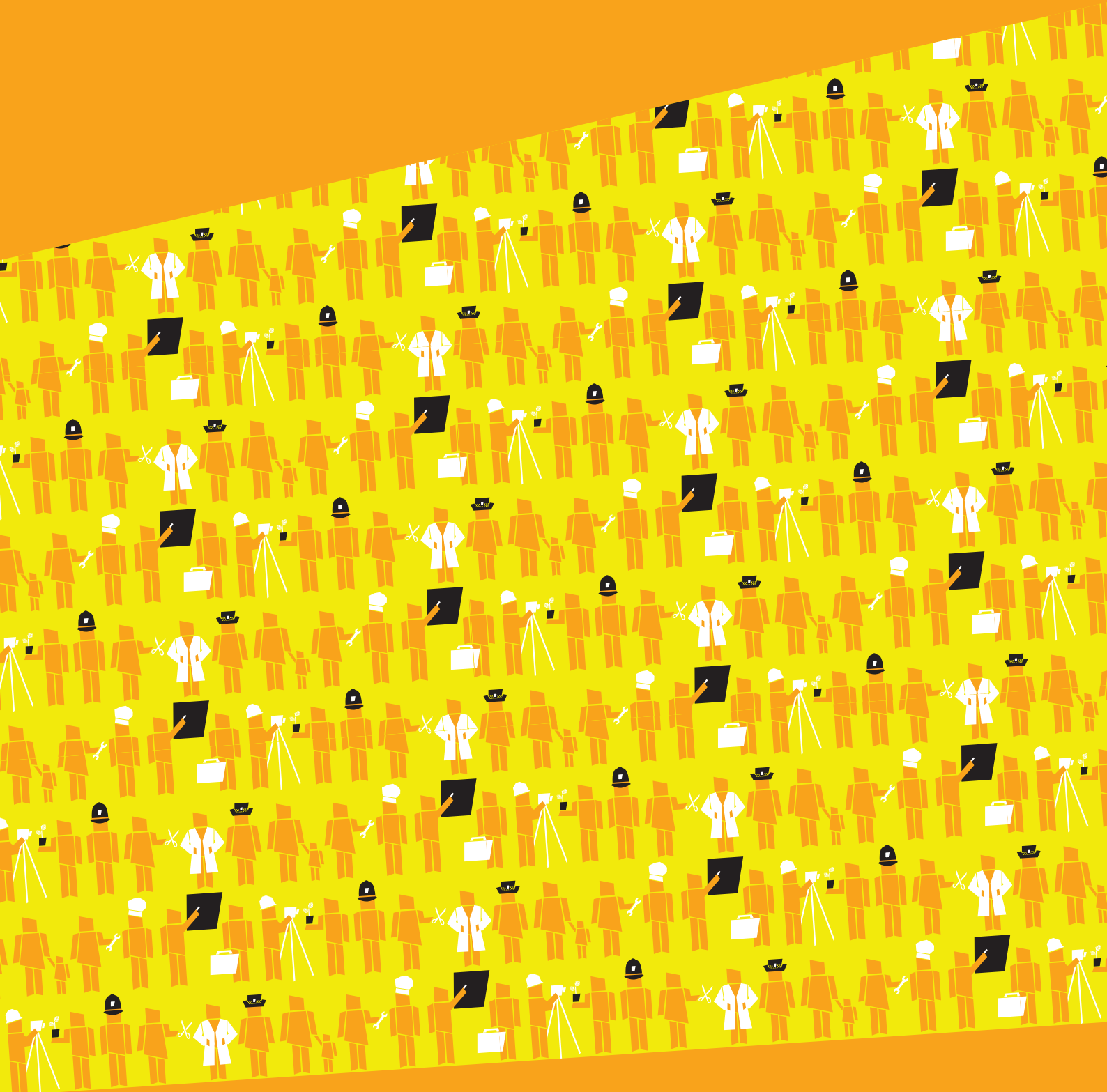


NUS Commission on the Future of Work



Foreword

The issue of work, and importantly quality work, is a vital one for the National Union of Students' seven million members. Whether it be students working to fund their education, the job searches undertaken by study leavers, or what work looks like in those all-important first years in the labour market, the lives of students – and young people more generally – are bound up with employment.

Yet with more than three quarters of a million young people unemployed, it is clear that the labour market is not working for many. At a time when the cost of study is rising, and being educated at post-compulsory level no longer offers the opportunities or long-term employment guarantees it once did, many students and study leavers across the UK are understandably anxious about the future they face. In response, NUS is focussing on student and study leaver employment issues, and the need for a New Deal for Work for the next generation.

For a new generation of workers to succeed it is vital that we take a look at the state of the current labour market for students and young people, in order to identify the key areas that must be addressed. The Future of Work Commission, established by NUS in May 2014, aims to do this through engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. Reading through the evidence and recommendations submitted, which are also outlined in this report, it is clearly time for a renewed conversation about the place of young people and work in the 21st century.

The report identifies three key problems: the quality of jobs, access to opportunities, and the variability and quantity of employment, for both working students and study leavers. It is also important to highlight the link between education (whether vocational or academic) and the labour market, and the need for developing employability skills and a knowledge of employment rights before students start their first job.

I believe that key to this report, as well as our work moving forward, is to look at what a 'good' job looks like for students and graduates in 2015. How can we ensure equality of opportunity for young people to obtain these jobs, and importantly, ensure that they have the skill set to undertake them?

The recommendations identified through the submissions to the Commission have been collated to provide suggested recommendations for government, employers, educators, NUS and students themselves. We would call upon these groups, and especially government, to investigate these recommendations, to ensure that a new generation of students can enter the labour market with the promise of no less than a 'good job'.



Toni Pearce
National President, NUS



Executive summary

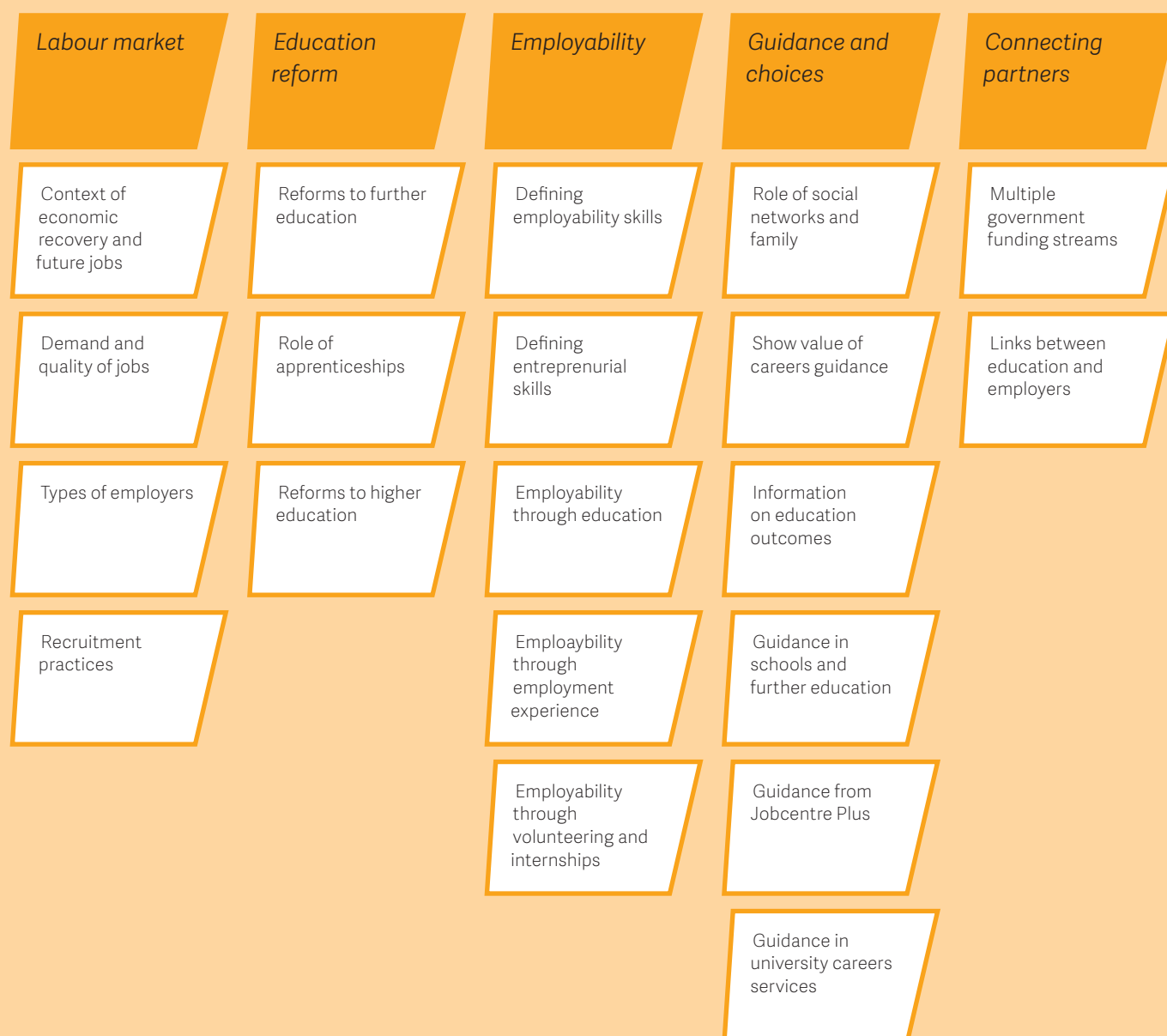
Executive summary

At a time when the cost of study is rising, and being educated at post-compulsory level no longer offers the long-term employment guarantees it once did, many students and study leavers across the UK are understandably anxious about the future they face. In order to better understand these concerns and develop solutions to tackle them, NUS launched its Future of Work Commission in early 2014 – a call for evidence from students, students' unions and stakeholders – from across the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors.

This report draws together key themes and recommendations from the evidence submitted to the Commission.

Across the submissions five key themes emerged. These were around wider labour market challenges, education reform, the employability of young people, guidance and choices for education and careers. Also, connecting partners across government, education providers and employers.

These themes and the headline issues that emerged are summarised in the following diagram:



Executive summary

There has been an attempt made throughout this report to highlight not just the prevailing themes brought out by the commission, but also key decision-makers within the arena of work for students, both during and after they have finished formal study. These key groups have been identified as: the government, employers, education system, NUS and, importantly, students themselves. Below is an outline of the main suggestions for these groups to come out of submissions to this report.

Government

- Offer a stronger vision for the future of careers advice
- Extend, throughout all stages of education, careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) provision for young people
- Ensure that young people learn about enterprise and employment rights at school
- Ensure that apprenticeships offer a sustainable route into skilled work
- Offer incentives to strengthen opportunities and employer engagement
- Ensure education at all stages, along with skills provision, supporting young people to enter sustainable employment
- Better regulate the use of internships
- Support co-ordinated action between stakeholder, information sharing, and monitoring

Employers, representative bodies and recruiters

- Rethink recruitment practices, so as not to unfairly disadvantage young people
- Offer multiple access routes into their organisations
- Promote geographical flexibility when advertising jobs and opportunities
- Create more talent pipeline programmes
- Offer more opportunities linking student employment with post-study work
- Recognise volunteering and other forms of work and non-academic experience

Education Providers

- Provide high-quality careers advice and guidance
- Engage better with employers
- Create and support more, and improved, work experience opportunities

NUS

- Support students' unions to lead by example on pay and conditions, and ensure flexibility in work opportunities
- Champion the use of student accommodation for the take-up of internships
- Foster collaboration between organisations active on youth employment policy networks, that would otherwise be competing against each other for funding

Students and study leavers

- Consider the geographic demand of the roles and sectors they are interested in
- Consider a broader range of employers when looking for work opportunities
- Be proactive in seeking experience that fits with their financial situation and other commitments, through volunteering, work experience or internships
- Better articulate what they have learnt from their experiences
- Support others to make informed choices and participate in alumni networks, acting as ambassadors and role models

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Introduction

Introduction

NUS' 2013 report with the New Economics Foundation (NEF) on the modern jobs economy focused on the changing labour market, the move from manufacturing to a service-based economy, and profound changes to its sectoral and geographical make-up. This includes a UK labour market increasingly characterised by higher wage work requiring advanced qualifications at the top, jobs in the middle in decline, and the expansion of a more precarious and flexible labour market for lower waged work (an hour glass-shaped labour market). This is characterised by temporary and zero hours contracts, needing less skills and development, with wages that do not meet living costs. In the past five years there has also been an acceleration in the shift from public to private job creation, especially by small firms, and growing regional disparities between London, south east England and the rest of the UK.

In light of these changes and building upon the NUS Modern Jobs Economy report, in May 2014 NUS established the Future of Work Commission, bringing together 12 commissioners representing a broad range of expertise. The Commission issued a call for evidence from students, students' unions and stakeholders from across the private, public and not-for-profit sectors, on the challenges and solutions to student and study leaver employment issues.

Reflective of NUS's diverse membership, the Commission endeavoured to cover the experience of students in work across further and higher education, in addition to study leavers. Therefore, it has been important to distinguish throughout the report which types of students are being referred to, given the complex nature of the student experience and what a student actually 'looks' like.

Different submissions often refer to a specific type or idea of a student relevant to their remit and area of expertise, so it is useful from the onset to highlight the complexities of such terms. Students are discussed in this report at various stages of their educational lives, including primary and secondary schools, colleges and university. Moreover, whilst students are often young people, and a key objective of the commission and this report is to look at the experience of young students

and graduates in the world of work, the two terms cannot be used interchangeably given the high number of mature students in education.

The Commission received over 40 written evidence submissions. These were submitted to NUS between 1 May-30 June, and evidence was given via two oral evidence hearings on 19 May and 2 June 2014. NUS asked Lancaster University's Work Foundation to review each of the 46 submissions from the Commission and to synthesise this into a series of key themes, issues, and emerging policy recommendations.

Organisation	Commissioner
Employer Representatives	
British Chambers of Commerce (BCC)	Dr. Adam Marshall, Executive Director
Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)	David Pollard, Education and Skills Chairman
CIPD	Peter Cheese, Chief Executive
Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR)	Stephen Isherwood, Chief Executive
Transport for London (TfL)	Tricia Riley, Director of Human Resources
Young People and Employee Representatives	
National Union of Students (NUS)	Toni Pearce, President
Trades Union Congress (TUC)	Paul Nowak, Assistant General Secretary
Bridge Group	Dr. Tessa Stone, Chair of Trustees & former Chief Executive at Brightside Trust
Intern Avenue	Dupsy Abiola, CEO and Founder
Experts and Researchers	
Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (CESI)	Dave Simmonds, Chief Executive
UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES)	Michael Davis, Chief Executive
Unions 21	Sue Ferns, Chair

Introduction

The following witnesses appeared at the oral evidence hearings:

Organisation	Witness
Session 1: Stakeholders – youth-led/youth focused organisations (19 May 10:00-11:00)	
Youth Employment UK (YEUK)	Laura-Jane Rawlings, CEO
vInspired	Araba Webber, Public Affairs and Policy Manager
TUC Young Workers	Anthony Curley, Chair
Intern Aware	Chris Hares, Campaign Manager
Session 2: Stakeholders – connecting organisations (19 May 11:00-12:00)	
Future First	Jake Hayman, Founder
Gradcore	Martin Edmonson, Chief Executive
Group GTI/ Target Jobs	Graham Storey, Chief Executive
National Council of Universities and Business (NCUB)	Rosa Fernandez, Head of Research
Session 3: Stakeholders – information, advice and guidance (2 June 10:00-11:00)	
National Association of Student Employment Services (NASES)	Alison Clarke, Director
Higher Education Careers Service Unit (HECSU)	Jane Artess, Director of Research
The Careers Group (University of London)	Bob Gilworth, Director of College-Based Careers Service
Association of Colleges (AoC)	Teresa Firth, Senior Skills Manager
Impetus Private Equity Foundation	Rhian Johns, Director of Policy and Campaigns
Session 4: Stakeholders – employers/employer bodies (2 June 11:00-12:00)	
KPMG	Alison Heron, Head of Student Recruitment
Digital Youth Academy	Albert Wright, Company Secretary
Allen & Overy LLP	Sarah Cockburn, Senior Manager (Graduate Recruitment)

Written evidence was submitted by representatives of more than 40 organisations:

Contributors	
Allen & Overy LLP	National Association of Student Employment Services
ASET	National Centre for Universities
Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP)	and Business (NCUB)
Bright Futures	National Citizen Service
Business Innovate	National Institute of Adult
Careers Alliance	Continuing Education (NIACE)
Chartered Institute of Personnel	National Union of Students (NUS)
and Development	Prospect
Confederation of British Industry	Public Relations Consultants Association
Digital Youth Academy	RenewableUK
Federation of Small Businesses	Spring Project
Future First	The Found Generation
Gloucestershire College	Think Global
Gradcore	Trades Union Congress (TUC)
Gradintel	Transport for London (TfL)
GTI MEDIA	TUC Young Workers
Higher Education Careers	UK Commission for Employment
Service Unit (HESCU)	and Skills
Impetus Private	Unison
Equity Foundation (IPPF)	Unite
Institute for Employment Studies (IES)	University and
Intellectual Property Office (IPO)	College Union (UCU)
Intern Aware	University of the West of England
KPMG	University of Wales
London Youth	University of Cumbria
London School of Economics	vInspired
Manchester Metropolitan University Students' Union	Youth Employment UK (YEUK)

Introduction

With such a welcome number of partners providing submissions and sharing a large volume of material, we have been able to draw on not only a wide range of views on the key themes and issues facing students and study leavers, but also a breadth of ideas and recommendations for moving forward. It is a challenge to bring this together into a single concise report. Importantly however, this report marks the first time that such a diverse range of expertise has been brought together on the issue of students and employment. Whilst the report and its recommendations display a broad range of views these are suggestions requiring further examination, but it has nonetheless led to the identification of several areas of shared concern across organisations and sectors that do not traditionally intersect.

The evidence submitted has been distilled into key themes and policy recommendations for government, organisations working in the youth employment field, and the student movement to consider. These themes offer a valuable basis for NUS' future policy and campaigns work in this area, and are a starting point for new collaborations on the future of work agenda.

Key Themes

Theme 1: labour market.

Theme 2: education reform.

Theme 3: employability.

Theme 4: guidance and choices.

Theme 5: connecting stakeholders.

Theme 1: labour market

Theme 1: labour market

In recent years the labour market has been a challenging place for students and study leavers. The level of unemployment among young people (aged 16-24) began to increase from 2004 and then accelerated with the onset of recession in 2008. By 2011, there were over 1 million young people who were unemployed. Whilst faring better than those with no qualifications, many students and study leavers have struggled to access employment, and for those that have been able to, opportunities have been of variable quality.

As economic recovery is beginning to take hold, there are some encouraging signs that job market prospects for students and study leavers are beginning to improve. The submissions referred to recent indications that employers are now offering more opportunities for young people, and this has been reflected in recent falls in the level of youth unemployment. Yet with around 764,000 young people unemployed, including 244,000 full-time students looking for part-time work, the situation remains challenging.¹ The youth unemployment rate is still more than three times higher than the adult unemployment rate. Meanwhile, the current economic recovery is characterised by growing levels of employment, but wages have not been increasing. Much of the current job growth is in part-time employment or self-employment.

Many of today's students and study leavers are therefore entering a challenging labour market in which there continue to be difficulties in accessing employment, and the opportunities available are of variable quality. Without sustained action some important challenges will remain – the rise in youth unemployment pre-dated the recession, pointing to structural issues beyond a short-term lack of demand – and the shape of the future labour market is expected to present new challenges to future cohorts of students and study leavers. As part of the Commission, we asked about the main challenges in the student and study leavers job market. Submissions broadly focused on three key areas: the **quantity** of jobs and work experience opportunities available, the **access** students and study leavers have to these opportunities, and the **quality** of the employment that

students and study leavers are entering. The remainder of this chapter summarises the evidence from the Commission on these points.

1.1 Demand and the quantity of jobs

Most respondents to the Commission highlighted an overall lack of opportunities in the student and study leaver jobs market. Particularly since 2008, growth in the number of study leavers was felt to have outpaced the number of jobs created, resulting in intense competition for jobs amongst this group – both with each other and others who have already entered the labour market. There is also evidence to suggest that students are struggling to find jobs that they are able to combine with their studies.

Whilst now falling, youth unemployment levels are still a major concern. Although just below the European average, the youth unemployment rate is still almost three times higher than the adult unemployment rate – a higher ratio than in most other European countries.

The number of opportunities available for students and study leavers varies considerably across the UK, and many submissions highlighted the disproportionate number of opportunities in London and the south of England. This was especially the case for graduates, potentially excluding many who do not have family or social networks in these areas. In addition, one submission suggested that accessing opportunities in local labour markets was particularly problematic for mature students, those studying part-time, or those with caring responsibilities who are required to study and work locally. On the other hand, employers in more remote areas were reported to struggle to attract candidates.

More encouragingly, several respondents pointed to evidence that the job market is picking up. In the first quarter of 2014, employment rose by 345,000. This seems to be having some positive impact on the youth labour market – over the same period the number of young people unemployed fell by 59,000. The benefits of this reduction have been felt more by those who

were not in full-time education rather than current students – in fact the number of full-time students looking for work has increased slightly.

Employer surveys conducted by a range of organisations indicate that employers have begun to offer more opportunities for young people and, importantly, that they intend to offer more in the near future. For example, more than half of employers surveyed by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in December 2013 claimed they offered more apprenticeships, and 44 per cent offered more internships, compared to 12 months previously. Similarly, according to surveys conducted by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), 81 per cent of employers expect to have roles available for 16-24 year olds seeking work, with recruitment set to grow for both graduates and apprenticeships.

Several submissions emphasised the high numbers of job opportunities generated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), pointing to evidence of over 4.8 million SMEs in the UK that employ around 60 per cent of workers. Many larger businesses have the resources needed to engage with the study leaver jobs market, for example through graduate recruitment programmes. But smaller businesses do not have scope to do this. SMEs typically have more sporadic recruitment needs and are likely to be less developed in their application, interview and selection processes.

Therefore, there appear to be weak connections between study leavers and education providers with small to medium-sized enterprises. Many students and study leavers are likely to target their job-seeking efforts at larger well-known employers. Competition is strong for graduate level vacancies with larger recruiters, and this may reflect the promotion of larger businesses as the best graduate employers. In contrast, small employers may lack visibility and are unlikely to receive support in recruiting study leavers.

1.2 Access

However, where jobs are available, many employers remain reluctant to take on students or study leavers.

Whilst several submissions voiced concern about a prevailing narrative focused on the shortcomings of young people, it is important to understand why many employers appear to be reluctant to recruit study leavers and other young people.

Multiple surveys suggest this is primarily due to two key factors: employers report that study leavers lack technical skills (eg. science, technology, engineering and maths, or 'STEM') and employability skills, including communication and time management. These issues are discussed in more detail in sections 3 and 4.

Tackling the barriers that prevent young people from thriving in the labour market is essential if they are to contribute and benefit from future growth in the UK economy. A wider issue to highlight and explore is the impact of socio-economic background in determining a young person's access to the labour market, as well as their agency in determining their career path once they have entered it. A study leaver's social capital, or lack of, is key to the extent and ways in which the following points of access identified by the Commission impact upon them.

Several contributors also highlighted employer recruitment practices as a key barrier for young study leavers accessing work. For those leaving further education, a bias towards graduates in the recruitment of many organisations was believed to disadvantage those study leavers who have taken vocational training routes. For graduates, whilst employer surveys suggest that degree classifications are less important than students' attitudes and aptitudes, some widely used recruitment practices can be highly restrictive.

Minimum requirements, such as a 2:1 in the final degree classification and UCAS scores (BBB or higher at A-level), a bias towards 'preferred institutions' and, from some employers, a requirement to have taken part in one of the companies' work experience schemes can make accessing graduate level opportunities a difficult task for a large proportion of graduates. This was felt in part to be due to an over-reliance on 'spray and pray' marketing techniques, resulting in high applicant volumes and requiring recruiters to filter them crudely.

Theme 1: labour market

The new Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) is designed to encourage a more holistic approach to recording student achievement. However it was felt that HEAR needed more funding and promotion across the student body, small to medium-sized enterprises and their representative groups. In addition, whilst new initiatives such as the HEAR are welcomed by some recruiters, others were reported to prefer their own systems of recruitment.

For all students and study leavers, informal recruitment practices can also present obstacles to accessing the labour market. According to the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) Employer Perspectives Survey 2014, word-of-mouth or personal recommendation persists as the most popular recruitment method for recruiting young people, and was used by just under a quarter of employers (23 per cent), who had recruited a young person in the last 12 months.² Small businesses in particular are more likely to have more informal recruitment processes, putting those new to the jobs market and without connections at a significant disadvantage. Submissions expressed concern that these recruitment techniques unfairly exclude a large proportion of students and study leavers, and have a negative impact on workplace diversity.

Several submissions also highlighted a lack of feedback during the recruitment process. Particularly for those who are new to the job market, understanding why applications are rejected might help them to understand how to improve and be more successful in subsequent applications. Whilst some employers do provide feedback, this does not appear to be widespread.

Several respondents pointed to the high numbers of employment opportunities generated by small and medium-sized enterprises. SMEs are important employers and major recruiters of graduates and other study leavers. At the start of 2012, there were 4.8 million SMEs in the UK. These businesses employ around 60 per cent of the UK workforce (The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills: Business Population Estimates, 2012).

However, there appears to be a large disconnect between study leavers and SMEs. Whilst some respondents felt SMEs were keen to engage in the student market, links between SMEs, universities and

other educational institutions were reported to be weak.

Respondents highlighted difficulties for SMEs in engaging with the study leaver jobs market. Whereas many larger businesses have experience with and the resources needed to engage with the study leaver jobs market, smaller businesses can struggle with the process. SMEs do not necessarily recruit in conjunction with the academic year, and have alternative recruitment practices with fewer demands in the application, interview and selection processes. In addition, ensuring that a new recruit is a good fit with the existing team is particularly important in a small organisation, which may count against new entrants to the labour market with no proven track record in a workplace. Whilst universities may offer some support, including access to sources of matched funding for internships, specialist academic support and consultancy to support the business, small businesses do not feel they receive adequate support from educational institutions or government departments in recruiting study leavers.

On the other side, educational institutions and recruiters can find it difficult to engage with SMEs, in part because there are so many of them, but also because they do not tend to have consistent recruitment demands.

Many students and study leavers also do not consider working for SMEs, instead aiming their job-seeking efforts at larger well-known employers. Competition is strong for graduate level vacancies with larger recruiters, with application to hire rates averaging between 85:1 and 65:1 over recent years. It was suggested that this was partly due to the promotion of larger businesses as the best graduate employers (eg. Times Top 100), and the lack of visibility of small employers on campus.

1.3 Job quality

Before considering the quality of the opportunities that students and study leavers are able to access, it is important to understand what a 'good job' looks like. This is, of course, difficult to define – and will depend largely on what a student or study leaver aims to gain from it. However, from the submissions, several key characteristics emerge.

Student job quality

Some submissions to the Commission focused on characterising a 'good' job for current students.

Whilst submissions largely focused on labour market opportunities for study leavers, according to The National Association of Student Employment Services (NASES), most students within the further and higher education sector now take some form of paid employment while studying. Many do this to financially support themselves during their studies. However, increasingly the student jobs market is also characterised by students looking to gain experience related to their study area and/or career aspirations.

Combining work with education can be beneficial, as long as this is appropriately balanced with the needs of education. Research from the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and UKCES suggest working between 10 and 15 hours a week or less to be an appropriate level; however they also highlight a limited and declining number of such jobs. Some organisations, like NASES and universities, are working to establish what a good student employer means, and some apply employer vetting procedures and promote codes of good practice.

According to the submissions received by the Commission, a 'good' job for students provides:

- A secure job that meets students' financial needs through decent remuneration, whilst recognising that a degree of flexibility is required for students to satisfy the demands of their course
- An opportunity to improve employment prospects upon leaving education
- Portability (opportunities to move jobs between their study and home locations)
- The opportunity to develop a collective voice in their

workplace, in order to ensure that requirements of a 'good' job are met

For current students, bar and restaurant work appear to provide the most opportunities. However, whilst providing an important source of income for some students, it was felt that the nature of this work (eg. unsociable hours) could be detrimental to the university experience. According to NUS' own submission, employment opportunities vary across students' unions – some only employ students in their student-facing services, such as in shops, cafes and entertainment. These jobs can offer flexible working arrangements to fit around a student's studies, and the pay is normally in line with the living wage.

Study leaver job quality

Most submissions focused on what a 'good' job for study leavers would look like. According to the range of submissions received by the Commission, a 'good' job for study leavers (both from further and higher education) provides:

- Training and opportunities to learn new skills – including job-specific and transferable skills
- Support and guidance from employers and colleagues (eg. mentoring and constructive feedback)
- Opportunities to progress to better paid roles with more responsibility
- A variety of work and learning experiences
- Decent pay and conditions
- Job security
- Fair treatment and respect from managers
- A chance to stand out
- The opportunity to develop a collective voice in their workplace in order to ensure both fair remuneration and working practices, plus continuing professional development at the start, and throughout, their career

Some submissions also presented evidence suggesting that young people's priorities around work had begun to shift, with many now placing more emphasis on jobs matching their interests, job satisfaction and the opportunity to make a difference through their work. In addition there is evidence of a large appetite for enterprise amongst young people: according to a survey by vInspired, 66 per cent of 16-21 year olds in

school or college and 68 per cent in university were interested in starting their own business.

In terms of the jobs that study leavers were moving into, most of the submissions focused on graduates. One submission argued that media reports often dwelt on negative trends in the quality of study leaver jobs, without noting that the majority do find worthwhile jobs. But responses to the Commission did raise several concerns about the quality of the jobs study leavers were going into. These concerns include high levels of part-time and self-employment, underemployment, insecurity and low pay, these are summarised as follows.

Several contributors felt that headline employment statistics hide the nature of available jobs, pointing to high levels of underemployment. The number of under-employed workers – those doing part-time jobs because they cannot find full-time ones or wanting more hours in their current jobs – increased by 42 per cent between 2008 and 2012 to reach 3.3 million. In the 16-24 age category, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that under-employment increased from 14.5 per cent in 2008 to 20.6 per cent in 2014.

According to ONS statistics quoted in the Federation of Small Businesses' (FSB) submission, more than one in three recent graduates are employed in a lower skilled job. This is both a concern for individuals – as they are not able to use the skills they have invested in to their potential – and for the wider economy, as the underutilisation of skills is arguably hampering productivity. This also has a knock-on effect for young people with lower skills and qualification levels, as they are crowded out of lower skilled work.

A number of submissions focused on job security.

Several contributors voiced concerns about the disproportionate numbers of young people, including students, who were entering insecure employment, in particular zero hours contracts (ZHCs). According to recent ONS statistics, 18 per cent of workers on ZHCs are in full-time education. Whilst submissions on the whole were wary about the use of ZHCs and their potential to be exploitative, one submission argued that – while for many they are not a suitable means of income – for students they should be protected, because they present flexible opportunities to suit a student lifestyle.

Other submissions were concerned with low pay.

Several submissions argued that many young people leaving education were being forced to take low paid jobs; low pay also means students are working more and spending less time participating in volunteering and other student activities. Meanwhile, a trend of falling wages in real terms is also a clear issue. According to the ONS: 'nominal wage growth below the rate of price inflation has resulted in real wages falling for the longest sustained period since at least 1964'. Real wages grew by 2.9 per cent in the 1970s and 1980s, 1.5 per cent in the 1990s, 1.2 per cent in the 2000s, and 2.2 per cent since the first quarter of 2010.

The increasing need to undergo a period of unpaid work experience was also a major concern of those who submitted evidence to the Commission. Whilst internships and work placements do offer a way of gaining valuable experience for many students and study leavers, they are often limited by a lack of opportunity for growth and progression, and their unpaid or inflexible nature can mean that they are not accessible to all. Yet, graduates are increasingly expected to take unpaid internships in order to access their chosen career.

Are students and study leavers' expectations being met?

As part of the call for evidence we asked respondents whether students' and study leavers' aspirations and expectations meet their outcomes in the job market. Responses were mixed. Whereas some respondents felt that students' understanding of today's challenging labour market means their expectations are not particularly high, others felt study leavers are ill-prepared for the realities of the job market, suggesting that student expectations need to be better managed about how long it may take to achieve a stable position at a desirable level of seniority, responsibility and pay.

According to the National Centre for Universities and Business' (NCUB) Employability Index, there is a sizeable mismatch between what surveyed students expected and what they achieve in the labour market. Almost 80 per cent of students expect to be in graduate level employment within 6 months, but according to ONS figures, little more than half of graduates are in graduate level employment 5 years after graduating. It was also suggested that students have to move jobs in order to advance in the labour market.

Several respondents believe many study leavers experience an anti-climax of expectation upon entering the labour market. This was particularly the case for graduates, possibly exacerbated by a disconnect between the job market and university rhetoric, where students were made to believe that a degree, often a 2:1, will guarantee them future employment success, yet their assumptions are not met upon entering the labour market. However, whilst managing expectations is an important consideration, it must be stated that young people have a right to presume decent employment prospects after leaving full time education and that this is a problem with the labour market rather than students themselves.

Almost all submissions were clear that many aspects of the education system, labour market, and transition between the two did not provide a 'level playing field'.

Despite sustained efforts to widen participation in higher education in particular, submissions highlight persistent inequalities according to socio-economic background and gender. Social background continued to play a key role in shaping an individual's prospects.

Taking into account the realities of the labour market for students, both during study and after they have left full time education, as well as attempts made by the commission to define what a 'good job' for students looks like, there appears to be scope for developing this further. Investigating the implications of developing an accreditation scheme – to be awarded to employers providing quality jobs to working students and graduates – was suggested by several submissions, including NUS. It would allow for continued exploration of the points raised within this chapter in terms of students' interaction with the labour market, providing a tangible way of moving forward and engaging with various stakeholders identified in this report, to promote and encourage best practice.

Summary

The submissions brought out a range of issues around the current and future challenges within the UK labour market. Our review of the submissions identifies several issues that emerged from across the contributions:

The context of economic recovery and future jobs: how the employment prospects of students and study leavers will be shaped by the wider economy.

Demand and the quantity of jobs: the number of job opportunities and the sectors and places where those jobs will be available.

Student and study leaver access to jobs: including unfair recruitment practices and persistent socioeconomic inequalities in access to job opportunities.

The quality of jobs: the type of jobs available for students and study leavers and whether these meet young people's expectations.

Theme 2: education reform

Theme 2: education reform

As a result of fiscal pressures and the belief that vocational education is not equipping study leavers with skills demanded by employers, both further and higher education are undergoing a major period of reform. Key aspects of this highlighted in the commission are the reform of the apprenticeship system, the withdrawal of funding for some vocational courses, and increases in university tuition fees.

Reforms to schools

Several submissions referenced the opportunity to embed pathways into work in primary and secondary education. This was through the teaching of basic and 'soft' skills, as well as enterprise education. Some of the specific issues relating to the provision of secure independent careers guidance for all year 8-13 pupils are discussed in the following section.

Some argued that employability and enterprise education should be embedded throughout the education system at all levels, including further and higher education institutions. This was in line with the recommendations of Lord Young's Review into Enterprise in Education³, to teach people the soft skills they need to succeed. Others argued that enterprise education should be part of the national curriculum and expand extra-curricular activities such as Youth Enterprise.

More explicitly, some submissions felt the OFSTED inspection framework should be strengthened, to encourage schools to place more emphasis on employability in addition to attainment. Others argued that young people should be educated about their employment rights and trade unions through the education system.

A Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) survey of its members showed that over 40 per cent of small businesses had no engagement with schools or colleges and that over a third had no intention of doing so, arguing that businesses should be incentivised to engage with schools as partners, by addressing time and cost barriers.

Reforms to further education

In relation to further education reform, responses to the Commission were largely concerned with apprenticeships. As many employers voice concern that the current education system is not equipping young people with what they need for work, attention has increasingly focused on apprenticeships as a means of tackling youth unemployment, offering employer-directed training to young people. Combining education and work; apprenticeships offer young people the opportunities and competencies employers need.

Submissions shared the view that employer recognition of new vocational standards was essential, and broadly welcomed increased employer involvement in apprenticeship reform. However, several submissions expressed concern that current proposals (eg. routing the funding for apprenticeships via employers, and looking for employers to contribute more to apprenticeship programmes) will instead reduce the number of employers offering apprenticeships. The focus here is particularly on smaller employers, as the administrative or financial burdens could be too great. In addition, concern was expressed about the impact of the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) on achievement rates or quality of delivery.

Concerns were also expressed about tailoring the apprenticeship model to the sectoral make-up of the UK economy. For example, to date, rapidly growing knowledge-based businesses – such as business and software services – are not as well represented within current reforms as traditional apprenticeship industries, such as engineering.

One submission highlighted the need to ensure that all industries were represented in apprenticeship reform. Concerns were also expressed about the limited supply of apprenticeship places, and that recent increases in take-up were dominated by those aged over 25 and existing employees. Looking at the provision of apprenticeships outside of England, the work-based learning sector is waiting to see the impact of apprenticeship reform in England – with particular

Theme 2: education reform

concern around the portability of qualifications across the UK. Whilst responses to the Commission relating to further education were largely concerned with apprenticeships, further education offers a wide range of vocational courses. The key impacts on the further education system highlighted by the Commission were: the withdrawal of funding for some vocational courses, and new requirements relating to the maths and English components of further education study.

Some argued for greater diversity in the training provider market, arguing that employer-led apprenticeship reforms could lead to this. More generally, submissions focused on the need for vocational qualifications to be given greater recognition by universities, and further work to make it easier for people to transition from one stage of education to another.

Others pointed out that the dominant image of young people's participation is disproportionately based on school education, the completion of GCSEs and 'A' levels, and transition to university thereafter. Whereas this is only one of multiple routes available to young people.

The Association of Colleges' figures for 2013/14 showed 846,000 16-18 year olds studied in colleges, compared to 444,000 in school and academy sixth forms. There are also 72,000 apprentices using colleges and 51,000 14-15 year olds. It was pointed out that funding per student is less in colleges than schools (up to £422 per student per year), where the staff spend is 20 per cent higher and VAT exemptions are applied.

Following the Wolf report: Review of Vocational Education, which found that a large number of courses had no or limited value in the labour market, funding for some vocational courses has been withdrawn. One submission suggested that this was a negative development, arguing that Young Apprenticeships, for example, offered valuable opportunities for some 14-16 year olds wishing to pursue vocational education.

Several submissions welcomed government action to ensure that young people who fail to achieve a Level 2 qualification in English and maths by the age of 16 continue to study these subjects until at least age 18, both at college and in apprenticeships. However, one submission suggested that the Skills Funding Agency should be more responsive to providers that are trying

to improve provision but have been refused funding. In addition, it was felt that more could be done to embed English and maths in work activities, so that timetables become less pressured and a more holistic approach is taken to develop employability.

Reforms to higher education

Higher education reform did not feature heavily in responses to the Commission. Tuition fees and student debt were highlighted as a concern, if graduates were unable to access post-study labour market opportunities to generate a return on their investment. Of interest was the impact that differing fee structures across the UK had on a graduate's career choices and the reality of their take home wage.

Other changes in the higher education system highlighted by submissions were: the increasing importance of graduate employability in the strategic agendas of most UK higher education institutions, the introduction of the Key Information Set as a mandatory requirement for all higher education courses (to better inform applicants of the employment prospects of courses), and the Higher Education Achievement report.

It is also clear that across further and higher education, similar and connecting challenges are faced. Increasingly they are expected to demonstrate to government and prospective students the impact that attending their institutions has on the future employability of their students. In addition, they are expected to deliver a curriculum that makes their students 'work ready' when they leave. Education institutions are also encouraged to ensure that businesses of all sizes inform the curriculum. Ensuring small businesses inform the curriculum was thought to be a key challenge for all education types. Of interest was the impact of the Scottish government's policy of directing funding to courses focusing on growth areas within its economy, as a means of ensuring not just the employability of graduates, but also producing skills needed for Scotland's future labour market.

One submission also argued the case for further work, to make it easier for people to transition between vocational and higher education. While some higher apprenticeships allow the apprentice to simultaneously

achieve an undergraduate degree, vocational qualifications are still generally given little recognition by universities.

Summary

The submissions brought out a number of issues around current reforms in further and higher education. The issues raised were not as extensive as within other themes. But this is likely to reflect the fact that both education systems are undergoing a major period of reform in a context of constrained public spending. Both face similar challenges with teaching institutions that must increasingly demonstrate to government and prospective students how they affect the future employability and work readiness of their students.

Our review of the submissions identified several key issues:

- Reforms to schools: in particular opportunities to embed pathways into work in primary and secondary education
- Reforms to further education: in particular, the response to the Wolf review and changes in vocational courses, including the role of apprenticeships and changes in employer involvement in the apprenticeship system
- Reforms to higher education: including the effects on tuition fees and student debts

Theme 3: guidance and choices

Theme 3: guidance and choices

Almost all of the submissions emphasised the importance of high quality careers Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) in enabling young people to make informed decisions about their study and career options. The consensus on the importance of careers advice is clear, with concerns about the current system raised by employers, professional bodies, sector skills councils, educational institutes, students, recruiters and other intermediaries. It was also evident that whilst there is a large amount of information available on careers, students and young people are not strongly supported to navigate this with independent guidance.

There appears to be a clear case for investing in IAG sessions, led by qualified careers professionals and delivered within a wider system of careers education. These can inspire young people and support them to achieve their ambitions, encouraging them to consider a wide range of career options and thereby support greater diversity in the workforce. Many submissions raised concern about the mismatch between the needs of employers and the expectations of young people. There is a shortage of young people pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering and maths. Careers advice can raise awareness of the kinds of opportunities young people can access in the labour market, thereby delivering a more responsive skills system.

Early and continued IAG at all stages of a young person's education is also important, in ensuring equality of access to careers typically undertaken by a certain demographic or 'type' of student. NCUB's submission highlighted evidence of a significant gender gap in the take up of engineering – over half of higher education entrants are women, yet only 16 per cent of engineering students are female and only 8 per cent of engineers are women – thus depriving engineering employers of significant talent. Information from an early age about the range of careers, the qualifications required and various avenues available for entering them, are key to ensuring that students do not limit their career options through a lack of information on how subjects and other choices determine their future options.

Quality of careers information, advice and guidance

The overwhelming majority of submissions were clear that the current system of careers information, advice and guidance has major shortcomings. This matters because if young people are not supported to think through their longer-term career prospects, they may only take into account the initial salary and not weigh up the value of the training they receive or their future career prospects.

There is a perception that social networks are increasingly important in terms of securing work experience and even finding paid employment. But almost half of young people on free school meals do not know anyone in a job they would like to do (Future First YouGov 2013 poll). The provision of good careers advice and wider career and work-related education is therefore key in terms of boosting social mobility, offering young people a chance to think through the steps they need to take to boost their employability and enter a particular role.

There was a range of views relating to the quality of careers provision in different settings. Schools now have a responsibility to 'secure independent careers guidance for all year 8-13 pupils'. There was much ambiguity in the initial guidance on this change, which, in combination with the fact that no funding was specifically set aside to deliver on the responsibility, seems to have impacted on the quality and level of provision within schools.

Submissions tended to focus on the provision available to young people in schools. Many submissions were highly critical of the services made available through schools and colleges, with concerns raised about the lack of impartiality on the part of schools. This is backed up by recent assessments of the standard of careers advice in schools, which indicate that many young people are not being given the chance to consider a range of career options, but rather encouraged to simply stay on in school.

Theme 3: guidance and choices

Other submissions reported that students were being encouraged to stay in school irrespective of their interests, with some schools telling pupils and parents that the raising of the participation age meant that they had to stay on in school, rather than explaining that they can also undertake work-based options. It was suggested that schools had little incentive to prioritise employer engagement, and that the pupil funding formula has served to keep disaffected students in school when a work-based learning option might have been more appropriate. Concern was also expressed about the lack of awareness in schools about further education options, such as apprenticeships.

A number of submissions raised concern that the quality of careers services was not being monitored sufficiently. The result is that standards of provision vary significantly between schools. In a recent study, Unison found that 28 per cent of schools were using their own staff to provide careers advice, and 36 per cent of those schools were delivering advice through teaching assistants and support staff. A number of submissions made the case for the skilled nature of careers advice work, and suggested that an accredited register of providers for schools could be introduced to raise standards. Some submissions argued that careers professionals – practitioners qualified to level 6 or above, as recommended by the Careers Profession Task Force – had a role to play in guaranteeing the quality of careers advice, but that they had been sidelined by recent reforms.

Recent guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE) to schools has emphasised that careers advice should be independent. One submission noted that whilst the new guidance encourages greater engagement between schools and the National Careers Service, as well as school visits by employers and providers, schools only have to offer the opportunity for other providers to inform pupils, but does not require them to do so. It was felt that this needed to be followed up, with OFSTED potentially checking that schools are adhering to the guidance. Indeed, since September 2013, OFSTED is now giving careers guidance assessments a higher priority in judging the leadership and management of schools.

The recent announcement that 16 and 17 year olds would be able to access personalised advice through the Jobcentre was welcomed, with one submission

calling for the Jobcentre to work with experts in the sector, to provide early initial assessment and support programmes.

Higher education careers services received less critical attention, though submissions did raise concerns that standards of provision vary considerably between institutions. The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) described how university careers services are ‘moving to a model of delivering to large groups, online materials and coaching approaches – rather than reliance on being absolute sources of information, giving in-depth counselling and guidance or being able to see students individually’. With careers information oriented towards traditional sectors such as law and finance, concerns were raised that students would miss out on opportunities in new and growing industries. Students also raised concerns that careers services tended to direct them toward careers in large law, accountancy, and management consultancy firms, neglecting potential opportunities in smaller firms.

Sources of careers information, advice and guidance

Whilst job and careers fairs were judged to be useful, it was noted that some employers limited their involvement to Russell Group universities, with fewer attending fairs at universities in the Million+ and University Alliance groups. It was stressed that these fairs also overlooked the needs and ambitions of individuals and could not replace a personalised, face-to-face service.

It was felt that provision for study leavers was lacking, with students only able to access limited services once they had left their institution. One submission from a group of young professionals noted that Jobcentre services were not adapted for graduates. In recognition of this limited provision, a case was made for schools to provide former students with career development support (Future First, GradCore). This could be open to jobseekers, but also study leavers who have progressed into work that does not match their skills or interests.

The National Careers Service, launched in 2012, offers advice services through three channels – face-to-face, over the phone and online. However face-to-face

careers advice sessions are limited to adults, and whilst the NCS' online and telephone services are open to young people, some submissions suggested they were not well adapted to this group and there was limited awareness of this provision.

Submissions noted that online services were likely to appeal to young people and there are a number of resources young people can draw on outside of government-funded websites, including Plotr and Skills to Succeed. At the same time young people might need support to critically examine career and employment-related information. Many websites offer generalised support and vacancies information that may not relate to student interests. It was further noted that the NCS services were not being promoted effectively.

Relevance of careers information, advice and guidance

Others proposed that contact with employers should be integrated into a purposeful careers education programme in schools, to ensure relevance to the workplace. This also applies to colleges and universities, where employers can add immense value to the curriculum. Submissions noted that employers and working people can contribute to the career development of young people by participating in career talks, providing placements, visits, shadowing opportunities, simulations and web-based resources, contributing to careers education activities such as CV writing workshops, mock interview and enterprise programmes, and by providing contacts. There were also calls for enterprise education to be incorporated into careers education. See chapter four for more on the role of enterprise education.

But employer engagement in careers education, it was argued, has been undermined by recent funding decisions and the removal of the duty for schools to provide work-related learning and careers education. This has reduced the scope to develop school-employer links within the curriculum. Aimhigher and Education Partnerships had provided brokerage between businesses and schools, but their funding was removed. The Career Sector Stakeholders Alliance highlighted international evidence that school-based guidance systems tend to have weak links with the labour market. OFSTED's recent assessment tallies

with this evidence; links with employers were identified as the weakest aspect of career guidance in the 60 schools visited.

It was argued that, for employer contributions to be effective, they required logistical support, curriculum space, and receptive schools and young people. The Careers Sector Stakeholders Alliance (CSSA) argued they should form part of a properly planned, delivered and reviewed careers education and guidance programme run by schools. They also recognised this would be a challenge, requiring support at a local level for schools and smaller businesses hoping to contribute.

A need for targeted intervention at key transition points

The case was made for targeting investment in career guidance and development at key transition points.

This would ensure that young people are supported as they finish their studies and transition into work. But there was consensus on the need for 'all ages, all stages' careers education. Subject choices, many of which will be made early in school life, were seen to have an impact on later choices made by students regarding their career.

As such there is a need to ensure that careers advice is made available to young people as early as possible.

Many students access careers advice toward the end of their studies, but this means that they have little time to take the steps needed to boost their employability. Therefore, efforts must be made to ensure that students have access to IAG throughout their studies, including secondary schooling and from the onset of their further and higher education courses. Some universities are taking steps to identify early aspirations at the outset of higher education, so that support services can be tailored from the outset.

It is also important to recognise the role of parents and carers in influencing young people's career choices.

But as many parents have little idea of the range of jobs that are available, it is important that careers services also reach out to parents to ensure they are informed about the kinds of opportunities that are available and what is required to follow particular career paths. Similarly, where students and their families live can

Theme 3: guidance and choices

impact upon the extent to which they are exposed to a wide range of career choice and opportunities. It would therefore be useful for young people to have greater opportunity to access information about the labour market specific to their geographical location.

Supplementing early and ongoing careers advice, it was also highlighted that young people need to be simultaneously provided with information on employment rights. Intern Aware pointed to their experience running workshops with students. They have found that providing increased knowledge of employment rights can boost young people's confidence, allowing them to more readily challenge bad practices that they encounter early in their careers as working students and graduates.

Summary

One of the main themes that emerged through the submissions is around the guidance made available to young people when making choices about educations and careers. Our review of the submissions identifies several related issues that emerged from across the contributions:

- Social networks and family: the key role of informal advice from peers and family
- Demonstrating value of careers guidance: how effective guidance can make a positive difference to people's choices
- Information on education outcomes: what a course or qualification offers to future career prospects
- Guidance in schools and further education: the advice services provided in schools and colleges
- Guidance in Jobcentre Plus: the advice services provided to young jobseekers
- Guidance in University careers services: the advice services provided to students and study leavers in higher education

Theme 4: employability

Theme 4: employability

On leaving school, college or university, many young people will struggle to find their place in an increasingly competitive labour market. There are numerous pathways into work, but also many people competing to get on them. As the vast majority of submissions made clear, in order to successfully negotiate these pathways young people will need to be able to draw on a wide range of skills and capabilities.

‘Employability skills’ can encompass skills and capabilities such as resilience, communication and negotiation, but the term is also used to describe a wide range of attributes, attitudes, behaviours and competencies that employers value. These include self-assurance, self-discipline, motivation, coping under pressure, self-awareness, decision-making, and time management, among others. Some employers also look for a set of ‘intrapreneurial’ skills – a term that refers to the ability to use initiative, take the lead and solve problems.

Young people can gain these skills in a number of ways, with submissions variously detailing the role that volunteering, work experience, internships, and traineeships can play, both in equipping young people for the world of work and their own self-development. In addition, many submissions emphasised the role that ‘enterprise education’, and the promotion of an ‘enterprise culture’ can play in boosting the employability of students.

It is clear that employers value these skills. According to the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) the most important factors that employers take into account when recruiting school and college leavers are their attitudes to work (78 per cent), their general aptitudes (57 per cent), and literacy and numeracy (50 per cent) ahead of academic results alone (37 per cent). An even greater proportion of employers (88 per cent) cited attitudes and aptitudes as important when it came to employing graduates.

The importance of work experience

There is clear evidence that work experience can improve the employment prospects of young unemployed people. Students who take the opportunity to gain this experience are likely to be favoured by employers, who believe that those with work experience have a better understanding of, and attitude towards, work. Over three quarters of employers agree that relevant work experience is essential to ensure young people are ready to work, two thirds were more likely to hire a young person with work experience over someone with none. Work experience may also have a positive impact on a young person’s studies, through improving communication and time management skills.

Developing employability skills in education

Yet submissions also highlighted evidence suggesting that many employers do not think that the education system is providing young people with the right skills.

The 2013 CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey found that 35 per cent of employers were unhappy with school and college leavers’ attitudes to work, and close to one third were not satisfied with the team working skills (30 per cent), basic numeracy (31 per cent), and literacy/use of English (32 per cent) of young people entering working life. At the graduate level, employers expressed most dissatisfaction with candidates’ business and customer awareness (48 per cent), international cultural awareness (47 per cent) and levels of relevant work experience (41 per cent). However, the picture is mixed, as the latest UKCES Employer Perspectives Survey, of 18000 employers, finds that the majority of those surveyed think they are well prepared. The level of preparedness increases with education, with 81 per cent of employers saying graduates are well prepared for work, 73 per cent saying the same of 17-18 year-old college leavers, 60 per cent saying it for 17-18 year-old school leavers, and 53 per cent saying it for 16 year-old school leavers.⁴

There was a feeling amongst stakeholders that it was never too early for young people to start developing these skills and acquiring work experience. Research suggests that the greater the number of interactions that a young person has with an employer, the less likely they are to become NEET: 'not in education, employment or training.'

Access and opportunity

Of the 18000 employers surveyed in the UKCES Employer Perspectives Survey of 2014⁵, 66 per cent think work experience is critical or significant when recruiting. However, only 30 per cent of these employers actually offer work experience. When looking at access and opportunity to work experience, submissions were clear that more employability support should be offered to students whilst they are studying. Employers can offer a range of opportunities to young people. Some provide short-term work experience placements, work shadowing or internships for students; others offer longer placements that may form part of a degree course. Some engage directly in schools, contributing to broader employability initiatives by providing advice on CV-writing, mentoring and other measures. Nonetheless, some submissions highlighted a lack of opportunity for young people as a key challenge.

Subsidised graduate internships were thought to have been useful in increasing the number of opportunities available. Furthermore, a number of submissions highlighted the need for a coordinating body – whether representative body, union, local authority or private company – to facilitate business engagement in the education system. Many employers already engage with local schools and colleges, but some find this more challenging. Some 40 per cent of small businesses surveyed by the FSB had no engagement with schools or colleges, suggesting that additional support is required to facilitate engagement at this level. Some intermediaries are working to open up access to placements in small and medium-sized enterprises whilst offering support to graduates. Employer engagement can also be facilitated by membership bodies, such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), who co-ordinate mentoring and employability programmes, such as Steps Ahead Mentoring.

Many submissions were concerned about equal access to work experience and employability opportunities. A longitudinal study of higher education applicants in 2006 found that labour market opportunity did not appear to be allocated solely on merit, but also on the basis of a number of external factors such as the type of university attended, age, parental education and ethnic background.

Short-term approaches to funding employability initiatives were also a key challenge. This has led to high staff turnover and the loss of experienced facilitators. Where local authorities or housing associations offer these initiatives, access was often restricted to particular areas, potentially excluding young people from a programme that would benefit them. In addition, submissions suggested that funding levels could be highly variable across higher education institutions.

Conversely a number of submissions also raised concern that young people were being asked to balance an increasing number of commitments with their studies. Participation in clubs and societies costs money and time that students may need to put into their studies, with similar restraints often applying to parents and carers of school-aged children. To enable students to combine education and work it may be necessary to adjust the current balance of teaching hours and course length, as well as taking action to increase the number of small jobs.

Quality work experience

Students may undertake a variety of work activities, encompassing paid, often part-time work, volunteering and work placements. What might be deemed good in a part-time job (flexibility, convenience and ease) is likely to be different from a good work experience placement, where relevance and the opportunity to undertake real tasks in a supportive environment are likely to be important.

Many submissions highlighted the importance of structured placements and opportunities for students. Organisations such as the CIPD are supporting employers to be 'youth-friendly' and offering guidelines on good placements. Young people undertaking work-related activity will often be gaining their first experience of employment. As such,

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employers and providers have a responsibility to ensure support as they settle into the workplace. Factors that are likely to be particularly useful to young people include: having a clear induction process, providing input on workplace etiquette, and offering a closing interview so that outcomes can be discussed and young people can identify the skills and experience they have acquired.

But several submissions expressed concern about the prevalence of unpaid internships. It was noted that there is a lack of awareness amongst employers and young people about the legal position on internships, and the distinction between workers and interns: 'interns with set hours and responsibilities are workers and therefore should at least receive the National Minimum Wage'. Further concerns about internships are highlighted later in this section.

It was felt that schools, colleges and universities needed to do more to integrate work experience into their courses. Yet support for making work experience compulsory, or a condition of graduation was mixed. There are a number of university courses that already offer short internships and placements to students as a part of their course. Some submissions expressed concern about the quality and relevance of short placements, which are unlikely to provide students with sufficient experience or a reference. Whilst these courses have 'raised the profile of skills amongst a university community focused on knowledge... they are largely devoid of context and unrelated to their main programme of learning'. However, other submissions emphasised the value of acquiring any form of work experience, particularly for young people with weaker employability skills or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Students and study leavers can benefit from ongoing support during work experience placements. This is in addition to the initial stages of employment, to help them adapt to working life. The importance of opportunities to build on placements and progress was also highlighted as an important indicator of a good quality placement. Provision of such support is, however, subject to funding. There are examples of initiatives that aim to provide holistic support to young people. For example London Youth offer an industry-specific programme called Build It, which supports young people in the London Borough of Lambeth

to gain skills and access training. Once participants have developed their skills, they are placed with local contractors for a 2-6 week placement, and continue to receive one-to-one support from a youth worker. This contact can be maintained for the first six months of employment, helping young people and employers to work through any issues.

Work experience initiatives

Robust evidence on the impact of many schemes was lacking. But some submissions were able to provide evidence of improved outcomes for students, as well as the wider benefits of acquiring employability skills.

There was broad support, particularly from employer representatives, for the initiatives that the government has introduced to help young people into work. Whilst the scrapping of the statutory requirement for young people to attain work experience at Key Stage 4 was seen as a step backwards, the introduction of traineeships, alongside government funding for apprenticeships, were thought to have enabled small and medium-sized enterprises to help to train young people. These businesses might otherwise struggle to employ young, inexperienced workers.

Traineeships were introduced in 2013, and comprise a work placement, work preparation training, and maths and English support. They are available to some young people (aged 16-23) who are not in employment, but have a reasonable chance of securing employment or an apprenticeship within 6 months. One submission expressed concern that the initiative's target is too narrow, and called for the scheme to be opened up to all 16-24 year olds that could benefit, particularly those over 19 with Level 2 qualifications.

Volunteering can have a number of benefits for students and graduates. Research commissioned by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement has found that half of recent graduates who are in paid work had reported that volunteering had helped them to secure employment.

Education providers

There is a growing focus on employability in higher education. An increasing number of universities are introducing careers and employability modules that attract credit into students' courses. Many students' unions in further and higher education provide opportunities for students to participate in classroom-based skills development, of key skills such as communication, teamwork and leadership. Often these courses are linked to core training for activity group leaders, such as compulsory sports club training. Leeds University's work in this area was highlighted, as they offer events management classes covering event planning, lighting and project management.

Submissions also emphasised the importance of embedding entrepreneurship at all levels of the curriculum. With particular emphasis on college and university settings, this was seen to be a way of overcoming limited employer engagement, where demand for external employer activity exceeded supply. The NUS pointed to their Careers Development Award as a model to build upon, whereby students participate in workshops and lectures, undertake CV development exercises, work experience, or volunteering. These awards often link up to The Higher Education Achievement Report.

Internships

Internships are a feature of the graduate labour market, but also impact on college students who seek work in sectors such as media, law and fashion, where internships function as the main point of entry. For example, the National Council for the Training of Journalists found that 82 per cent of new entrants to journalism had done an internship, of which 92 per cent were unpaid.

However, for various reasons it is not possible for many young people to undertake an unpaid internship. In the largest online UK internship survey to date, 87 per cent of respondents said they were paid nothing or below the national minimum wage. Moreover, many internships are located in London, so would be unavailable to those who cannot afford to work in the city for free during the period of the internship. Those young people who are unemployed and claiming

Jobseeker's Allowance are generally not able to continue claiming the allowance whilst they undertake the internship, because it would mean that they would be unavailable to accept offers of employment and attend interviews at the Jobcentre.

Whilst many employers offer fair pay on internship schemes, there was concern about a lack of awareness among employers and young people about their legal position. The distinction between workers and interns is that interns with set hours and responsibilities are workers, and therefore should at least receive the National Minimum Wage. Just 12 per cent of employers are aware of their legal obligations to pay interns if they are 'workers'. Plus, 80 per cent of young people are unaware of the Government's Pay and Work Rights Helpline.

Enterprise

An 'enterprise culture' is one that offers students many opportunities to interact with employers in different professional contexts, with project-based learning and placements. Developing a culture of enterprise is likely to be particularly important for students on certain degree programmes. In a survey of graduates who had undertaken creative arts, design, media and crafts first degrees, 45 per cent had worked on a freelance basis, and a quarter had started a business in their early careers (4-6 years after graduating)

Some evidence suggests that enterprise education can encourage more young people to set up a business. But the main aim of promoting enterprise education should be to nurture enterprise skills and experiences through the education system. One submission noted that the focus on enterprise and self-employment as a means of strengthening young people's employability meant that it was important that discussions about Intellectual Property were included. Submissions also highlighted the need for students to have prominent role models from the world of business to relate and learn from.

Summary

The submissions brought out a wide number of challenges relating to what are loosely referred to as 'employability skills'. The perceived work-readiness of young people when leaving education was of particular interest to employers. Submissions discussed issues around how a young person can become work-ready and the role of individuals, education institutions, and employers in developing these skills. Our review of the submissions identified several related issues including:

- Defining employability skills: understanding what skills employers want
- Defining entrepreneurial skills: understanding if young people can be better prepared for how business works
- Developing employability through education: discussing how employability and entrepreneurial skills can be acquired within education
- Developing employability through employment experience: discussing how employability and entrepreneurial skills are acquired when in work
- Developing employability through volunteering and internship: acquiring skills with voluntary work on work placements

Theme 5: connecting partners

Theme 5: connecting partners

There is no single organisation or individual responsible for tackling youth unemployment. In order to deliver quality employability and careers education initiatives, employers, education providers, intermediaries and stakeholders need to communicate with one another.

Submissions highlighted a number of examples of stakeholders working together. This includes stakeholders linking further and higher education provision, or through engagement between university careers services and local and regional businesses. But many submissions made it clear that the links between various stakeholders were not strong enough. This was particularly clear when it came to links between education providers and small businesses, and in the context of careers provision in schools. It was suggested that many employers are keen to engage with schools but find it difficult to approach them, or lack the time and expertise to approach individual establishments.

Whilst there are a number of overlapping services that seek to provide careers support, one submission suggested that there had been a 'proliferation of uncoordinated and potentially wasteful funding initiatives,' with organisations such as the Department for Education, Education Funding Agency, Skills Funding Agency, Department for Business Innovation, and Skills and Department for Work and Pensions often working in isolation and without sufficient coordination of funding from other sources. Furthermore, whilst the new guidance from the Department for Education promotes greater engagement between schools and local employers, one submission expressed concern that the guidance did not require schools to allow students to hear from other providers about the opportunities that they offer.

A lack of resources, and difficulty in identifying and developing relationships with stakeholders, were identified as barriers to greater collaboration. One submission noted that competition between institutions can reinforce inequality and does not benefit students and employers.

Many submissions discussed the need to provide more support to enable improved coordination,

through national or local initiatives and partnerships. Whilst some discussed the role of regulation and inspection frameworks, as a means of ensuring that particular stakeholders prioritise engagement, the submissions placed greater emphasis on the need for an independent body, or 'enabling structure' to mediate between various parties and encourage collaboration. An existing structure in a position to take on and develop this role are Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), however it was also highlighted that these, or any alternative structures, must also take into account other local partners and, importantly, the voices of students and young people themselves. Similarly, it remains to be seen as to whether the government's announcement in December 2014, of the creation of a new careers and enterprise company for schools, will be an effective solution for creating meaningful local partnerships between schools and other important stakeholders.

Work towards the creation of local enabling structures is vital if partners are to engage students and young people in a consistent way, throughout all stages of school and beyond. The Commission would suggest that potential structures to fulfil this role are examined, developed and resourced, as a key step towards engaging young people as workers in their local economies, and preparing them for work in other locations nationally and internationally

Summary

Finally, the submissions brought out examples of challenges around connecting partners and coordinating stakeholders, to deliver actions that support young people into jobs. These challenges include:

- Multiple government funding streams: risks of confusion and duplication from policy initiatives and programmes
- Lack of coordination and support to strengthen links between education and employers: the relationships between education providers and employers are often weak.

Concluding remarks

Concluding remarks

The NUS has called for a New Deal for students, and vital to this vision is quality work. Crucially, it calls for a New Deal that does not place the blame of youth unemployment and poor quality work at the door of students and young people, but instead the creation of a labour market that provides meaningful skills development opportunities and employment with decent remuneration.

In a world where the nature of work is changing, and will continue to do so, current students will be the first generation of workers to know nothing but the new status quo. So it has been vital to investigate how this new reality can be harnessed, and where necessary improved upon, in order to ensure that students are equipped for the world of work and have the capacity to call for quality employment as no less than their due.

The disconnect between aspiration and reality of opportunity for study leavers is stark. Referenced in this report, the NCUB's Employability Index highlighted the sizeable mismatch between what surveyed students expect and what they achieve in the labour market – almost 80 per cent of students expect to be in graduate level employment within 6 months, but according to the Office for National Statistics, little more than half of graduates are in graduate level employment 5 years after graduating. Young workers increasingly find themselves in precarious work that is characterised by fixed-term, short-term, agency, zero hours, temporary or part-time work or placements. With low pay – and often no pay – for the requisite internships that are key to accessing certain careers, students are entering the labour market to undertake jobs that fit neither their skills nor their aspirations, and more importantly do not necessarily provide the developmental opportunities that would allow them to progress in their chosen careers.

Moreover, there is a tension between so-called flexibility, which can in fact work for students as they juggle work experience and employment with their studies, and what often amounts to insecure work that does not allow young people to meet their financial needs to live decently or develop their employability skills. Therefore, more has to be done to ensure that opportunities are created for new entrants into the labour market, and also that study leavers are linked more effectively to existing opportunities already provided.

To this end, the Future of Work Commission was established in order to bring together a range of partners and stakeholders, to identify and explore these key issues facing working students and graduates, and importantly those who are currently excluded from the labour market.

The submissions to the Commission produced over 90 suggested recommendations, an examination of which can form the basis of future work on this issue and which need to be explored by government, employers, education providers as well as the student movement itself. These collated suggestions are outlined in Appendix 1, the recurring themes from which are summarised in the following table.

Recurring themes from recommendations submitted to the Commission:

	Labour market	Education reform	Employability	Guidance and choices	Connecting partners
Students and study leavers	Consider full range of employers and geographies		Be prepared to volunteer and take entry level jobs	Support other students. Role of alumni	
Student movements and youth sector	Ensure Student Union staff receive living wages		Encourage young people to use careers advice services		
Employers and business groups	Increase flexibility in employment (eg. hours to fit with study, home-working)		Promote recruitment practices that recognise volunteering experience		Role of LEPs and Chambers in encouraging employers to offer work experience
Education providers	Promote work experience on campus and in colleges	Increase development of vocational education and job placement	Embed 'enterprise' in education. Promote volunteering	Support advice services, accredited careers staff	Engage employers in governance and admission processes
Government and policy makers	Funding for national student employment project and job guarantees	Favour vocational education and apprenticeships, Education of enterprise skills and workers' rights	Grants and tax-breaks for employers offering work experience. Jobcentres to promote volunteering	Funding for career advice services. Strengthen destinations data. Legal clarity on internships	Funding to support employer engagement. Devolve funds

Concluding remarks

The report has identified areas of shared common ground and concern amongst its contributors, and key to the recommendations were three over-arching themes identified by the commission; the quality of jobs, access to opportunities, and the variability and quantity of employment. What is clear from this report is that to tackle these key issues a more joined up approach is needed, with a far greater commitment to collaborative working between government, employers, educators, trade unions, students, and the student movement. This will ensure that young people are entering the labour market having had multiple opportunities to engage with the world of work; to develop their thoughts about it, hopes for their role within it, and foster meaningful and transferrable skills. It is also clear that key to this is a quality careers service that amounts to more than a tick-box exercise for students. It should be an ongoing process involving all stakeholders throughout an individual's school life – through further and higher education and beyond – to the first years of a young person's career.

It is to be hoped that this report will catalyse much-needed discussion and collaboration on this issue. With the various stakeholder groups identified within this report ensuring all students and young people have the opportunity to access quality employment, in a vibrant labour market receptive to their needs and circumstances, and aware of the many opportunities that students and young people can bring.

Endnotes

Endnotes

¹ ONS (2015) UK Labour Market, January 2015. Available at http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_390755.pdf

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/373770/14.11.11._EPS_2014_-_Executive_Summary_full.pdf

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/338749/EnterpriseforAll-lowres-200614.pdf

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/373769/14.11.11._EPS_2014_-_Main_Report_full_V2.pdf

⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/373769/14.11.11._EPS_2014_-_Main_Report_full_V2.pdf

Appendix 1

Appendix 1

Appendix 1: collated recommendations from submissions

The commission received over 90 individual recommendations from the submissions that it received. These set out a range of propositions requiring action on the part of the government, education providers, employers, unions, students and study leavers, as well as other intermediaries.

Recommendations from the submissions have been collated and are outlined below, with further information available, in many instances, in the original submissions. It is important to highlight that these are collated suggestions from a range of submitting organisations to the commissions, rather than report recommendations themselves. They are included with the hope of driving engagement and further discussion on the issue of students and work forward.

Many of the recommendations are concerned with improving careers advice and education, in addition to improving employer engagement in the education system. But the issue of unpaid internships also attracted a lot of attention. Submissions also set out some ideas for ways to create quality opportunities for students, enable study leavers to gain experience of work, and develop their employability skills.

Government should...

Offer a stronger vision for the future of careers advice

- Produce a public statement from the National Careers Council on the future vision and strategy for the NCS
- Extend the remit of Sector Skills Councils to include setting a sector-specific careers strategy

Extend careers information, advice and guidance provision for young people

- Improve and promote the services that the National Careers Service make available to young people, including investment in marketing the NCS.
- Development of localised face-to-face careers support through the development of school-based

career development offices, to serve students and alumni

- Improve the availability of online information and tools for careers guidance, including facilitating the creation of a national online resource, to promote careers within small high growth, graduate-friendly companies to entrepreneurial students. The case for a national small business jobs portal has not been proven, but warrants further thought. Links could be strengthened between the NCS website and the quality-assured local labour market, with information from local NCS providers. Plus, offer career reviews at key transition points, to help people develop their skills
- Support the development of a national alumni buddying system, to provide informal but practical careers information, advice, guidance and access to opportunities for young people. New college/university entrants would be matched to current students, and college/university students would be matched with former students from their old school. The ex-students would have studied the same course at any educational institution, would be presently in work, and have indicated an openness in supporting fellow alumni
- Create a simple information resource/campaign for small high-growth businesses to understand the availability of graduate talent, the benefits they can bring to the business, and the process to attract and recruit them.
- Take the lead in the mass rebranding of small and medium-sized businesses, to create a sub-section of the market (high growth businesses) that would benefit from the most able and brand-conscious students

Ensure that apprenticeships offer a sustainable route into skilled occupations

- Favour apprenticeships at Level 3 or above, and support uptake of Level 3 vocational qualifications outside of apprenticeships

- Monitor the quality of, and attainment in, apprenticeships offered through the AGE grant

Offer funding and incentives to improve the number of work experience and employment opportunities, and strengthen employer engagement

- Introduce a fund to support the delivery of a nationally-mandated, locally-run system to support employer engagement in schools
- Offer grant funding or an incentive to encourage employers to offer high quality work experience opportunities, building on the AGE initiative. This could also take the form of a growth incentive through which the business is given greater support to invest in growing and expanding the business
- Offer tax breaks for employers who take on placement students
- Fund a national student employment project, encouraging organisations to advertise vacancies via NASES to distribute to Job Shops direct, through a national jobs portal
- Support the development of a student friendly employer accreditation scheme

Ensure that employment and skills provision supports young people to enter sustainable employment

- Commit to a job guarantee for every young person who has been out of work for more than 6 months
- There needs to be greater recognition by Jobcentre Plus that, where appropriate, jobseekers should be able to undertake relevant and meaningful work experience, volunteering and internships without incurring sanctions
- Ensure that training providers are incentivised to ensure that young people enter sustainable employment, in addition to achieving qualifications and outcomes
- Endorse National Student Employment Week. This may go some way to stop the perception of many employers that students and graduates should be delighted to work for them unpaid, 'to get valuable experience'

Better regulation of internships

- Disseminate Department for Business and Innovation and Skills advice on good quality internships
- Improve enforcement of national minimum wage legislation, prosecuting more employers who fail

to pay it, to deter non-compliance. HMRC could proactively investigate internships advertised through well-known websites, where adverts suggest that interns will undertake set hours and tasks, but specify wages below the national minimum wage or expenses only. HMRC could also contact these companies to remind them of their duty to pay the National Minimum Wage, where someone is working rather than an intern (eg. set hours and tasks)

- Provide further information through the Pay and Work Rights Helpline, to clarify the investigation process and level of confidentiality that informants can expect
- Tackle the current situation in which students and graduates are interning indefinitely at their own cost. This can be done through various means, namely excluding existing exemptions, and designating individuals who have undertaken work experience for over four weeks to be classed as a 'worker,' as described in the National Minimum Wage Act. In cases of work experience, internships could be time-limited, possibly by introducing a four-week rule
- Ensure that third parties are able to complain about non-enforcement of the National Minimum Wage, strengthening mechanisms to make complaints to HMRC

Ensure that young people learn about enterprise and employment whilst at school

- Make enterprise education part of the National Curriculum and expand extra-curricular activities such as Youth Enterprise
- Strengthen the OFSTED inspection framework, to encourage schools to place more of an emphasis on employability, in addition to attainment
- Ensure that young people are educated about their employment rights and trade unions through the education system
- Introduce a reduced fee structure and financial contribution to academic institutions, in recognition of the increased costs involved in providing key courses. This would incentivise course uptake and ease the financial burden on individuals accessing further or higher education, especially for in-demand subjects such as STEM-related degrees

Support coordinated action between stakeholders

- Establish a Secretary of State for Youth Employment or Youth Minister

Appendix 1: recommendations from submissions

- Support Work Programme providers to work together, to join up their work with employers
- Support more small and medium-sized enterprises to engage in the Social Mobility Business Compact
- Devolve remaining Youth Contract funding, with additional £800m, so that local areas can bid in for funding to develop single, local points of support for young people, targeting the hardest to help
- Establish local youth employment initiatives or partnerships across the UK, bringing together local councils, Jobcentre Plus, employers, educational institutions, charities and voluntary organisations, other relevant stakeholders, and including a role for local enterprise partnerships (LEP's) in co-ordinating education-business links. Importantly, these should also include representation of young people, a weakness identified in the current LEP initiatives

Support information sharing and monitoring

- Commission an annual survey of undergraduates and small high-growth businesses, to track what we hope will be growing awareness of the opportunities within this sector, and highlight the challenges to overcome
- Consider making the DLHE a more independent and consistent survey, by taking it away from universities and creating a more accurate tool for assessing the value of courses in achieving good employment outcomes
- Monitor post-study employment. Contributors identified several means of doing this, including: strengthening destination measures so that links between education and employment can be quantified, analysing degrees for their 'value added', showing universities that increase employment prospects for students who enter with lower UCAS points or from less privileged backgrounds, and tracking post-study employment through the tax system

Education providers should...

Provide high quality careers advice and guidance

- Schools should promote vocational courses as a high quality option
- Schools should be encouraged to achieve a recognised Careers Education, Information, Advice

and Guidance (CEIAG) Quality Award for its internally provided programme of provision. Externally procured services should be from a provider which meets the Matrix Standard. The deliverer of externally-secured careers guidance should be a recognised professional with appropriate qualifications in career guidance, and listed on the national Register of QCF Level 6 professional advisers

- Find out about motivation and aspirations of students as they enter higher education, so that support can be tailored to student needs earlier
- Provide 'have a go sessions', like those offered at Skills Show

Engage better with employers

- Include an employer representative on governing bodies, responsible for developing an institution's engagement with local businesses
- Involve employer engagement earlier in the process of applying to higher education, arguably participating in admissions interviews/processes, providing prospective students with the opportunity to hear about 'industry needs' at an early stage in their thinking about work-related options
- Work towards a minimum entitlement to an appropriate number of hours of input from employers in each course
- Enable enterprise and employability in the school ethos and embed it in their teaching

Create and support more and better work experience opportunities

- Encourage extracurricular activity, including work experience and volunteering from the very beginning of university, so students can gain as much experience as possible before they leave
- Encourage institutions to ring-fence any surplus from commercial recruitment services to fund employability projects, providing valued work experience
- Introduce two week work placements for all higher education students not already undertaking sandwich degrees, these would be a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) requirement for employers rather than a recruitment tool
- Set up student opportunities centres, encompassing a job shop, employment services, enterprise support

and volunteering centre

- University placements should count for university degree credit, enabling students to gain work experience whilst still receiving student loans and support

Create and support more and better employment opportunities

- Embed employability and enterprise education throughout all levels of the education system, including further and higher education institutions as recommended by
- Lord Young. For example, introduce an elective enterprise module available to all university students, and ensure every university has a fully supported and active enterprise society
- Reconsider the current balance of teaching hours and course length, for example, to fit in with work
- Increase work opportunities available on campus, encourage more institutions to adopt a student employment on campus policy, and guarantee internal roles for students
- Provide more support for student union staff to develop enterprise (particularly social enterprise) within the union
- Provide graduate recruiters with better and easier access to the talent pipeline and a more efficient way to target and engage talented young people. This would be based on objective profiles that describe employability characteristics they seek to develop their businesses, for example, the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)
- Provide financial support to initiatives that facilitate graduate recruitment and work experience, particularly in industries where paid internships are not always available, (eg. creative industries)
- Provide a student employment fund for Job Shops, to apply for project funding and develop local and regional projects
- Offer teachers the same opportunities as students, to raise their business knowledge

Employers, representative bodies and recruiters should...

Make efforts to engage and retain working students, and help strengthen the link between study and graduate opportunities

- Rethink recruitment practices so as not to unfairly disadvantage young people (eg. by better advertising roles and scrapping minimum requirements such as minimum UCAS points)
- Engage in the Social Mobility Business Compact – which provides good examples of how employers can address social mobility through their employment practices
- Employers to offer multiple access routes into their organisations, including both apprenticeships and graduate opportunities
- Employers should acknowledge the reality of work for students, and undertake measures to ensure that they can stay in employment throughout and at the end of their course. This could include offering more ‘small hours’ jobs to fit around student study commitments, where possible (eg. large employers with multiple sites), offering work at home during holidays to keep continuity for the student and employer. Plus, offering and promoting geographical flexibility when advertising jobs
- Offer more opportunities linking student employment with graduate opportunities, where students are given fast-track access to graduate management schemes, following a structured work programme during their study
- Design graduate recruitment processes to simultaneously develop employability
- Offer more internships as part of formal schemes, offering opportunities to develop
- Offer more talent pipeline programmes

Local Enterprise Partnerships

- Coordinate with educational institutions, voluntary and youth organisations, and students and study leavers, in order to pool resources and respond effectively to local need
- Manage links between schools and small businesses
- Work with local employers to add value to work experience, training workshops, and one-to-one mentoring for student employees

Appendix 1: recommendations from submissions

NUS should...

- Encourage all students' unions to employ students on a living wage, and encourage flexible working arrangements as standard
- Promote greater awareness of employment rights and engage trade unions
- Support the Careers Alliance campaign, to ensure young people have access to high-quality careers education and guidance at all stages of education, and encourage more employers to offer young people opportunities to learn about the work during studies
- Champion the use of student accommodation during long holidays, for the take-up of (paid) internships, particularly in London and the south east of England
- Foster collaboration between organisations competing for funding
- Support other students to make informed choices and participate in alumni networks, acting as ambassadors
- Be aware of their own agency in campaigning for, and working towards, decent work and career opportunities, including engaging with the student movement and joining workplace trade unions

Students and study leavers should...

- Take into consideration their responsibilities when searching for and undertaking their first job, and where possible proactively seek out those opportunities available, for developing their employability and preparedness for the world of work
- Facilitated by service providers, relevant local businesses and a quality IAG service, students should be encouraged to think about their subject and course choices in relation to their future career trajectory
- Consider more explicitly the geographic demand dimensions of the roles and sectors they are interested in
- Consider a broader range of employers when looking for opportunities on the jobs market, beyond larger employers, and well-known brands
- Be proactive in seeking experience that fits with their financial situation and other commitments through volunteering, work experience or internships
- Be prepared to take entry level jobs through which they can develop transferrable skills
- Better articulate what they have learnt from their experiences by understanding what employers are looking for, seeking help from careers advisors and feedback from employers they come into contact with



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