

# The City's Business:

Helping young Londoners  
towards and into employment

A Guide



March 2016

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# Foreword

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Nearly one in five young Londoners is unemployed. The capital has the third highest rate of 16-24 year olds out of work in England. This is despite the growth we have seen in the UK's economy, which has resulted in reductions in overall unemployment.

Youth unemployment causes exclusion and disadvantage, and has a cost to society. We believe more can be done to prevent young people falling through the net. It is time to tackle youth unemployment in London with renewed dedication.

Young people need to be helped to develop the skills that employers require to meet current and future demands. We need to address the disconnect between skills and business needs.

While many City institutions are indeed addressing these challenges, we believe that the City as a whole – City businesses large and small; the City Corporation; schools and educators; charities and third-sector organisations; and Livery companies - can do more. Businesses that are already actively supporting young Londoners are seeing the benefits; finding new talent and the opportunity to diversify their workforce. This support is benefiting young Londoners as well, by helping them to build career aspirations, develop valuable soft skills, and gain insight into working life through hands-on experience.

We convened an expert Panel of senior people from City businesses, Livery companies, voluntary and community organisations working with young people, London local authorities and the City Corporation to consider what more the City could do.

We have identified five guiding principles for City institutions keen to become involved, or do more to help tackle youth unemployment in London, and some simple first steps to take. We hope that they will help maximise the collective effort of the City and contribute to more young people being supported out of unemployment and into jobs.

By working together we can increase the City's contribution to tackling youth unemployment.

We can also make sure the City gets the maximum benefit from the talent of young Londoners.

**Mark Boleat**

Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee  
City of London Corporation

**Alderman & Sheriff Charles Bowman**

Co-chair of Study Panel

**Debby Ounsted CBE**

Co-chair of Study Panel



**19.5%**

of young Londoners are unemployed despite strong economic growth in the city's economy.

# Youth employment in London – The Challenge and the Opportunity

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London has a lot to offer its young people. Londoners, who outperform the rest of the country when it comes to school attainment, have some of the best job opportunities on their doorstep, and have a lot to offer businesses. Yet, for many young Londoners, these advantages do not translate into successful employment. Youth unemployment in the capital is considerably higher than the national average.

As London's economy has grown, the demand for workers has been in highly skilled professional roles. This change in the London labour market has disadvantaged many young people - especially those who leave school with few formal qualifications. Young people typically start their employment journey in lower-skilled roles, where demand has been declining.

We know that youth unemployment has negative long-term consequences for the individual concerned and for the economy. It is a waste of young people's talent. But we also know that City institutions<sup>1</sup> that support young people's employability have found that in addition to meeting their social responsibility objectives, there are many benefits for their business. These include the opportunity to diversify their employment base and bring in the best talent, and helping to develop the workforce of the future.

Fewer young people now combine work and study, and many leave education without ever having had a paid job. However, employers from all sectors value

soft skills that are often gained through experience of work. The lack of work experience puts young people at a disadvantage, especially when they find themselves competing against older, more experienced workers for entry-level roles.

In London these trends are further exacerbated by intense competition for entry-level roles and limited entry routes into careers for those who have not chosen an academic pathway. London employers are less likely to offer apprenticeships<sup>2</sup>, and competition for those that are available is higher than in any other English region.

In addition, actually finding out about job opportunities is a challenge. Who you know makes a big difference – personal recommendation and word of mouth remain the top recruitment channels for UK employers<sup>3</sup>. Unless young people have pre-existing networks of contacts, they may struggle to access opportunities.



**23%**

of unemployed young people have been out of work for more than 12 months.

<sup>1</sup> 'City institutions' is used throughout to refer to the range of stakeholders in the City who have a role to play in tackling youth unemployment: City businesses and employers, both large and small; the City Corporation; schools and educators; charities and third-sector organisations; and Livery companies.

<sup>2</sup> 8 per cent of London employers employed an apprentice in 2014 compared to an English average of 11 per cent, and 15 per cent in the North West (the region with the highest proportion of apprentices employed). UKCES (2015) *Catch 16 – 24* and UKCES (2014)

<sup>3</sup> In 2014, 26 per cent of businesses who recruited a young person did so through word of mouth/personal recommendation. Just 17 per cent used free public recruitment channels. UKCES (2015) *Catch 16 - 24*

# Five guiding principles for the City to help tackle youth unemployment

The City is home to a range of institutions – businesses, Livery companies, charities, public bodies, educational establishments and cultural organisations – and all of these can, and many often do, play a role in helping young people to access and progress in work. There are many ways that City institutions can help and there is invariably a solution that can fit with what each organisation can offer and wants to achieve – irrespective of whether it is already very active and looking for ways to develop a well-

established offer, or perhaps starting from scratch. Indeed, much can be learnt from the wealth of good practice underway: City institutions' input can range from employing a young apprentice or offering work experience within the workplace to raising awareness of careers and aspirations of young people through workplace visits, mentoring and career talks.

By using five key principles, and the simple steps which follow, City institutions can ensure that they are offering useful support for young people.

## 1. Walking the Talk

City institutions can act as good role models, making sure that their own support for unemployed young people is the best that it can be. Ultimately, the most valuable opportunities for young people are often found within an organisation's employment practices and operations.

How?

- Look at recruitment and staffing needs to identify where young people might be offered positions within the organisation.
- If there are not appropriate roles within the business itself, organisations can host valuable work experience or ask their suppliers to offer young people opportunities.
- Make use of the upcoming Apprenticeships Levy to be an exemplar in how apprentices are recruited, trained and developed.



### Linklaters

Linklaters carries out a variety of activities in the wider community, including the Realising Aspirations programme in schools in Hackney and Tottenham, which offers mentoring, tutoring, careers days and structured work experience.

Linklaters also offers local young people apprenticeships in departments such as Finance, HR, and Learning and Development. Apprentices receive soft skills training and mentoring from a

Linklaters employee and support to find future employment within the firm or externally when the apprenticeship concludes. They have a 50% retention rate, with those who do not stay with the firm obtaining roles elsewhere. A major strength of Linklaters' approach is that it is aligned with its mainstream HR procedures, opening up employment opportunities to young people from diverse backgrounds

## 2. Target support where it is needed

The landscape around youth unemployment support is crowded. There is a huge number of organisations and initiatives already operating and doing valuable work. Organisations seeking to become involved in this area should aim to build on what is already there and fill gaps rather than duplicate. Initiatives specifically targeted at addressing the real challenges young people face can have a positive impact, since it is less likely that they will find their way into City organisations on their own.

We also know that, although young people from across London face challenges to access employment, support from City institutions is not evenly spread across the capital.

How?

- Target specific groups e.g. young people with low qualifications, disabilities, young parents, or little or no work experience. This could lend itself to either short- or long-term engagement, depending on the capacity and interest of an individual City institution.
- Target areas with relatively little support from other City organisations to help ensure that all young Londoners can benefit from City opportunities; individual City institutions might wish to partner specifically with 'underserved' boroughs, for example.

### The Prince's Trust

The Prince's Trust supports young people into jobs or training. One of its key programmes, 'Team', offers carefully targeted, specialist support to 16-25 year olds with some of the greatest barriers to work. Young people gain key employability skills, self-confidence and motivation to equip them to progress into further education, training or employment.

The success of the programmes relies on the input and support of a wide range of collaborators, from small businesses, to big businesses such as Standard Life and Barclays, to public services such as fire and rescue and further education colleges.



### 3. Collaboration

There are many organisations operating within the City and across London that have specific expertise and experience of working with young people. Such organisations have substantial experience of 'what works' in supporting youth employment.

When businesses work alongside one or more of these organisations there is an excellent opportunity to ensure that both the young person and the business itself receive the greatest possible benefit. Good partners understand both young people's and business needs and are able to structure programmes that provide a balance between the two, as well as being on hand to provide support to both parties where needed.

#### How?

- Collaborate with 'expert' organisations which are familiar with the kind of activity being undertaken.
- Work with organisations which know their local landscape well – often the local authority itself, schools/colleges, or local voluntary and community sector bodies.

#### Livery Schools Link

Livery Schools Link runs a number of programmes including the Livery Showcase Event and the Education Conference. The showcase event allows the Livery companies to showcase the trades, industries and professions that their Companies represent to students and their teachers. The purpose is to inform students about the career paths and job opportunities that exist within these trades, allowing students to meet and talk to Livery representatives at their stands.

Three months after the showcase, the Education Conference takes place. This is aimed at headteachers of schools to enable them to provide better career guidance to their students. The Education Conference capitalises on contact made during the showcase to build an on-going relationship between schools and liveries. It is a good example of joining up initiatives, helping to maintain interest and develop partnerships.

### 4. Small and local is beautiful

For smaller institutions in particular, the scale of the problem of youth unemployment, and the scale of the programmes that some of their larger peers put in place to tackle it, can be intimidating, and it might lead to the conclusion that there is little that they can do in this area. This could not be further from the truth. Smaller institutions can and do make highly targeted, high impact interventions and a number of larger organisations also take an effective 'small and local' approach.

#### How?

- Consider working at a small, local scale, collaborating with existing, established services.
- Focus interventions on a few partner institutions – e.g. schools and colleges – and resist the urge to go for quantity over quality.

#### Barnett Waddingham – City Careers Open House

Barnett Waddingham, an independent provider of actuarial services, decided to develop a more diverse approach to recruitment and employment, particularly focusing on promoting careers in actuarial services. However, with little connection to schools or colleges in nearby boroughs they did not know where to start so approached the Brokerage Citylink to support them. As a first

step, staff volunteers hosted a series of workshops for young people on what it's like to work in the City and the career opportunities available to bright and hard-working school students. Barnett Waddingham has further workshops planned for 2016 and is growing its programme to include support for mock assessment centres and hosting a young person on a work experience placement.

### 5. Monitor and evaluate

It is important that organisations are clear about what they are hoping to achieve from their support for young people: what would be a good outcome and how will it be measured? Are they interested in tangible measures such as the number of young people moving into paid work – or would 'softer' measures, such as increases in confidence and awareness of what the City has to offer, be more appropriate?

The type of monitoring and evaluation strategy will vary, depending on the organisation and the intervention. What works for a large business will not necessarily be appropriate for a small one, but all need to monitor the impact of their interventions and feed this back into their choice of strategies, ensuring that they continue to develop and build upon what works.

#### How?

- Be clear on the difference you want to make from the outset and how it will be measured.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of the interventions you put in place, refining future activity to build on 'what works'. You can plan your evaluation process using tools such as the Journey to Employment (JET) framework developed by New Philanthropy Capital.
- Seek feedback from participants and act on it.



#### Barclays' LifeSkills

Barclays' LifeSkills programme is aimed at 11-19 year olds. It aims to improve young people's confidence and capabilities in skills that they will need after leaving school. The programme focuses on three key areas (work skills, money skills and people skills). It is delivered by Barclays employee volunteers, teachers and charities and online resources.

To ensure the programme was having the desired impact, Barclays commissioned a comprehensive evaluation of the programme. It gathered evidence

from young people on how the programme affected their confidence, awareness, knowledge and ability around the key skill areas. The fieldwork also sought to understand how and why some elements of LifeSkills worked better than others and whether it worked better for participants from different backgrounds.

The evaluation provided evidence of how the programme was having a positive impact as well as a good indication of where and how future activity could be improved.

# What next? 'Plan on a plate'

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We hope that we have inspired you and your organisation to do more to support young Londoners into employment or get involved for the first time. This is our 'plan on a plate' for how you can take this forward.

For further information on signposting to additional resources and for additional good practice examples demonstrating the guiding principles, visit: [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/thecitysbusiness](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/thecitysbusiness)

Please contact: [partnerships@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:partnerships@cityoflondon.gov.uk) with any questions, suggestions or comments.

## 1. What can you do in your workplace?

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Think about what you can do to bring young Londoners into your workplace to give them some meaningful experience of your industry. Don't under-estimate how stimulating this can be for a young person. By offering a visit, work experience or an apprenticeship, you will be giving young people valuable skills to help them on their journey to work.

## 2. Who could benefit most from your offer?

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There are many different issues facing young Londoners and perhaps your support can be targeted on young people with particular barriers, e.g. young people with disabilities, ex-offenders, young parents etc. Also, areas close to the City receive more offers of support, so consider offering your support to areas in outer London.

## 3. Who can you work with?

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Once you have decided what to do, there are many organisations who have good links with young people and can act as intermediaries to ensure your offer gets to those who would benefit the most. Contacting the local authority can be a good start or using some of the online links to established organisations with a track record of engaging and supporting young people.

## 4. Doing something is better than nothing.

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Starting small, for example with one visit, one apprenticeship or one work experience placement, is a great start. This allows you to test out what works best for your organisation and the young person. Things can then grow from there.

## 5. Continually review what you are doing.

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Ask yourself if your actions are having the impact that you intended. If you are working with an intermediary organisation, ask questions about the real benefit to those you are supporting. Use this information to review and adapt what you do to ensure you are making a real difference to a young person.



# A young person's journey to work: where can businesses help?

There are many points in a young person's journey towards work where there is space for businesses to help. Interventions by City institutions can have an early impact, while young people are still in education (e.g. improving young people's employability skills and awareness of City careers), and also later in life, when they are transitioning into work (e.g. through opening up employment opportunities in businesses themselves).

1.

Work inspiration in school, online learning resources

Work inspiration can take place in school or in the workplace and can include: showcase events, careers talks, and experience days, or a combination of these – and all can focus on the breadth of roles available, including ancillary roles.

Mentoring can underpin and reinforce work inspiration, providing valuable guidance and 'real life' role models.

Not all young people are in mainstream education: some of those with the most serious barriers to work may have been removed or opted out. Many services work specifically with these groups, offering a further option for intervention at this stage.

2.

Work experience, internships, apprenticeships

Offering work experience and internships can help young people to gain work experience and understand more clearly what working for a City business might involve – again, the breadth of roles, including ancillary roles, can be covered.

Developing an apprenticeship programme can provide a structured route into work and an accredited alternative to university for school leavers.

Businesses can recruit directly, or use specialist services that provide support to both young people and the staff who will be working with them.

Some young people are more ready for work experience than others. For those who are further away, businesses could look at partnering with organisations that work with these groups or getting involved in initiatives that provide suitable work experience.

For older students, or school leavers:

For young people who are 'work ready'  
Businesses can intervene by looking at their own recruitment practices to ensure that they are youth-friendly and that they are advertised openly to all young people and do not only recruit via word-of-mouth.

Businesses can also ensure that corporate responsibility and community investment programmes are suitably linked into recruitment initiatives: ensuring that young people who are recruited, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, don't become stuck in a corporate responsibility 'silo'.

Businesses could think about how to open up opportunities within their supply chains.

3.

Youth friendly recruitment policies practices

4.

Providing access to job and career opportunities

For young people in work

The journey doesn't end when the young person has a job: businesses can still intervene by providing mentoring to new staff and investing in training and development to support career advancement.

32%

of young City of London employees are recruited directly from higher education or university compared to the 14% national average.

## This work has been guided and endorsed by:

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# Five guiding principles for the City to help tackle unemployment:

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1. Walking the Talk

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2. Target support where it is needed

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3. Collaboration

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4. Small and local is beautiful

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5. Monitor and evaluate

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