market intelligence/information (LMI) and greater employer engagement is also essential within schools, colleges and local communities to help young people understand the relevance and connectivity between their learning and work. This is highly relevant in the context of young people having access to experiences of the world of work.

Impact of Brexit on Job Opportunities

In response to a multiple choice question 436 responses were given to “Do you think that the UK’s decision to leave the EU (Brexit) will have an impact on your future job opportunities?” 46% (n=200) stated they “**Don’t know**” and 40% (n= 173) thought “It will make it harder to find a job” and only 5% (n=23) believe “**It will be easier to get a job**”. Only 9% (n=40) of respondents thought there would be “**No change**”.

Figure 18



Conclusions: Implications for policy and practice

The Careers Advisory Forum in Northern Ireland⁴⁸, the Education Authority and Area Learning Communities have an ideal opportunity to consider the findings from this report. Also, schools, colleges, universities, employers and employer representative bodies such as the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Institute of Directors (IoD), the Federation of Small Businesses and sector specific organisations may wish to compare the findings to their own experiences. The report should stimulate conversations between teachers, parents/guardians, careers advisers and young people on perceptions and myths surrounding careers, routes to progression and the future world of work.

Young people’s perceptions of learning and work vary significantly. We have learned that not all young people use the internet to access careers information. This has implications for both policymakers and practitioners in the design and delivery of services. The growth of technological devices has rapidly expanded. Employers have new ways to contact, manage and surveil workers at all times (Buchanan,

⁴⁸ This was established to advise both the Department for the Economy and the Department of Education on current and future careers provision in the context of ‘Preparing for Success 2015-2020’ - <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/careers-advisory-forum>

2018)⁴⁹. Young people need to be supported to build digital career management skills and to create their own e-portfolio that captures and celebrates achievements. The Education Authority is developing an ICT strategy to drive collaboration through data, planning, and pedagogy. Careers and learning should be a key strand within the strategy. Vocational education and training must have parity of esteem with academic pathways - with easily understood qualifications and progression routes. Careers education and guidance needs to be strengthened in close collaboration with business.

There is an obvious gap between what young people perceive as important to employers and what employers' value i.e. employers expect more than just exam results. Young people reported their concerns with regard to securing employment centred around their lack of experience and interview skills. This indicates that more needs to be done on employer engagement in schools and colleges to give young people greater exposure to and experience of the world of work. This can be achieved through attendance at careers fairs, skills shows, virtual learning e.g. use of ICT and games, work shadowing, paid internships, and volunteers from business coming into the classroom. Also, consideration needs to be given to empowering young people and enabling them discuss jobs now and in the future with emphasis on developing 'soft skills', alongside qualifications. Parents/guardians must also be reached.

It is crucial to recognise that the steps a disadvantaged young person has to take in order to participate in post-16 course choice and decision-making can be quite profound, compared to more advantaged young people. Overall, many young people reported they are worried about securing work, not having enough experience and, in the long term, not earning enough to pay rents and bills.

This research shows careers teachers and careers advisers are key influencers. Other international research findings indicate that parents/guardians are major influencers in young peoples' career decision making. There is a weak evidence base in Northern Ireland on the extent to which parents/guardians are sufficiently equipped to provide this support. There is also a need to broaden horizons and raise awareness of opportunities from an early age starting in primary schools upwards.

Supporting young people to access and make good use of labour market intelligence/information (LMI) is essential for them (and their parents/guardians) to have meaningful career conversations linked to learning and work. Broadly speaking, the majority of young people in this research appear to be fairly realistic about starting salaries. There is no magic answer to how long individuals stay in a job or how frequency they might switch jobs. Similarly, the issue of Brexit introduced young people to a major external factor that may well change the world in which they live. The rationale behind these two issues is simply to encourage young people to develop careers resilience and adaptability. Lessons learned from this can be applied in careers education programmes.

Strategic leadership is essential, particularly in the context of divergent new vocation education and academic pathways. Young people must have the right level of support through to the point at which key decisions post-16 options are made. This requires investment training and continuous professional development for both teachers, careers advisers and employers.

Further research is needed to evaluate specific approaches that support young people's career decision-making over time e.g. more longitudinal tracking. There is a need to connect with young people in schools and colleges between the age of 14 years old to 19 years old to find out more about their views of the world of work, the opportunities available to them, and what they think their future might look like. Labour market intelligence/information and its usage has significant implications for the 'specialist' role of the practitioner alongside the introduction of AI, including chatbots. This will necessitate new forms of communicating with and supporting young people both online and offline. There is scope to carry out further research on this topic and the methodology can be refined drawing on experience from this pilot survey.

⁴⁹ Buchanan, R. (2018). Social media and social justice in the context of career guidance. Is education enough? In Hooley, T., Sultana, R. & Thomsen, R. (Eds.) *Career guidance for social justice: Contesting neoliberalism* (pp.109-124). London: Routledge

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Appendix 1 – List of questions in the survey

Q1. Do you know what career you would like to go into after you finish education?

Q2. I would like to be a

Q3. Rank the following by how important you think they are to employers? (1 – most important; 5 – least important)

a) Good qualifications; b) Work experience; c) Transferable skills (reliability, team work etc.); d) Charisma and personality; e) Connections / knowing the right people

Q4. On a scale of 1 - 5, how confident are you about securing your IDEAL JOB when you finish education? (1 – very confident; 5 – not confident at all)

Q5. On a scale of 1 - 5, how confident are you about securing ANY JOB when you finish education? (1 – very confident; 5 – not confident at all)

Q6. How much money do you think you might earn in your first year at work?

Q6. How much money do you think you might earn after five years of work?

Q7. Do you think that the UK's decision to leave the EU (Brexit) will have an impact on your future job opportunities?

Q8. Who do you think can help most with your career planning? (Choose all that apply)

a) Someone in a job; b) A subject teacher (for example Maths, History, English, etc.); c) A Careers Teacher; d) A Careers Adviser; e) Your parent/guardian

Q9. Rank what has influenced your ideal job choice the most? (1 – most influential; 6 – least influential)

a) The salary; b) Work-life balance; c) The variety and interest in the job; d) Challenge of the work; e) Doing something that helps others; f) Being seen as important and prestigious.

Q10. Rank what worries you most about securing a career when you leave education? (1 – worries you most; 5 – worries you least)

a) Not enough jobs; b) I won't have enough experience; c) I won't earn enough to pay rent and bills; d) I don't have the right soft skills (interview practice etc.).

Q11. Do you ever go online to access careers information?

Q12. If yes, which of the following do you use? (Choose all that apply)

a) NI Direct; b) Skills Northern Ireland; c) Google; d) Facebook; e) LinkedIn; f) Other (please specify)

Q13. How long do you think you will stay in your first job?

Q14. How many jobs do you think you will have throughout your career?

Q15. Which jobs do you think will disappear in your lifetime?

"a) Waitress; b) Cashier (e.g. in a shop or bank); c) Accountant; d) Taxi driver; e) Estate agent; f) Newspaper/magazine journalist; g) Other (feel free to add more if you think of them)

