



www.learningandwork.org.uk

 @LearnWorkUK

WHAT EMPLOYERS WANT: IMPROVING YOUNG PEOPLE'S EMPLOYABILITY

September 2017

Nicola Aylward, Head of Learning for Young People

Liz Davies, Senior Researcher

Emma Hinchliffe, Sheffield Futures

 **LEARNING AND
WORK INSTITUTE**

 **SEFYDLIAD DYSGU A GWAITH
LEARNING AND WORK INSTITUTE**



Scotland's Learning Partnership

Forum for Adult Learning

NI

ECORYS



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

PROJECT APPROACH

Part of L&W's role as UK Co-ordinator of the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL)

- x70 young people trained as Action Researchers (including 10 with learning difficulties, young adult carers, care leavers and those from disadvantaged backgrounds).
- Action Researchers conducted interviews in pairs with over 40 local employers, discussed and identified findings, fed back to L&W.



Prince's Trust



CANOLFAN
MILENIWM
CYMRU
WALES
MILLENNIUM
CENTRE®



PROJECT AIMS

Understand

- What does an 'employable' young person look like?
- What skills and attributes are employers looking for when they recruit a young person?

Equip

- Train young people with Action Research skills.
- Increase young people's confidence.
- Improve young people's understanding of what employers want.

EMPLOYER VIEWS

Employers like young people...

“I never look at a young person and say no. Young people have a lot to offer. We like to give them a chance to prove themselves and do well. They often surprise you with what they have to offer!”

Employers want...



A positive attitude

Show enthusiasm, commitment and energy.



'Soft skills'

Including **communication, problem-solving, time management, teamwork** and **working well under pressure**.



'Hard skills'

Sometimes specific to certain jobs but almost all employers highly value **literacy, numeracy** and **digital skills**.



Experience

A range of different types of experience, particularly work experience and volunteering.



Qualifications

Even though not all the qualities they are looking for can be measured through qualifications, qualifications are valued by employers.

EMPLOYER VIEWS



OUTCOMES FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Satisfaction** at giving young people practical advice to be more competitive in the job market.
- **Business benefits** from explaining their industry, company, recruitment processes, and skills they value.
- **Useful feedback** and insights from a young person's perspective.

IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE'

- Practical skills (research, communication, and team work).
- Breaking down barriers with employers.
- Improved understanding of what employers are looking for.
- Confidence in interviews.
- Links with employers – work experience.
- Jobs!

I would definitely research more and work harder on a CV to be more proactive.

I'm going to be looking for another placement. The information I got from the project will help me to look for that placement and to sell myself better.

It's made me more confident making that initial contact.

I know that they are willing to employ younger people.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS



BENEFITS TO PROVIDERS

- New approach to supporting young people to develop employability skills.
- New resources to share and use with unemployed young people.
- New and stronger relationships with local employers.
- Up-to-date knowledge about what local employers are looking for.

This Year (2016/17)

- L&W working with partner organisations throughout the UK – particular emphasis on supporting young care leavers and carers.
 - Sheffield Futures (Talent Match)
 - Drive Forward
 - Communities First
 - Barnardo's
- This year's work has shown:
 - the model works for young people from a range of backgrounds and with challenging circumstances (with some adjustments)
 - the Project in a Box and resources are accessible and easy to use so organisations can deliver the model with limited support from L&W – ensuring the work is sustainable.

Insight from practice



- Why 'What Employers Want'?
- Challenges
- Benefits
- Success factors

Emma Hinchliffe, Young People's Involvement Worker

TOP TIPS

1. Use this approach to expand and develop your engagement with local employers.
2. Involve young people in choosing which employers to invite to participate.
3. Ensure young people a) ask questions which are most meaningful to their situation, b) have time to practice before meeting employers, c) have chance to work as a team to plan and deliver the interviews.
4. Bring young people together to discuss and identify findings, and reflect.
5. Support young people to share the findings in a creative way.

How you can get involved

Project resources

Practical and accessible information and resources have been developed for young people and providers
– feel free to use these!

www.whatemployerswant.org

‘Guide for Young People...’

www.learningandwork.org.uk/sites/niace_en/files/resources/What%20Employers%20Want.pdf

THANK YOU

QUESTIONS

nicola.aylward@learningandwork.org.uk

liz.davies@learningandwork.org.uk