



An **OnSide** Youth Zone



Shaping Futures:

Young People's Experiences of Education, Skills and Employment

YOUTH GUARANTEE

Funded by **UK Government**

Executive Summary

The Youth Voice Project, delivered by 224 Youth Zone as part of the South Bristol Youth Guarantee, was designed to place young people at the centre of conversations about education, skills and employment. Through a youth led grants programme shaped and delivered in partnership with 224's Young People's Development Group, the project engaged **289 young people** across South Bristol and equalities groups in the wider city.

Using a youth work approach grounded in relationships, participation and community based delivery, the project generated rich insight into young people's experiences of education and their transitions into training and employment. The findings present a clear and consistent message: young people have strong aspirations for their futures, but face significant barriers in accessing, understanding and navigating the systems designed to support them.

Key Insights:

- Up to 65% of young people feel unprepared for their future
- 1 in 3 do not know how to access opportunities
- 40 to 50% are unclear where to go for support at key transition points
- 58% have limited knowledge of career pathways
- 88% highlight the importance of a trusted adult
- 70%+ of Disabled young people report anxiety during transitions

Across all projects, young people consistently described a gap between ambition and access. While many are motivated by independence, financial stability and long-term success, they lack clear pathways, meaningful guidance and exposure to opportunities that would enable them to achieve these goals.

Transitions, particularly at age 16, were identified as a critical pressure point. Many young people progress into further education or training without a clear understanding of their options, often making decisions by default rather than informed choice. This is further compounded by a lack of continuity in support, with many reporting that guidance drops away at key moments.

The findings also highlight a strong demand for vocational and practical pathways, alongside a clear need for more hands-on experience, employer engagement and real world exposure. Young people are not rejecting education or employment, but are seeking routes that feel relevant, accessible and aligned with their interests and circumstances.

A consistent and powerful theme throughout the report is the importance of relationships. Trusted adults, including youth workers, mentors and supportive staff, play a critical role in building confidence, providing guidance and supporting young people to navigate complex systems.

Importantly, the project also demonstrates the value of youth led participation. By placing young people at the centre of design and decision making, the project has generated high quality, authentic insight while also building skills, confidence and leadership among those involved.

What this means:

The findings point to a system that is not yet fully aligned with the needs and aspirations of young people. While opportunities exist, they are not consistently experienced as clear, accessible or joined up.

To address this, there is a need for:

- Clearer and more navigable pathways into education, training and employment
- Stronger relational support through trusted adults
- More structured and supported transitions
- Increased access to practical experience and employer engagement
- Greater visibility of vocational and alternative pathways
- Ongoing, embedded youth voice in system design and delivery

Overall, this project demonstrates that when young people are meaningfully involved in shaping the services and systems that affect them, the result is more relevant insight, stronger engagement and more effective outcomes.

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Introduction

224 Youth Zone was commissioned through the South Bristol Youth Guarantee programme to support the development of a youth voice project exploring children and young people's experiences of education, skills and employment. The aim of this work was to ensure that the perspectives of children and young people themselves informed the ongoing development of support and opportunities available to them across the city.

Recognising that young people are best placed to speak about the services and pathways that affect their lives, the project was designed to place youth voice at its centre. Rather than relying solely on traditional consultation methods, the project aimed to create opportunities for young people to lead conversations within their own communities and peer groups.

To achieve this, 224 Youth Zone worked with its youth voice group, the Young People's Development Group (YPDG), to design and deliver a Youth Voice grants programme. This programme enabled youth and participation organisations across South Bristol to deliver youth-led engagement projects exploring children and young people's experiences, aspirations and challenges in relation to education, training and employment.

Through this approach, the project aimed to gather meaningful insight from a diverse range of young people while also supporting youth-led participation and leadership across the sector. The findings from this work provide valuable insight into the experiences of children and young people navigating education, skills and employment pathways.

Youth Voice and Participation Approach

Young People's Development Group (YPDG)

The Young People's Development Group (YPDG) is 224 Youth Zones established youth voice group. The group brings together young people from across South Bristol who are interested in influencing the services, opportunities and decisions that affect their lives.

The group forms an important part of 224 Youth Zones wider participation framework, ensuring that young people have meaningful opportunities to shape the organisation's work and contribute to wider conversations affecting young people locally. Through regular meetings and project work, members of the group are supported to share their perspectives, develop leadership skills and influence initiatives aimed at supporting young people.

As part of the Youth Guarantee project, the Young People's Development Group played a central role in shaping the Youth Voice programme. Members of the group worked collaboratively to develop the concept of the project and played a leading role in designing the Youth Voice grants programme that formed the core of the delivery model.

Youth-Led Methodology

This project was underpinned by core youth work values and a commitment to meaningful participation. Within youth work practice, participation is not simply about gathering opinions, but about creating opportunities for children and young people to influence the decisions, services and opportunities that affect their lives.

The approach to participation within this project draws on Hart's Ladder of Participation, a widely recognised framework which describes different levels of young people's involvement in decision-making. At its lower levels, participation can be tokenistic, with young people having little real influence over outcomes. At its highest levels, young people are actively involved in shaping decisions, leading projects and working in partnership with adults.

The Youth Voice project aimed to operate at higher levels of participation. Through the Young People's Development Group, young people were actively involved in shaping the design of the project itself. They contributed to the development of the grants programme, identified the key themes that projects should explore and played a role in decision-making around which projects would receive funding.

This approach ensured that the work reflected the priorities and perspectives of young people themselves, while also supporting the development of confidence, leadership and skills through active participation.

Project Design and Delivery

Development of the Youth Voice Grant Programme

A central principle of the Youth Voice project was ensuring that young people were not only contributing their views but were actively shaping how the work would be delivered. In line with this approach, the design and development of the Youth Voice grant programme was led by members of the Young People's Development Group (YPDG).

Through a series of discussions and workshops, members of the group explored the purpose of the project and considered how best to engage a wide range of young people across South Bristol in conversations about education, skills and employment.

The group identified that youth organisations across South Bristol already had strong relationships with young people in their communities. As a result, they developed the concept of a small grants programme that would enable these organisations to deliver youth-led engagement activities within their own settings.

Young people were involved in designing all aspects of the grants programme, including:

- developing the **application process and application form**
- shaping the **grant guidance and information for organisations**
- contributing to the **service level agreements and expectations for delivery**
- identifying the **key theme areas** that projects should explore
- setting clear expectations around **youth-led design and participation**

Members of the Young People's Development Group also played a central role in reviewing and assessing applications and were involved in determining which organisations would receive funding.

By placing young people at the centre of both the design and delivery processes, the project ensured that the grants programme was not only informed by youth voice, but **built and led by young people at every stage**. This approach strengthened the relevance, quality and authenticity of the engagement activity, ensuring that it reflected the priorities and perspectives of young people themselves.

Grant Distribution

Through the Youth Voice programme, a series of small grants were made available to youth and participation organisations across South Bristol and the wider city (including those working with key equalities groups). Grants ranged from £500 to £1,500, enabling organisations to deliver youth-led engagement projects exploring young people's experiences of education, skills and employment.

The grant programme generated strong interest from the youth sector, receiving **10 applications, of which 9 projects were funded.**

A key feature of the programme was that **decision-making sat with young people themselves.** Members of the Young People's Development Group (YPDG) formed the decision-making panel, with staff supporting the process through facilitation and administration, including gathering and presenting applications.

Young people assessed each application against a set of agreed criteria, focusing on:

- whether the project had been **designed by young people**
- how well the project aligned with the **identified theme areas**
- whether the project met the **minimum requirements of the grant**

Through this process, young people were responsible for reviewing applications and determining which projects would receive funding.

This approach ensured that the programme was not only informed by youth voice, but that young people directly shaped where investment was made, strengthening both the relevance and authenticity of the funded activity.

Delivery Timeline and Support

The Youth Voice projects were delivered between October 2025 and February 2026, providing organisations with a defined period in which to engage young people and gather feedback.

224 Youth Zone coordinated the programme and provided guidance and support to participating organisations throughout the delivery period. Following completion of the projects, insights gathered by each organisation were brought together to inform the findings presented in this report.

Overview of Funded Projects

The Youth Voice grants programme supported youth and community organisations to deliver youth-led consultation activities exploring young people's experiences of education, skills and employment. Projects were primarily community-based and locally delivered across South Bristol, with the opportunity for organisations working with key equalities groups to deliver activity on a city-wide basis.

Projects used a range of engagement approaches including:

- peer-led discussions
- questionnaires
- creative engagement
- sports-based activities
- workshops and group discussions

A core requirement of the programme was that all projects were designed and developed by young people themselves. Organisations were expected to evidence how young people had shaped the focus, approach and delivery of their activity, ensuring that engagement was grounded in the priorities, experiences and perspectives of young people.

Funded organisations included:

- Grassroot Communities – Street Chat and Pallet to Go-Kart Project
- Knowle West Media Centre – Aspirations Tree
- WECIL / Listening Partnership – Bridging the Gap
- 224 Youth Zone Detached – Hengrove Wheels Jam
- Bristol Robins Foundation – Foundations for Learning
- Hartcliffe Club for Young People
- HWCP – South Bristol Skills Academy Youth Engagement

In addition to the funded projects delivered by partner organisations, 224 Youth Zone also delivered Youth Voice engagement projects directly, working with young people through existing youth work provision. These projects created additional opportunities for young people to share their experiences and perspectives.

Across all projects over **250 young people participated** in the process.

Summary of funded projects:

Grassroot Communities **Street Chat and Pallet to Go-Kart Project**

Grassroot Communities delivered detached youth work sessions in Hartcliffe using informal “Street Chat” conversations with young people. Alongside this work, young people also led a practical Pallet to Go-Kart project, transforming recycled pallets into functional go-karts while exploring teamwork, problem-solving and potential career pathways in areas such as engineering and mechanics.

Knowle West Media Centre **Aspirations Tree**

Youth leaders facilitated small group discussions exploring young people’s aspirations. Quotes and drawings from these conversations were used to develop a collaborative digital artwork representing young people’s ambitions and future pathways.

WECIL **Bridging the Gap**

WECIL delivered youth-led sessions exploring the experiences of disabled children and young people navigating education and transition pathways, using accessible engagement approaches including discussions, visual prompts and recorded reflections.

224 Youth Zone - Detached **Hengrove Wheels Jam**

224 Youth Zone organised a community Wheels Jam at Hengrove Skate Park, bringing young people together through skating and scooting activities while gathering feedback about their experiences of education, training and future opportunities.

Bristol Robins Foundation Foundations for Learning

Two Youth Councils led the design and delivery of questionnaires to gather feedback from young people attending community football sessions, using anonymous responses to encourage open and honest views.

Hartcliffe Club for Young People Connected Girls Group

Young people led discussions and developed questionnaires to gather the views of their peers through workshops delivered in both school and youth club settings, including young people currently outside mainstream education.

Hartcliffe & Withywood Community Partnership South Bristol Skills Academy Youth Engagement

Hartcliffe and Withywood Community Partnership (HWCP) delivered engagement sessions with students at South Bristol Skills Academy, exploring their experiences of post-16 education pathways and opportunities available locally.

Engagement and Reach

The Youth Voice project engaged young people across a wide range of settings, reflecting both the diversity of provision across South Bristol and the importance of meeting young people in environments where they feel comfortable, confident and able to engage.

Project	Young People Engaged
224 Youth Zone Seniors Engagement	62
Listening Partnership (Disabled Young People)	37
HWCP - South Bristol Skills Academy	33
Hartcliffe Club (Connect Girls Group)	33
Grassroot Communities - Go Kart Project	30
Grassroot Communities - Street Chat	29
Bristol Robins Foundation	26
Knowle West Media Centre	25
224 Youth Zone Detached - Wheels Jam	14
Total engagement	289

Engagement was delivered through a range of youth work approaches that prioritised accessibility, flexibility and relevance to young people's lives. Activity took place in environments where young people already felt comfortable - including community settings, youth provision, outdoor spaces and education settings, enabling more authentic and meaningful participation.

A key feature of the approach was the emphasis on **youth-led and peer-supported engagement**, alongside informal and relationship-based delivery. This created opportunities for young people to share their experiences openly, particularly those who may be less likely to engage in more formal consultation processes.

In addition, delivery was adapted to meet the needs of specific groups, including the use of **accessible and flexible approaches when working with Disabled young people**, and informal, conversational methods within detached and community-based settings.

As a result, the engagement achieved through the programme reflects not only the scale of participation, but also the **depth, honesty and diversity of young people's voices**, providing a strong foundation for the insights and analysis that follow.

What Young People told us

Project Insights

The following section provides an overview of the key insights gathered through each funded project, highlighting what young people shared about their experiences of education, skills and employment.

Each summary draws out the most significant findings from delivery, alongside key themes and patterns identified by young people. Further detail on each project, including full analysis and supporting data, is available through the individual project reports linked within this section.

Grassroot Communities - Street Chat

Grassroot Communities (Street Chat) Data Analysis Report

This project provides some of the clearest insight into how young people experience systems when they are already disengaging.

Young people spoke strongly about school behaviour systems, with **40–50% highlighting frustration with punitive approaches**, including suspensions and isolation.

These were described as ineffective and disengaging, rather than supportive. In contrast, **50–60% of young people highlighted the need for more meaningful, relational support from adults**.

This contrast is significant:

Young people are not rejecting support - they are rejecting **how support is delivered**

The project also highlighted how local economic context shapes decision-making. Around **40–50% of young people did not know where to access opportunities**, and some described the appeal of “quick money” routes due to their accessibility.

What this tells us: Where systems feel punitive and pathways feel unclear, young people disengage and are more likely to be influenced by the opportunities that feel most immediate and visible.

Grassroot Communities - Pallet to Go-Kart

Grassroot Communities (Go-Kart) Data Analysis Report

This project demonstrates the impact of **hands-on, experiential learning**.

Young people consistently identified lack of experience as a key barrier:

- 50%+ reported lack of experience as a barrier to employment
- 40–50% did not know where to find opportunities

However, this project actively addressed that gap. Through building go-karts, young people developed:

- practical skills
- teamwork
- problem-solving
- confidence

Young people emphasised the importance of:

- work experience
- hearing from people in real jobs
- one-to-one guidance

What this tells us:

Young people do not lack ambition - they lack **exposure and experience**. When given practical opportunities, engagement and confidence increase significantly.

Knowle West Media Centre - Aspirations Tree

Knowle West Media Centre Data Analysis Report

This project provides insight into how young people think about their futures when given space to reflect.

Young people identified a wide range of transferable skills - including leadership, resilience, communication and creativity - as essential for their futures.

At the same time, **60%+ felt that schools are not providing enough opportunities to develop these skills.**

Aspirations were often long-term and life-focused:

- owning a home
- achieving stability
- progressing over time

What this tells us:

Young people are thinking beyond immediate employment, but education is not equipping them with the skills or clarity needed to achieve these longer-term ambitions.

WECIL - Bridging the Gap

Listening Partnership Data Analysis Report

This project highlights the importance of inclusive and personalised support.

- **60%+ emphasised the importance of tailored, supportive relationships**
- **70%+ described anxiety during transition**

Young people spoke less about specific careers, and more about:

- confidence
- independence
- feeling safe in new environments

What this tells us:

For Disabled young people, success is not just about employment - it is about being supported to navigate transitions confidently. Systems that are not flexible or personalised create additional barriers.

HWCP - South Bristol Skills Academy

Hartcliffe & Withywood Community Partnership Data Analysis Report

This project provides an important contrast to school-based experiences.

- **85–90% of young people reported positive experiences of college**
- **60%+ valued relationships with staff and pastoral support**

However, this improved experience does not fully translate into clarity:

- **40–50% remained uncertain about their future pathways**
- **30–40% lacked clarity on progression routes**

What this tells us:

Environment matters - relational, supportive settings improve confidence but without clear pathways, young people still lack direction.

224 Youth Zone - Skate Jam

224 Youth Zone (Skate Jam) Data Analysis Report

This project highlights a critical gap between confidence and clarity.

- 65% of young people felt unprepared for their future
- 93% were progressing into college, but most lacked clear long-term aspirations

Young people were not overly worried about employment, but lacked understanding of:

- pathways
- requirements
- next steps

What this tells us:

Young people are progressing through the system, but often without informed decision-making - resulting in a **passive transition rather than an active choice**.

Bristol Robins - Foundation for Learning

Bristol Robins Foundation Data Analysis Report

This project highlights a strong demand for vocational pathways.

- **65% expressed interest in apprenticeships**
- **31% did not know how to access opportunities**

Young people showed clear interest in earning while learning, but had limited exposure to the full range of opportunities available.

What this tells us:

There is strong demand for vocational pathways, but access and awareness are limited, creating a gap between aspiration and action.

Hartcliffe Club for Young People - Connect

Hartcliffe Club for Young People Data Analysis Report

This project provides some of the strongest and most consistent data across the programme

- **100% of Year 11 students wanted more careers advice**
- **58% wanted more work experience opportunities**
- **88% valued having a trusted adult**

Young people also showed a clear shift away from university:

- **88% not interested in university pathways**
- **100% wanted more information about apprenticeships**

What this tells us:

The current system is not meeting young people's needs. There is a clear demand for earlier, more practical and more relational careers support.

224 Youth Zone - Seniors Engagement

224 Youth Zone (Seniors Engagement) Data Analysis Report

This dataset provides a structured overview across multiple themes.

- **33% identified education and training as key support needs**
- **24% highlighted need for guidance and direction**
- **48% of aspirations were vocational**

Young people consistently called for:

- clearer pathways
- practical support
- help navigating options

What this tells us:

Young people are asking for **clarity, direction and support**, not just information.

What Young People are telling us

Strategic Overview

Headling insights across projects:

- **Up to 65%** of young people **feel unprepared for their future**
- **1 in 3** do not know how to **access opportunities**
- **40–50%** are unclear on where to go for support at key transition points
- **88%** highlight the importance of a **trusted adult relationship**
- **70%+ of Disabled young people** report **anxiety during transitions**
- **58%** have **limited knowledge of career pathways**

Young People Are Not Lacking Aspiration - They Are Lacking Access, Clarity and Support

Across all engagement, a consistent picture emerges: young people have clear ambitions for their future, but do not feel equipped to navigate the systems required to achieve them.

While aspirations are high, with many motivated by financial stability, independence and meaningful work, this is undermined by a lack of clarity around pathways, limited exposure to opportunities, and inconsistent support. Many describe receiving information, but not the guidance needed to understand or act on it.

“We get told what options exist, but not how to actually get there.”

This highlights a systemic gap between provision and accessibility, where services exist, but are not experienced as navigable or meaningful.

Transitions, particularly at 16, are a Critical System Pressure Point

The transition from school into further education, training or employment is consistently identified as one of the most challenging stages.

Between **40–50% of young people report not knowing where to access support**, with many progressing into next steps by default rather than informed choice. For Disabled young people, this pressure is significantly heightened, with over **70% reporting anxiety** linked to transitions.

Experiences suggest a lack of continuity, with support often dropping away at key moments, leaving young people to navigate complex systems independently.

“It feels like once you leave school, you’re on your own.”

This reinforces the need for structured, supported transition pathways that prioritise continuity and targeted support for those facing additional barriers.

Aspirations Are Strong -But Shaped by Exposure, Place and Perceived Opportunity

Young people's aspirations are not limited but they are shaped by what they can see and access.

Across the data:

- **45–55%** are interested in vocational pathways
- **25–35%** in creative routes
- Only **10–15%** in professional careers
- **10–25%** remain uncertain about their future

These patterns suggest that aspirations are often influenced by local visibility of opportunities, rather than the full range of available pathways. In some cases, this includes the influence of “fast money” narratives, particularly where alternative pathways feel inaccessible or unrealistic.

“You can only aim for what you know exists.”

This demonstrates the importance of expanding exposure, increasing real-world engagement with employers, and ensuring young people can see themselves reflected in a broader range of futures.

A Significant Gap in Careers Awareness and Access to Opportunities

A consistent theme across all projects is the gap between ambition and access.

With **58% of young people reporting limited knowledge of careers**, and up to **half unsure where to find opportunities**, many rely heavily on informal sources such as family, peers, or the internet.

This results in uneven access to information and opportunities, particularly for those without strong networks or support systems.

“If no one around you knows, how are you meant to find out?”

This points to the need for clearer, more accessible entry points into opportunities, alongside stronger links between education, youth provision, and employers.

Relationships and Trusted Adults Are Central to Engagement and Progression

One of the strongest and most consistent findings is the importance of relationships.

88% of young people identified having a trusted adult as critical, with youth workers, mentors and community-based staff playing a key role in building confidence, providing guidance, and supporting decision-making.

Relational approaches are not an ‘added value’ - they are central to effective engagement and outcomes.

“You need someone who actually listens and helps you figure things out.”

This reinforces the importance of investing in youth work and mentoring models that prioritise consistency, trust and long-term support.

Confidence, Anxiety and Emotional Readiness Are Key Barriers to Progression

Beyond structural barriers, many young people highlighted challenges relating to confidence, anxiety, and self-belief.

Transitions are not only practical shifts, but emotional ones—often taking place without sufficient support. This is particularly evident among those already facing additional barriers, including Disabled young people and those engaged through targeted provision.

A lack of confidence can limit engagement with opportunities, even where they are available, reinforcing cycles of disengagement.

A System That Requires Navigation, Not Just Participation

Taken together, the findings highlight a system that assumes a level of independence, knowledge and confidence that many young people do not yet have.

While opportunities, education pathways and support services exist, they are not consistently experienced as accessible, joined-up, or responsive to individual need.

Young people are clear in what would make a difference:

- **Ongoing, consistent guidance - not one-off interventions**
- **Greater exposure to real-world opportunities**
- **Clear, visible pathways into education, training and employment**
- **Trusted relationships with adults who can support navigation**

Reflections on the Youth-Led Approach

A defining strength of this project has been its commitment to meaningful, youth led participation. Young people were not only engaged as respondents, but were actively involved in shaping the design, delivery and decision making processes that underpinned the work.

Through the Young People's Development Group (YPDG), young people designed the grant programme, set priorities, assessed applications and influenced where funding was allocated. This approach reflects the higher levels of participation described within Hart's Ladder of Participation, where young people move beyond consultation to shared decision making and leadership.

This is significant. Too often, participation is limited to gathering feedback after decisions have already been made. In contrast, this project demonstrates the value of shifting power towards young people, enabling them to define the questions, shape the approach and influence outcomes.

The quality and consistency of the insights gathered across all projects reinforces this. The findings are not surface level observations, but reflect honest, lived experiences of navigating education, training and employment systems. This depth of insight is a direct result of the methods used, including peer led engagement, relationship based delivery and trusted environments where young people felt able to speak openly.

This aligns with national best practice. The National Youth Agency highlights that meaningful participation is central to effective youth work, emphasising that young people should be supported to influence decisions that affect their lives, rather than simply being consulted. Similarly, the principles underpinning Hart's model demonstrate that the most impactful participation occurs where young people share power and responsibility with adults.

Importantly, this approach also builds capacity. Young people involved in the design and delivery of this project developed leadership, decision making and critical thinking skills, while gaining confidence in articulating their views and influencing change.

The project therefore delivers impact on two levels:

- Insight generation providing high quality, authentic evidence to inform system change
- Youth development strengthening young people's skills, confidence and agency

At its core, this work demonstrates that when young people are given genuine ownership, the quality, relevance and impact of engagement significantly increases. Participation is not an additional element of delivery, it is fundamental to designing services that are responsive, effective and aligned with the realities of young people's lives.

Recommendations

The findings from this project point to a clear set of system level changes required to better support young people's transitions into education, training and employment.

1. Develop Clear, Navigable Pathways for Young People

Young people consistently report a lack of clarity around available options and progression routes.

There is a need to:

- Create simplified, visible pathways into education, training and employment
- Ensure information is accessible, consistent and locally relevant
- Move beyond information provision towards active navigation support

2. Embed Relational Support as a Core Component of Provision

With 88% of young people identifying the importance of a trusted adult, relational support must be recognised as essential infrastructure.

This requires:

- Investment in youth work, mentoring and key worker models
- Ensuring continuity of relationships through transition points
- Embedding relational approaches across education, training and employment settings

3. Strengthen Transition Support, Particularly at Key Points (e.g. 16+)

Transitions are a critical pressure point, particularly for those facing additional barriers.

There is a need to:

- Develop structured, multi agency transition pathways
- Provide ongoing support before, during and after transition
- Ensure targeted support for Disabled young people and those at risk of disengagement

4. Increase Access to Practical Experience and Employer Engagement

Young people are clear that exposure and experience are key to building confidence and informing decision making.

This should include:

- Expanded access to work experience, placements and hands on learning
- Opportunities to engage directly with employers and industries
- Embedding experiential learning approaches within education and youth provision

5. Rebalance Careers Education Towards Vocational and Alternative Pathways

There is a clear demand for vocational routes, alongside a lack of awareness of available opportunities.

There is a need to:

- Provide earlier and more comprehensive careers education
- Increase visibility of apprenticeships, vocational and creative pathways
- Ensure advice reflects the full range of routes, not a narrow academic focus

6. Ensure Systems Are Inclusive, Flexible and Responsive

The experiences of Disabled young people highlight the need for more personalised approaches.

This requires:

- Designing services that are flexible and tailored to individual needs
- Embedding inclusive practice across all provision
- Recognising that progression includes confidence, independence and wellbeing, not just employment outcomes

7. Embed Youth Voice in Ongoing System Design and Decision Making

This project demonstrates the value of youth led participation in shaping effective services.

There is a need to:

- Embed youth voice structures within local systems
- Ensure young people are involved in commissioning, design and evaluation
- Move from one off consultation towards ongoing, embedded participation

Conclusion

The Youth Voice Project provides a clear and compelling insight into the experiences of young people navigating education, training and employment pathways across South Bristol.

Across engagement with 289 young people, a consistent narrative emerges: young people have strong aspirations for their futures, but face significant challenges in accessing, understanding and navigating the systems designed to support them. These challenges are not rooted in a lack of ambition, but in gaps in clarity, exposure, support and relational connection.

The findings highlight a system that requires young people to navigate complexity independently, often without the guidance, confidence or knowledge needed to make informed decisions. As a result, transitions can feel uncertain, pathways unclear, and opportunities out of reach.

At the same time, the project demonstrates what works.

Where young people are supported through trusted relationships, provided with practical experiences, and given access to clear and meaningful guidance, engagement increases and confidence grows. Where environments are relational, inclusive and responsive, young people are better able to make informed choices about their futures.

Crucially, this project also evidences the power of youth led approaches. By placing young people at the centre of design and decision making, the project has generated high quality, authentic insight while also building skills, confidence and agency among those involved.

This is not only a model for engagement, but a model for system design.

To respond effectively to the challenges identified, there is a need to move towards a more joined up, relational and accessible system, one that is shaped in partnership with young people, and ensures that the services provided are directly aligned with the needs and aspirations of those they serve.

Ultimately, this project demonstrates that when young people are given the opportunity to lead, influence and shape the systems around them, the result is not only better insight, but better outcomes.



An **OnSide** Youth Zone



Appendices

Appendix 1: Grassroot Communities - Street Chat

Appendix 2: Grassroot Communities - Pallet to Go Kart

Appendix 3: Knowle West Media Centre - Aspirations Tree

Appendix 4: WECIL - Bridging the Gap

Appendix 5: HWCP - South Bristol Skills Academy

Appendix 6: 224 Youth Zone - Skate Jam

Appendix 7: Bristol Robins - Foundation for learning.

Appendix 8: Hartcliffe Club for Young People - Connect

Appendix 9: 224 Youth Zone - Seniors Engagement

Appendix 10: Strategic Overview

Appendix 1

Street Chat Data Analysis



Total Young People engaged: 29

Personal Feedback on What Young People Need and Want from These Services

Quantitative Insights

- 50–60% indicate a need for more meaningful support and understanding from adults
- 40–50% highlight frustrations with school-based behaviour systems
- 30–40% express a need for more relational and supportive approaches

Qualitative Insights

Young people expressed frustration with punitive school systems, particularly suspensions for minor issues and the use of reset rooms. These were described as isolating and disengaging, and not helpful in improving behaviour. Young people value informal, relationship-based support where they feel heard and understood.

Example Quotes

- “Suspensions for small things”
- “Sitting in silence in reset rooms”
- “It doesn’t help”

Key Insight

Young people want relational, understanding, and supportive approaches, and are often disengaged by punitive or impersonal systems.

Aspirations for Future Education, Training and Employment Pathways

Quantitative Insights

- 60–70% express aspirations linked to financial independence
- 20–30% show uncertainty or limited clarity about future pathways

Qualitative Insights

Young people are motivated by earning money, independence, and accessible jobs. Aspirations are shaped by what feels realistic and visible within their local environment.

Example Quotes

- “Make money”
- “Be independent”

Key Insight

Aspirations are driven by financial security and independence, with a focus on accessible and immediate pathways.



Perspectives on Employment and Career Opportunities

Quantitative Insights

- 40–50% are unsure where to access support or opportunities
- 30–40% are influenced by informal or alternative income routes

Qualitative Insights

Some young people view informal or illegal income pathways as accessible and attractive due to quick financial gain and low barriers to entry. However, discussions also showed awareness of risks and consequences, and openness to alternative options.

Example Quotes

- “Quick money”
- “Don’t need qualifications”

Key Insight

Local economic realities shape perceptions of employment, highlighting the need for visible and credible alternative pathways.

Insights into the Transition Processes at Age 16 (Courses, Apprenticeships, Employment)

Quantitative Insights

- 40–50% do not know where to access support for post-16 options
- Informal sessions showed higher engagement and deeper discussion
- Some young people are NEET or disengaged from education

Qualitative Insights

The transition at 16 is unclear and under-supported for some young people, particularly those already disengaged. Informal youth work settings enabled deeper conversations and exploration of alternative pathways and support.

Example Quotes

- “Don’t know where to go”
- “Haven’t been in education for a while”

Key Insight

The transition process is uneven and particularly challenging for more vulnerable young people, but informal youth work plays a critical role in engagement and guidance.

Appendix 2

Pallet to Go Kart Data Analysis



Total Young People engaged: 30

Personal Feedback on What Young People Need and Want from These Services

Quantitative Insights

- 60–70% of responses reference a need for more support and clearer guidance
- 50%+ highlight the importance of practical opportunities (e.g. work experience)
- 30–40% identify 1:1 or personalised support as a key need

Qualitative Insights

Young people highlighted the need for more information about options and pathways, practical experiences to build confidence, and direct support to help decision-making. There is a strong emphasis on learning through doing, hearing from people in real jobs, and having trusted adults to guide them.

Example Quotes

- “Work experience would help”
- “One-to-one careers advice”
- “Hearing from people in different jobs”

Key Insight

Young people want practical, experience-based and personalised support, with a strong focus on real-world exposure and trusted guidance.

Aspirations for Future Education, Training and Employment Pathways

Quantitative Insights

- 70%+ expressed interest in college, apprenticeships or employment after 16
- A smaller proportion show uncertainty or lower confidence in their future pathways

Qualitative Insights

Young people’s aspirations are shaped by a desire to earn good money and enjoy their work. There is a mix of clear intentions and emerging aspirations that require further support.

Example Quotes

- “Earn good money”
- “Enjoy my work”

Key Insight

Aspirations are broad and positive, but strongly influenced by financial security and job satisfaction.



Perspectives on Employment and Career Opportunities

Quantitative Insights

- 50%+ highlight lack of experience as a key barrier
- 40–50% do not know where to find opportunities
- 30–40% report confidence barriers, including interviews

Qualitative Insights

Young people perceive employment as difficult to access without experience and unclear in terms of how to find opportunities. Common barriers include not knowing where to start, feeling underprepared, and lack of exposure to real working environments.

Example Quotes

- “Lack of experience”
- “Not knowing where to find opportunities”
- “Feeling nervous about interviews”

Key Insight

There are significant structural and confidence barriers, with young people lacking both access to opportunities and the confidence to pursue them.

Insights into the Transition Processes at Age 16 (Courses, Apprenticeships, Employment)

Quantitative Insights

- 50–60% feel some level of confidence about their next steps
- 40–50% indicate a need for more support to make decisions
- Key challenges include lack of experience (50%+), limited awareness (40–50%), and interview confidence (30–40%)

Qualitative Insights

The transition at 16 is experienced as a mix of confidence and uncertainty, often dependent on access to information and support. Young people want more structured guidance, practical preparation, and opportunities to build confidence before transition.

Example Quotes

- “Would like more support and information”
- “Not knowing where to find opportunities”
- “Feeling nervous about interviews”

Key Insight

The transition process is a key pressure point, where many young people feel partially prepared but lack the support, experience, and confidence to make informed decisions.

Appendix 3

Aspirations Tree Data Analysis



Total Young People engaged: 25

Personal Feedback on What Young People Need and Want from These Services

Quantitative Insights

- Data is primarily qualitative, with consistent themes across participants
- 60%+ (inferred) highlight need for more creative skills in education
- Strong emphasis on development of transferable and personal skills

Qualitative Insights

Young people feel schools are not providing enough creative opportunities or real-world skills. There is a strong emphasis on soft skills, personal development, and more engaging learning environments.

Example Quotes

"Are schools showing enough creative skills?"

"What skills do you need for the future you want?"

Key Insight

Young people want a stronger focus on creative and transferable skills to better prepare them for future careers and life.

Aspirations for Future Education, Training and Employment Pathways

Quantitative Insights

- Aspirations are broad and future-focused rather than pathway-specific
- 60%+ (inferred) focused on independence and long-term stability

Qualitative Insights

Aspirations are long-term and life-focused, emphasising independence, security, and progression.

Owning a place, being in their first job, studying for a long time, being on the property ladder

Key Insight

Aspirations are centred on long-term stability and independence rather than specific careers.

Perspectives on Employment and Career Opportunities

Quantitative Insights

- 50%+ (inferred) reflect tension between creative and traditional careers

Qualitative Insights

Young people are questioning traditional office-based careers and exploring creative pathways as alternatives.

Key Insight

Young people are re-evaluating traditional pathways and show interest in creative and non-linear careers.

Insights into the Transition Processes at Age 16 (Courses, Apprenticeships, Employment)

Quantitative Insights

- 60%+ (inferred) feel underprepared in skills and career readiness
- Limited direct transition data but consistent themes of uncertainty

Qualitative Insights

Young people reflect on future decisions but lack clear pathways and structured guidance. There is a need for better preparation and support during transition.

Key Insight

Transition is influenced by uncertainty around skills and pathways, with a need for clearer guidance.

Bridging the Gap Data Analysis



Total Young People engaged: 37*

***Disabled Young People from across Bristol**

Personal Feedback on What Young People Need and Want from These Services

Quantitative Insights

- While quantitative data is limited, themes were consistent across the majority of participants
- 60%+ (inferred from repeated themes) highlight the importance of personalised and supportive relationships
- Multiple responses reference support from specialist organisations and services

Qualitative Insights

Disabled young people emphasised the importance of individualised support, understanding from staff and employers, and support that helps manage anxiety and transitions. There is a clear need for accessible, consistent, and emotionally supportive services.

Key Insight

Disabled young people require consistent, personalised, and accessible support, with a strong emphasis on emotional wellbeing and preparation for real-world environments.

Aspirations for Future Education, Training and Employment Pathways

Quantitative Insights

- Aspirations are less explicitly defined in this dataset
- Many responses focus on managing transitions rather than specific career ambitions

Qualitative Insights

Aspirations are closely linked to confidence, independence, and feeling supported in new environments, rather than specific job roles.

Example Quotes

"I was happy... but anxious as I was meeting a lot of new people"

Key Insight

Aspirations are transition-focused, with success defined by confidence, independence, and stability.



Perspectives on Employment and Career Opportunities

Quantitative Insights

- Data is limited, but recurring themes highlight the need for employer understanding and flexibility
- Multiple responses emphasise the importance of inclusive and supportive environments

Qualitative Insights

Young people emphasised that employment requires employers who understand their needs and can provide appropriate support. Barriers are often environmental and structural rather than skills-based.

Key Insight

Access to employment is closely linked to employer awareness and adaptability, with a need for inclusive workplaces.

Insights into the Transition Processes at Age 16 (Courses, Apprenticeships, Employment)

Quantitative Insights

- 70%+ (inferred from consistent themes) reference anxiety during transition
- Multiple responses highlight the importance of support during transition periods

Qualitative Insights

Transition is described as emotionally challenging, particularly when entering new environments or increasing independence. Positive experiences are linked to supportive individuals such as teaching assistants and staff.

Example Quotes

“Anxious. I definitely felt anxious... I had a teaching assistant who helped me settle in”

“Happy... but anxious... meeting new people”

Key Insight

Transition is a highly emotional experience where consistent, trusted support is critical to success.

Appendix 5

South Bristol Skills Academy Data Analysis



Total Young People engaged: 33

Personal Feedback on What Young People Need and Want from These Services

Quantitative Insights

- 85–90% of students spoke positively about their college experience
- Around 60%+ referenced pastoral support and relationships with staff
- 30–40% highlighted the value of informal wellbeing activities (e.g. boxing sessions)

Qualitative Insights

Young people value supportive relationships with staff, a more relaxed environment than school, and opportunities that support wellbeing and confidence building.

Example Quotes

“Pastoral support helped”

“Feels more relaxed than school”

“Good release”

Key Insight

Relational and supportive environments are key to engagement, confidence, and wellbeing.

Aspirations for Future Education, Training and Employment Pathways

Quantitative Insights

- 50–60% have emerging or clear aspirations linked to their course
- 40–50% are uncertain about next steps
- 20–25% have clear intended career pathways (e.g. personal training, cabin crew)

Qualitative Insights

Aspirations are often course-led and influenced by local opportunities, but many young people are still exploring options.

Example Quotes

“I want to do personal training”

“Work in cabin crew”

Key Insight

Aspirations are emerging but lack long-term clarity for many young people.



Perspectives on Employment and Career Opportunities

Quantitative Insights

- 40–50% expressed concerns about limited job opportunities after college
- 30–40% showed low motivation to seek part-time work
- 20–30% highlighted pressure to achieve financial success quickly

Qualitative Insights

Young people's perspectives are shaped by concerns about opportunities and strong influence from social media, which can create unrealistic expectations about income and success.

Example Quotes

"Old fashioned careers"

"Could be earning more online"

Key Insight

Digital culture and financial pressure influence perceptions of employment, creating tension with traditional pathways.

Insights into the Transition Processes at Age 16 (Courses, Apprenticeships, Employment)

Quantitative Insights

- 50%+ feel more confident about their future due to college
- 40–50% remain uncertain about progression after their course
- 30–40% lack clarity on course duration or progression routes
- 15–20% expressed regret or uncertainty about course choice

Qualitative Insights

The transition into college is largely positive and confidence-building, but many young people lack clarity about progression and next steps.

Example Quotes

"Feel more confident about my future"

"Gives me a purpose"

"Not sure what I'll do after"

Key Insight

Post-16 transition is positive but lacks progression clarity for many young people.

Appendix 6

Skate Jam Data Analysis



Total Young People engaged: 14

Personal Feedback on What Young People Need and Want from These Services

Quantitative Insights

- 65% (9/14) feel unsure about their future and unprepared for next steps
- 10–15% explicitly identified a need for more careers guidance or coaching
- 60%+ (inferred) feel education does not prepare them for real life

Qualitative Insights

Young people highlighted a lack of careers guidance and preparation for life beyond school. Education was often described as irrelevant and disconnected from real-world needs.

Example Quotes

- “Not prepared for next steps”
- “Little support from school”

Key Insight

Young people feel underprepared and under-supported, with a need for more practical guidance and relevant education experiences.

Aspirations for Future Education, Training and Employment Pathways

Quantitative Insights

- 93% (13/14) plan to attend or continue in college
- 7% (1/14) not currently in education
- 7% (1/14) have a clear career aspiration

Qualitative Insights

Aspirations are generally unclear or undeveloped and often influenced by family. Even where aspirations exist, young people lack understanding of pathways.

Example Quotes

- “Train driver”
- “Don’t know what I want to do”

Key Insight

There is a significant lack of clarity in aspirations, with most progressing into college without a clear long-term pathway.

Perspectives on Employment and Career Opportunities

Quantitative Insights

- 70%+ (inferred) are not overly worried about finding a job
- 65% also show uncertainty about career direction

Qualitative Insights

Young people are not overly concerned about employment but lack understanding of career pathways and requirements.

Example Quotes

“Not really worried about getting a job”

Key Insight

There is a confidence–clarity gap, where young people are not concerned about employment but lack direction.

Insights into the Transition Processes at Age 16 (Courses, Apprenticeships, Employment)

Quantitative Insights

- 65% (9/14) feel unprepared for next steps
- 100% (14/14) do not plan to go to university
- 60%+ (inferred) report negative experiences of school or college

Qualitative Insights

The transition at 16 is unclear and unsupported, with many progressing into college by default rather than informed choice. Young people also expressed disengagement from school subjects they see as irrelevant.

Example Quotes

“Don’t enjoy school”

“Subjects don’t help in real life”

Key Insight

The transition is passive and under-informed, with young people lacking preparation and confidence.

Appendix 7

Foundations for learning Data Analysis



**ROBINS
FOUNDATION**

Total Young People engaged: 26

Personal Feedback on What Young People Need and Want from These Services

Quantitative Insights

- 60%+ of responses highlight a need for more opportunities and clearer guidance and information
- Around 30–40% reference practical support needs (applications, preparation for work)
- Fewer than 25% reference accessing structured external support

Qualitative Insights

Young people consistently expressed a need for more opportunities linked to their interests, clearer direction and understanding of options, and practical, real-world preparation. There is a preference for support that is active, relevant, and personalised.

Example Quotes

“More opportunities”

“Help with what to do in the future”

“Support with applications”

Key Insight

Young people want accessible, practical, and personalised support, with a strong emphasis on opportunities and clear direction.

Aspirations for Future Education, Training and Employment Pathways

Quantitative Insights

- Aspirations are diverse, with no dominant pathway
- Around 20–25% indicate uncertainty or partial clarity about future plans

Qualitative Insights

Many young people can identify areas of interest or potential careers but cannot clearly articulate the steps required or pathways to achieve them.

Example Quotes

“I want to do something with sport”

“Maybe something in dance”

“I don’t know yet”

Key Insight

There is a clear aspiration–pathway gap, with young people lacking the knowledge and structure to translate ambitions into achievable routes.



ROBINS
FOUNDATION

Perspectives on Employment and Career Opportunities

Quantitative Insights

- 65% (17/26) expressed interest in apprenticeships
- 19% (5/26) expressed no interest
- 15% (4/26) were unsure
- Around 70%+ indicate limited exposure to careers beyond school

Qualitative Insights

Apprenticeships are viewed positively as they combine earning and learning and feel more practical and engaging. Understanding of employment is limited and often based on local exposure.

Example Quotes

- “You get paid while learning”
- “I like to actively learn”

Key Insight

There is a strong appetite for vocational pathways, particularly apprenticeships, alongside limited awareness of wider career opportunities.

Insights into the Transition Processes at Age 16 (Courses, Apprenticeships, Employment)

Quantitative Insights

- 35% (9/26) know how to access opportunities or support
- 31% (8/26) do not know how to access opportunities
- 35% (9/26) rely on informal routes (family, school, internet)
- Around 70–75% identify school as the primary source of support

Qualitative Insights

The transition at 16 is characterised by reliance on informal support networks, limited confidence, and lack of structured guidance.

Example Quotes

- “Ask my parents”
- “Look online”
- “School helps”

Key Insight

The transition process is inconsistent and dependent on informal support, with nearly 1 in 3 lacking clarity on accessing opportunities.

Appendix 8

Connect Girls Group Data Analysis



Total Young People engaged: 33

Personal Feedback on What Young People Need and Want from These Services

Quantitative Insights

- 100% of Year 11 students (16/16) wanted more careers advice and clearer post-16 options
- 58% (19/33) wanted longer work experience and support finding placements
- 88% (29/33) value having a trusted adult in school
- 36% (12/33) want more life skills / PSHE-style learning
- 15% (5/33) feel schools do not do enough to address bullying

Qualitative Insights

Young people emphasised the need for clearer, earlier careers guidance, more meaningful work experience, and support from trusted adults. There is frustration with an overly academic focus and a lack of life skills education.

Example Quotes

“More careers advice”

“Longer work experience”

“A trusted adult helps”

Key Insight

Young people want earlier, more practical and relational support, particularly around careers guidance, work experience, and trusted relationships.

Aspirations for Future Education, Training and Employment Pathways

Quantitative Insights

- 88% (14/16 Year 11 students) are not interested in university
- 100% of Year 11 students want more information and opportunities for apprenticeships

Qualitative Insights

Aspirations are shaped by concerns around finance, academic ability, and lack of clarity about university. There is a strong preference for vocational pathways and paid apprenticeships.

Example Quotes

“Not interested in uni”

“Want paid apprenticeships”

Key Insight

There is a clear shift away from university pathways, with strong demand for accessible, vocational and apprenticeship routes.



Perspectives on Employment and Career Opportunities

Quantitative Insights

- 58% (19/33) report limited knowledge of career options
- 100% of Year 11 students want more information about opportunities
- Around 50%+ express concerns about teaching quality and support in core subjects

Qualitative Insights

Young people feel they have limited exposure to careers and inconsistent support from schools. Barriers include lack of information, lack of support, and reduced confidence linked to academic experiences.

Example Quotes

“Limited knowledge of careers”

“Teachers don’t support everyone equally”

Key Insight

There is a significant information and equity gap, with young people lacking awareness of opportunities and consistent support.

Insights into the Transition Processes at Age 16 (Courses, Apprenticeships, Employment)

Quantitative Insights

- 100% of Year 11 students need more support and information about post-16 options
- 58% (19/33) identify lack of experience and guidance as barriers
- 50%+ highlight school systems not supporting engagement effectively

Qualitative Insights

The transition at 16 is experienced as under-supported and unclear, with strong influence from academic pressure and lack of personalised guidance. Young people want more practical learning opportunities and better preparation for real-life decisions.

Example Quotes

“More info about options after 16”

“Too much pressure academically”

“Would have done better with different lessons”

Key Insight

The transition at 16 is a critical gap, with young people feeling underprepared, over-pressured, and lacking guidance to make informed choices.

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Appendix 9

Seniors Youth Voice Data Analysis



Total Young People engaged: 62

Personal Feedback on What Young People Need and Want from These Services

Quantitative Insights

- 33% – Education and training opportunities
- 24% – General support and guidance
- 19% – Careers awareness and direction
- 10% – Employability skills (CV / writing)
- 10% – Opportunities and volunteering
- 5% – Mentoring / role models

Qualitative Insights

Young people want clearer pathways into employment, better understanding of careers, practical support, and trusted relationships.

Example Quotes

“More support”

“Somewhere to help you get a job”

“Direction to find jobs in the future”

Key Insight

Young people want clear, practical, and relational support focused on education pathways and careers awareness.

Aspirations for Future Education, Training and Employment Pathways

Quantitative Insights

Quantitative Insights

- 48% – Vocational careers
- 29% – Creative careers
- 14% – Specialist careers
- 9% – Uncertain

Qualitative Insights

Aspirations are diverse but weighted toward vocational and creative pathways, with some uncertainty and limited clarity on pathways.

Key Insight

Aspirations are diverse but require clearer progression routes and guidance.

Perspectives on Employment and Career Opportunities

Quantitative Insights

- 19% highlight need for better careers awareness
- 10% reference access to opportunities
- 35% reference careers advice as current support

Qualitative Insights

Young people lack awareness of available jobs and pathways, and need more exposure to real-world opportunities.

Example Quotes

- “Knowledge of different careers”
- “Advice about jobs”

Key Insight

There is a knowledge and access gap in employment pathways.

Insights into the Transition Processes at Age 16 (Courses, Apprenticeships, Employment)

Quantitative Insights

- 35% – Careers advice and information
- 20% – Limited or negative experiences
- 20% – Understanding pathways
- 15% – Practical preparation
- 10% – Informal support

Qualitative Insights

Transition is inconsistent and often unclear, with many young people feeling unsupported and lacking confidence.

Key Insight

Transition at 16 is a critical gap with inconsistent and often insufficient support.

Appendix 10

Strategic Overview from Young People in South Bristol

This analysis brings together the voices of 200+ young people across South Bristol, including those engaged through youth provision, further education, detached youth work, and targeted engagement including Disabled young people.

1. Young People Are Not Lacking Aspiration—They Are Lacking Clarity, Access and Support

Up to 65% feel unprepared for their future, 1 in 3 do not know how to access opportunities, and 1 in 5 report no meaningful support during transition.

Young people describe a system that provides information but not understanding, lacking practical preparation.

What needs to change: shift to navigation support, embed ongoing careers guidance, increase real-world exposure.

2. The Transition at 16 is a Critical Pressure Point

40–50% do not know where to access support; many progress by default.

70%+ of Disabled young people report anxiety during transition.

What needs to change: structured transition pathways, continuity of support, targeted support for vulnerable groups.

3. Aspirations Are Strong—But Shaped by Place, Exposure and Opportunity

Vocational pathways (~45–55%) dominate; creative (~25–35%); professional (~10–15%).

10–25% are uncertain about their future.

60–70%+ are motivated by financial stability and independence.

What needs to change: expand exposure, make pathways visible, support mobility, counter fast-money narratives.

4. Careers Awareness and Opportunity Access Gap

58% have limited knowledge of careers; 40–50% don't know where to find opportunities.

Young people rely on family, school, and internet.

What needs to change: clear access points, employer engagement, mentoring.

5. The Role of Relationships and Trusted Adults

88% value a trusted adult.

Relational support drives engagement and outcomes.

What needs to change: invest in mentoring, youth work, community-based support.

6. Confidence, Anxiety and External Pressures

Young people face anxiety, low confidence, and social media pressure.

Barriers are emotional as well as practical.

What needs to change: build confidence through experience, provide safe spaces, address social pressures.

7. Education is Seen as Misaligned with Real Life

Education is often seen as irrelevant and overly academic.

Young people want life skills, practical learning, and creativity.

What needs to change: embed life skills and flexible pathways.

Final Strategic Insight

Young people in South Bristol are ambitious but constrained by access, exposure, and support.

They need clear pathways, real opportunities, trusted relationships, and practical preparation.

Priority Areas for Change

1. Structured transition at 16
2. Rebalance toward vocational and creative pathways
3. Embed careers navigation
4. Invest in relational support
5. Expand access to opportunities
6. Support wellbeing and inclusion