An employer's guide to supporting talented young people facing barriers into work

> "People ask, why recruit someone who won't be an obvious fit—why take the harder option?
>
> The answer is, they bring a new dimension to our business. They have a right to have a chance. And we have a duty to society—the whole of society."

Rob Perrins,
Chief Executive, Berkeley Group
Chairman of the Berkeley Foundation

Executive Summary

Despite record levels of employment, nearly 500,000 young adults aged 16–24 are recorded as not looking for work in Britain today.

As evidence emerges of looming labour shortages in construction, retail, agriculture and other sectors a coalition including FTSE companies, academics, professional institutes and youth charities have come together to launch this guide to help employers bring talented marginalised young adults into sustained, full-time work.

Clearly, there are costs and challenges associated with this cohort. But increasingly, employers are beginning to recognise the opportunity they present. The drivers for business include:

(a) **Acquiring a new source of talent and ideas that will enhance, not just replicate, your existing workforce.**

(b) **Making a transformational impact on the life of a young person and their family.**

(c) **Playing your part as a business in creating a fair society and a productive economy.**

The first step for any company is to understand why young adults with so much latent talent might not be in employment. Chapter one of this Guide provides expert analysis of the situations and context which have shaped their experience.

There are also fantastic examples of employer-led programmes working with this cohort of young adults which demonstrate what can be achieved. One of these, called Street Elite, is described in chapter two.

Lastly, companies need to adapt their working practice and equip their staff with practical guidance on how to recruit and retain these employees. Chapter three of this Guide is a short list of dos and don'ts. These are based on years of experience working with young adults without much experience of the workplace. But it is striking how much they reflect basic good practice for supporting young women and young men so they can flourish in a business.

Our invitation to every employer is to share this report with your board, with your HR director and your Responsible Business team. Challenge the business not just to engage with young people who might be temporarily unemployed but with talented young people from a whole range of backgrounds who might face significant barriers to work. This is where the real need and opportunity lies.

All of the content is available at
www.talentedpeoplework.co.uk

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Talented, marginalised and out of work. *Why?*

by Dr Sally Zlotowitz
Clinical Director, MAC-UK

This first chapter of the **Employer's Guide** explains why **talented**, marginalised **young people** may not be employed or actively looking for work.

It draws on the latest evidence from psychology and social science to unpick some of the typical **experiences** that affect many young adults today. It illustrates the **challenges** they face and points to the **character** and **resilience** produced by this kind of lived experience.

Young adults in Britain categorised as '**NEET**' (Not in Employment, Education or Training) are frequently seen by employers and public services as hard to reach. But there is often very little insight as to why this might be true. Without **understanding** the reasons behind their apparent **disengagement**, attempts to support them into work and make the most of their talent often fail,[1] leaving us all worse off.

Understanding the data

- Young people aged 16–24 face the highest levels of unemployment in Britain. During the period July to September 2017, youth unemployment was 11.1%, compared to 4.3% for the rest of the working age population for whom unemployment has been decreasing.[2]

- The Office for National Statistics divides NEET young people into two categories: Economically Active, who have looked for work in the last 4 weeks through the Job Centre, and Economically Inactive, who haven't. As of September 2017, 62.1% of the 790,000 young people in Britain who are currently NEET are also economically inactive.[3]

- During the period July to September 2017, 264,000 young women were classified as NEET and economically inactive compared to 227,000 young men.[4]

- The number of young men who are economically inactive has risen fast over the last two years. The primary reason for young men being defined as NEET and Economically Inactive is due to health problems, in particular mental health issues.[5]

- In addition, many young people are simply classified as 'unknown'. Local authority data from 2016 shows the number of 'unknown' 16–18 year olds is as large as the NEET population in some areas, suggesting the overall problem could be much bigger than the statistics reported by the ONS.[6]

Understanding the experience of marginalised young people

"We must **look** at the lens through which we see the world, as well as the world we see, and **understand** that the lens itself shapes how we interpret the world."

Stephen Covey
Educator, author, businessman

The lens through which a problem is viewed shapes people's emotional response to it as well as the solution offered. One common societal lens used to understand unemployment is that young people (and their families) have a 'skills or motivation deficit'.[7] The answer is then that they simply need to 'work harder' and make some personal changes to get a job.

This is such a dominant story in our society that unemployment is often seen as the result of 'personal failure'[8] and the story of marginalisation and/or youth offending as one of 'family dysfunction'.[9] But in reality it merely illustrates the phenomenon of 'fundamental attribution error'[10], explaining our tendency to ascribe the behaviour of other people solely on the basis of individual internal qualities rather than their situation or context.

Explanations that narrowly focus on the individual (and their familial context) miss the wider structural, social, and multiple systemic and contextual factors that shape the lives of marginalised people, as well as the ways in which systemic disadvantage can accumulate and multiply.[11] Explanations at the individual level also tend to make invisible some of the unearned power and privilege of certain groups that can account for differences in occupational outcomes.[12]

The evidence presented in this chapter tries to make visible some of these other contexts and deepen our understanding of what life is really like for many young adults.

A better lens

To understand young unemployment, we need a framework that can represent the multiple interrelated factors that create, maintain and exacerbate it. Ecological systems theory[13] views a person in relation to the wider context in which they live.

According to this approach, individuals develop in the context of a multi-layered system of relationships, from the widest systems, such as culture and the way society is organised through economic and social policy, through to the more obvious and directly felt relationships, such as immediate family. Considering these different systems can also reveal hidden powers, privileges and resources.

Figure 1 illustrates the different systems and structures that affect an individual young adult. The arrows between the circles demonstrate the interactions over time and the complex relationships between these different systems.

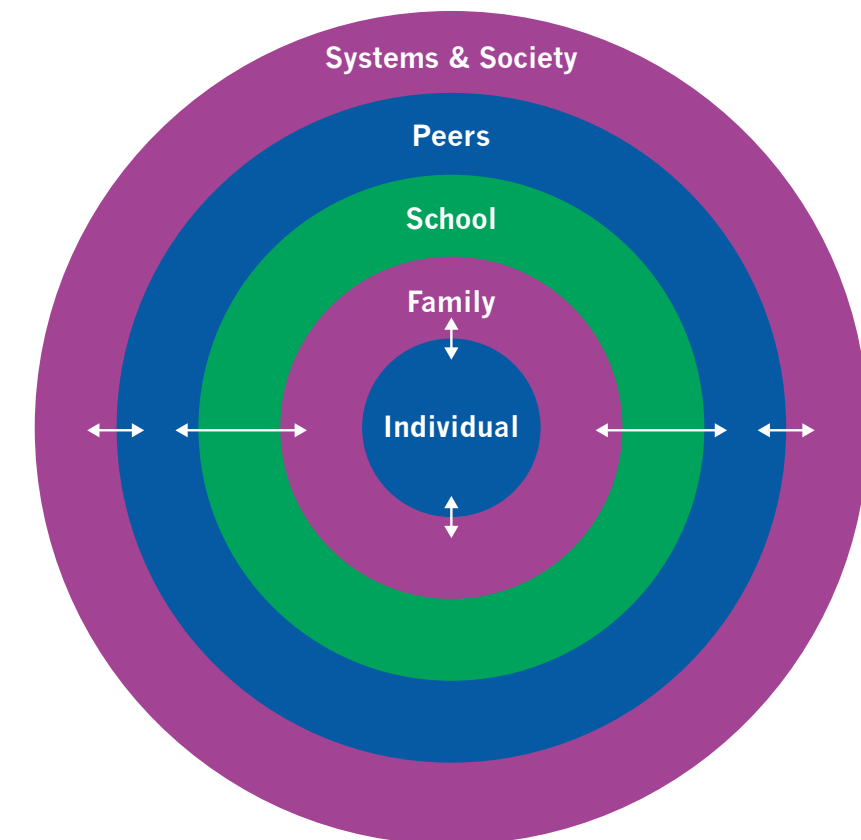
Systems & Society
Peers
School
Family
Individual

Figure 1: The ecology of a young person's life

The rest of this chapter applies this framework to the hypothetical story of a person called **Ty**, as a way of helping organisations understand the **talents**, **experience** and **behaviours** of young people who they might employ.

The individual

Ty is 19 years old. He loves to play football and is often out with friends. He is passionate about music and very well connected on his local estate.

Ty identifies as mixed heritage, his mother is of African heritage and his father is White British. He enjoys learning about both sides of his family. He is deeply protective over his mother, grandmother and younger brother. He and his mother laugh a lot together, sharing a sense of humour.

He is keen for his younger brother to gain qualifications, go to university and get a job. He realises his brother looks up to him, and with this in mind he has been thinking about how he can transform his own life.

"He **realises** his brother looks up to him, and with this in mind he has been **thinking** about how he can **transform** his own life."

Family

Ty lives with his **Mum, Kea**, and his younger brother, **Ben**. They live together in a two bedroom local authority flat in inner city London. Ty shares a room with his brother. Most of Ty's extended family live outside of the UK. Ty's grandmother (Kea's mother) lives in a flat in a different area and they regularly spend time together.

Ty's father, Blake, used to live with them in the home but he left after being arrested for domestic violence. Kea was financially dependent on Blake and felt unable to leave. Blake's alcohol use had increased since leaving the army, and this contributed to high levels of conflict and controlling behaviours in the home. Ty often tried to prevent his younger brother from witnessing aggression at home. Blake's violent outbursts left the young Ty fearful and their relationship stormy.

Domestic violence accounts for 29% of violent crime in London, with male on female violence a significant majority.[14] One in seven (14.2%) of under-18s will have lived with domestic violence at some point in their childhood, often combined with other forms of abuse.[15] Evidence shows that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as abuse, neglect and violence, impact on healthy cognitive, emotional and behavioural development.[16] High levels of fear, anxiety, threat and criticism can heighten stress responses in children for the longer term and lead to poorer well-being, often referred to as 'developmental trauma'.[17]

ACEs are associated with low self-worth, difficulty in expressing, controlling and communicating emotions, and higher levels of energy due to differences in the stress arousal system.[18] These effects can in turn impact on behaviour at home and in school, so it might be more difficult to sit and concentrate for long periods or get along with friends.[19]

Similarly, attachment theory asserts that children whose primary caregivers are unreliable, unresponsive or inconsistent can affect the way those children relate to others in their future relationships.[20] Early relationships generate an 'internal working model' of how relationships operate and can affect how young people later experience 'helping adults', potentially lowering trust in them.[21] Ty experienced a positive primary caregiver relationship through Kea, but for some young people this is not the case. Children who are placed into local authority care are five times more likely to be in contact with the criminal justice system[22] and more likely to experience unemployment.[23]

School

Ty attended local state schools in which there were relatively large class sizes and low staff-to-pupil ratios. Ty **excelled** in **sport, art** and **creative classes** but found literacy hard. Repeated standardised numeracy and literacy tests ('SATs') from primary school onwards resulted in a series of unhelpful cumulative consequences for him.

First, Ty found studying for the tests narrow and unmotivating because sports and arts were not included. Second, repeated low scores on literacy meant he became labelled and targeted as a 'low achiever'. But with few spare resources (ie Teaching Assistants) the school could not offer much literacy support and his home life could not provide this either. This made him feel "overwhelmed by assessments and demotivated by constant evidence of his low achievement", further increasing the gap between him and other students.[24]

Third, as a young black boy, psychological evidence suggests that Ty would have likely experienced extra pressure and stress from standardised tests because of fear that the tests will confirm negative racial stereotypes.[25] In addition, his elevated arousal levels, linked to developmental trauma, made it difficult for Ty to 'sit' tests.[26] Once in secondary school he disengaged yet further as these issues became more shameful for him when he hit adolescence. This in turn resulted in exclusions.

Broader evidence suggests that accountability measures of the current education system (such as SATs) disproportionately affect already disadvantaged children, narrow the curriculum, and negatively impact both teachers' and pupils' well-being and mental health.[27] In addition, evidence shows that BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) boys are three times more likely than their white peers to be excluded from school.[28]

Developmental trauma has overlap with symptoms of ADHD and these young people often attract this diagnosis, leading to further negative labelling and discrimination.[29] In 2016, 21% of African Caribbean boys (the highest of the ethnicities) were identified to have special educational needs and a Statement of Educational Needs (SEN).[30] This may be part of a persistent pattern of historical misdiagnosis[31] based on low teacher expectations[32], peer pressure and masculinity issues[33] and schools not meeting cultural needs.[34]

Peers

Ty would manifest some of the violence he experienced at home in his behaviour towards his peers at school by **'externalising behaviours',** such as **verbal aggression.**[35] This sometimes made it difficult for him to sustain friendships and created feelings of frustration and shame, which he covered over with further aggression.[36]

During adolescence, peer relationships become an increasingly important part of development, so it is unsurprising that adolescent depression and aggression is associated with both peer rejection and social exclusion.

With more time out of education, Ty found alternative peers within his community who were older. They used a mixture of coercion and incentivisation to encourage Ty to 'run' drugs for them. Ty was drawn into this peer group by a number of push and pull factors. Research has shown many young people join street 'gangs' for protection and to reduce any threat to their family, whilst also being attracted to the status, sense of belonging and large income that it can bring.[37] Ty saw the money as an opportunity to support himself and his family financially, which for him outweighed the arrests that inevitably followed.

As Ty became more drawn into this network, he witnessed and perpetrated acts of violence.

Ty's previous experience made it more likely he would be seriously emotionally affected by the violent incidents, such as the stabbings that he witnessed.[38] Ty began to cope with nightmares, flashbacks, and anxiety on his own because he felt unable to talk to his family or the health and victim support services offered. Although the sense of daily risk and danger appealed to Ty, it also brought hypervigilance and mistrust of unknown peers. Smoking cannabis helped with such anxiety but also affected his motivation.[39]

Fear of being seen as a 'snitch' by peers, along with other geographical (such as postcode risk) and psychological barriers (like mistrust and finding it difficult to be vulnerable) have made it difficult for young people affected by 'gangs' in their communities to access services, especially mental health services that have rigid thresholds, waiting lists and appointment systems.[40] Indeed, up to one in three young people involved in the criminal justice system may have unmet mental health needs.[41]

Systems and society

Ty's **political**, **economic** and **citizenship education** was **limited**. He **doesn't vote** and when he sees politicians on TV, they rarely seem to represent his background or experience.

Ty was encouraged to sign up to the job centre by professionals. However, he believed his offending history prevented him from getting a good job so he didn't bother. He also had seen peers start jobs that were low paid and unrewarding. Moreover, the cultural context associated with an increasing sense that the poor are 'undeserving' of social welfare protection[42] meant Ty had no interest in claiming benefits; aware of its 'humiliating' cultural significance in both his subculture and wider society. He also did not want to give up his personal details because of mistrust about where this information might be used.

Ty was repeatedly stopped and searched by police in his local community. The evidence suggests that he would have been exposed to stop and search by the police six times more than his white peers in his community (which is not explained by increased offending rates or drug use[43]). He and his friends were regularly 'moved on' from their own housing estate because of changes to the law which tries to prevent groups of young people gathering.[44]

In addition, Ty was charged rather than cautioned for drugs possession, whilst most of his white peers received cautions for similar circumstances (56 per cent of white people received cautions rather than charges for drug offences, compared to only 22 per cent of black people[45]). Recent cuts to the legal aid system meant Ty was unable to access quality legal guidance for these issues.[46] Young men from BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities now make up 44% of those in youth custody with 35% identifying as black or mixed heritage, this is despite an overall decrease in the youth custody population.[47]

In terms of Ty's experience of Youth Offending teams, he was regularly 'assessed' by various practitioners for his level of 'risk' according to 'risk factors'. This concept of 'risk management' dominates criminal justice policies.[48] Ty was repeatedly asked to think about his own 'anger' and 'impulsivity' and sent to different strangers to talk about this, which didn't make sense to him.

Instead, Ty tried to express what he thought needed to change in his community and to talk about his faith but there were limits to how practitioners could use his ideas within the youth justice system.

Ty also became aware he was regularly talked about in terms of his 'level of risk', and assigned points according to the borough's 'gangs matrix'.[49] This led to a further sense of mistrust and alienation. The gangs matrices have been critiqued for constituting 78% BAME young men.[50]

These inequalities extend to the types of crime and criminals that are investigated by the system. For example, the current criminal justice system has been heavily challenged because "it focuses attention on a narrow range of predominantly minor harms, deflecting attention away from many other more serious harms[51]; and it tends to create and reinforce social inequality through its focus on the poorest and most marginal communities in our societies.[52]"

The very common experiences of young people feeling misunderstood, misrepresented and unfairly treated by the criminal justice systems are associated with social isolation, less dignity, less trust in public institutions, and increasing propensity towards activities and behaviours deemed risky or 'not normal'.[53]

"Young men from BAME communities now make up **44%** of those in youth custody with **35%** identifying as black or mixed heritage."

Changing the future

Though he may not explicitly name these, Ty (and his family) has **experienced multiple social, health** and **racial inequalities** alongside some more **interpersonal adverse developmental experiences**. As a result, at 19 years of age, Ty has an offending history and low educational attainment. He is often left 'exasperated, resentful and insecure' by life on the margins.[54]

Ty's accumulated experience of the education and criminal justice systems created a perception of services and authority figures as untrustworthy, unfair and blaming. At the same time, Ty internalised a view of himself (and his skills) as unwanted and unvalued in mainstream society. This meant he tended to avoid situations in which people might 'judge' or 'assess' him to avoid further shame.

Nonetheless, Ty is still motivated to act as a role model to his brother. He is ready for change. Despite his fears, he is willing to take a new type of risk and engage with people who are prepared to give him a chance.

We know that with the right support and opportunities, the trajectory of Ty's life can change. Many organisations are starting to work differently and find ways of harnessing the creative, entrepreneurial and leadership skills of young people like him.

Street Elite,[55] for example, uses sport, mentoring and work experience to help hard to reach young adults overcome the barriers to employment. Similarly, charities like MAC-UK, Leap Confronting Conflict and Drive Forward demonstrate that given the right support, people like Ty can become confident individuals and highly successful in the work place.

Increasingly, employers are beginning to recognise the opportunity these young adults represent. For every business the rationale will be different but there appear to be three main drivers:

(a) **Making an impact on the life of a young person and their family**

(b) **Acquiring a new source of talent and ideas**

(c) **Playing a part in making society fairer**

Some of the best examples of employer-led programmes working with this cohort of young adults include:

Movement To Work, a voluntary collaboration of UK employers committed to tackling youth unemployment by providing work experience and vocational training opportunities.

http://www.movementtowork.com/about-us/

Make Your Mark, a four-week work experience employability programme for local disadvantaged young people run by M&S and The Prince's Trust.

http://corporate.marksandspencer.com/documents/plan-a/make-your-mark.pdf

BAE Systems is a founding member of Movement To Work and provides opportunities to around 100 young people from across the country who are not in education or employment.

https://www.baesystems.com/en/what-we-do/suppliers/united-kingdom/movement-to-work

As more evidence like this emerges, a common pattern is visible which should give employers real confidence to engage with this part of the labour market. While every young adult is an individual, a successful journey to work for this cohort of young adults often follows quite a similar path, which is demonstrated on the next page.

"Many **organisations** are starting to work differently and find ways of **harnessing** the **creative, entrepreneurial** and **leadership skills** of young people."

The journey to work

19 years old, creative, ambitious, living in a single parent household with caring responsibilities for a sibling and parent.

Sceptical about authority and state, not taking benefits or using health services and never voting. Unimpressed by a system that feels rigged and judgmental, and mixing with a crowd that's up to no good.

Something happens. A friend gets seriously hurt. Or they meet a positive influence, like a youth worker, who points them towards a programme that is worth checking out.

Surprisingly, the support they get seems real and respectful. They meet some impressive and inspiring people who've been on this journey themselves. The promise of a job actually materialises.

The work placement is difficult and challenging at first in an environment with rules and behaviours that feel very alien. But support from a mentor and a growing sense of self-belief sees it through.

The employer is impressed and turns the placement into a short-term contract. What seemed strange starts to feel normal and regular pay makes a real difference to the family.

Negotiating new relationships with old friends is tough. But for almost the first time, life has purpose. It feels good.

"How do we **break down** the **barriers** to **employment** for a section of **society** that is brimming with talent?"

So the fundamental question is, how do we make this kind of positive and progressive journey commonplace? How do we break down the barriers to employment for a section of society that is brimming with talent?

Chapter Two of this Guide describes the opportunities and challenges of working with previously disengaged young adults, drawing primarily on a training for work programme called Street Elite.

It examines the perspectives of both the young adults involved and their line managers during their first few weeks, months and years at work.

Chapter Three then provides guidance for people who are directly line managing these employees with a practical list of dos and don'ts.

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2

Case studies

This chapter of the guide is designed to illustrate the **opportunities** and **challenges** of employing talented, marginalised young adults.

It draws primarily on an **employment** initiative called **Street Elite** to examine the experiences of a group of young adults during their first few weeks, months and years at work.

The Street Elite initiative is aimed at both women and men aged 18–24, though 70% of participants are currently male. Vulnerable young women can be harder to **engage** because of a mixture of caring responsibilities, motherhood and a tendency to be less visible 'on the streets'.

This chapter is based on a series of interviews conducted with young adults and their managers in the Berkeley Group. It begins by **examining** the highs, the lows and the considerations for both parties. It then looks at some of the **issues** and **behaviours** you might encounter, and ends with three case studies which demonstrate just how different each **individual journey** can be. These case studies are primarily young men because that reflects where we have had most experience so far with the programme.

On one level, you will encounter people who have difficult outside influences and little or no experience in a working environment. But you will also find people with a huge amount of **ability,** who can be a source of **innovation, inspiration** and **insight.**

All you need to do is flex your business and enable your staff to make the most of this talent pool.

About Street Elite

Since 2012, Street Elite has worked with over 300 young adults from estates across London.

The initiative uses sport and mentoring to motivate young people who are currently not in education, employment or training (NEET). It offers intensive support to young people often living on the edge of gangs and crime, helping them gain the confidence and skills to get a job or go on to further education.

So far, after five years,

74% **of participants have successfully moved into education, training or employment, having delivered regular coaching sessions on housing estates across London**
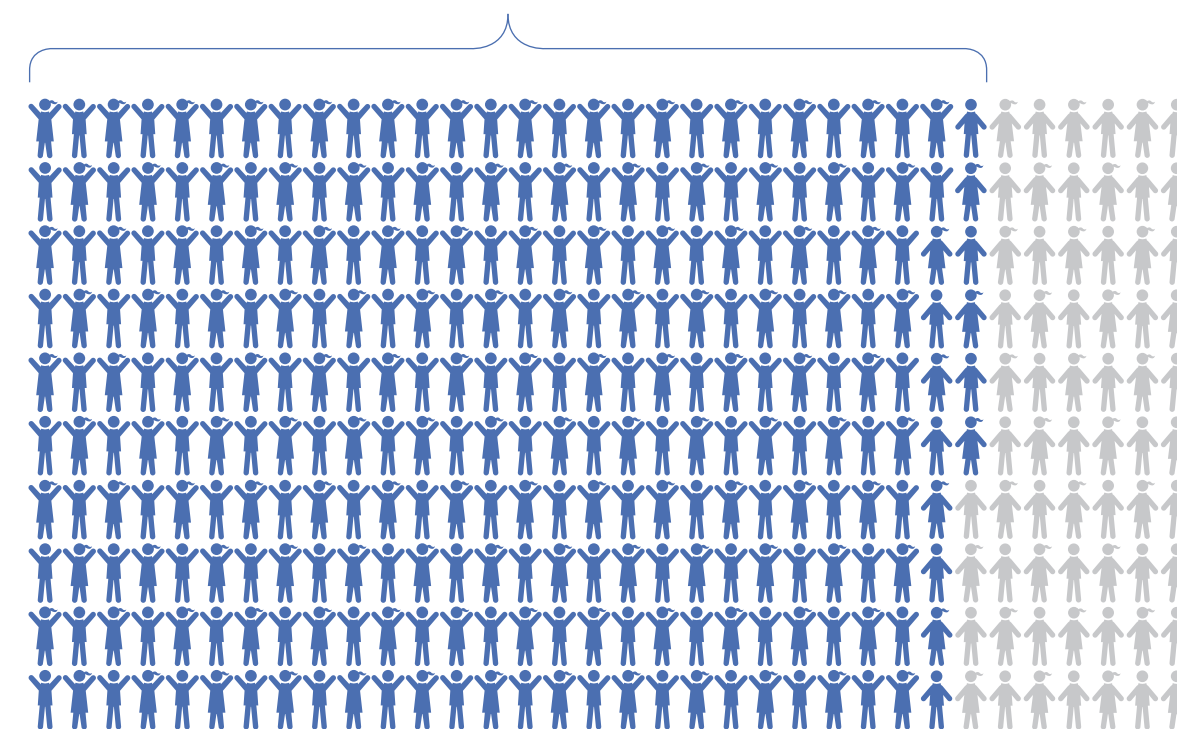
The programme is delivered through a partnership between the Change Foundation and the Berkeley Foundation; a small youth charity and a foundation run by a FTSE 100 business, working together with councils, funders and other employers.

You can find out more, including a recent five year evaluation by Oxford Brookes University, at **www.street-elite.org**.

The benefits you may experience…

A young adult's perspective

Acting as role models and inspiring other young people
"Leading the way and acting as a role model. We can help branch out to the younger generation and help connect on a more personal level."

"I think we bring a bit of **youthfulness** and a willing to please mind-set. We bring a **fresh energy** to the job."

Street Elite graduate

Strong communication skills
"Since I've joined my office I have broken down a lot of communication issues between the different departments. I make the office a fun and better place to work by simply being myself and using my abilities of good communication and adaptability."

Loyal employees
"We are far more likely to repay the opportunity given by the business with loyalty to the business."

Strong digital skills
"We're good with technology. I implement new methods of reaching out and advertising in the business."

A chance to change someone's life
"I think everyone should be given a chance to see what talent they have got or what they are willing to do to show they can progress in life by trying, rather thanbeing judged by their past."

A manager's perspective

"I have been able to use our Street Elite candidates as **role models to encourage others with career progression doubts.** When you look at their backgrounds and how they have improved, not only with work skills but their overall confidence, it gives others a lift to **aspire to better themselves**."

Manager of young person

Breaking down preconceptions
"Most people were sceptical over how individuals from a less fortunate background could grow and develop into a role of responsibility and add real value to a team. Our guys have proved how they have matured, grown and progressed in their roles."

Candidates who are loyal and dedicated
"The candidates were loyal and had grit to work hard."

It's rewarding
"It's fulfilling when they are prepared to make the effort and show commitment."

Creating a culture of helping and developing others
"Having a Street Elite apprentice on site has brought the best out in people as everyone tries to help them in one way or another. I have seen managers spending time with them on site, showing them how things work. They include them in the site life and general camaraderie to make them feel part of our team."

Recruits with a real hunger to learn
"The ambition and willingness to learn I have seen from him is something to be proud of."

The highs…

A young adult's perspective

"Berkeley was the first company to look beyond my criminal record and **not judge a book by its cover.**"

Street Elite graduate

Seeing a positive change in themselves
"Everything about me has changed. The way I talk to people, approach people, I got a timetable of my day or weekly thing. I organise myself. You do different things."

Sharing constructive messages with the community
"I can tell my friends working is the way, it's the way you progress up. It doesn't matter what you do, you gotta work to progress up, it's not gonna come to you straight away."

Building relationships
"Seeing my colleagues is the best part of my day. Everyone is open. No one is scared, they're a bubbly bunch."

Learning with other people
"We are a team here so even if myself and others have a different view on things we come together and develop a solution that suits everyone."

"Every morning I was always **determined** to come in. I was always **excited** and didn't know what to expect."

Street Elite graduate

A manager's perspective

Watching someone progress
"He's gone from a boy to a man. He's a different person. He's come out of his shell and impressed the team."

Seeing colleagues rally around them
"A lot of the older family guys tried to take them under their wing, tell them about what they're doing and where they're going."

Taking on someone who is grateful and eager to learn
"He was full of confidence, very polite, extremely grateful for the opportunity. To a point where I had to tell him to stop thanking me. He was desperate to get more responsibility."

Breaking down preconceived ideas and investing in others
"At first there was a reluctance. They were unsure of what they were going to get and how the guys would apply themselves. Since taking them on it's reaffirmed how they are actually very keen to be offered a job and prepared to throw in their heart and soul. They know it's part of our culture."

Having a positive impact on the community
"It's changed his life and with his very first pay cheque he bought his family a take away to say thanks for putting up with him and supporting him when he wasn't equipping himself the best he could."

"He was full of **confidence,** very polite, **extremely grateful** for the opportunity."

Manager of young person

The lows…

A young adult's perspective

Adjusting to traditional working hours
"I've been late a couple of times. They've been on to me about that. It happens. It's my fault. I'm late."

Disagreements with colleagues
"Little arguments. I done something wrong and he wasn't really too happy."

Challenging the patience of team members
"First day everyone was cool and asking for help was easy. Now they give me more stuff to do. When I ask nobody wants to help. They tell you to look it up. They get annoyed. There are days when I think why the hell am I coming in?"

Being disciplined
"When they put trust in you but you don't perform they can be harsh. You can get a bollocking. It can put you down for the whole day."

Understanding the breadth of the business and how it works
"You don't see how much you need to learn until it's put on a plate. I learned how to read drawings but then I'm asked for another thing. It's daunting. You start asking yourself will I ever understand? How will I progress?"

> "I was slightly **anxious.**
> I felt like I didn't fit in as
> **everyone looked and
> spoke very professionally.**"

Street Elite graduate

A manager's perspective

> "She wasn't very engaging but this of course comes from being **shy** and **worried about doing anything wrong.**"

Manager of young person

Challenges with literacy and exams
"He failed his construction skills test three or four times. He hasn't got the natural ability."

Outside influences
"He was forever getting into fights outside of work."

Family problems
"He had issues with the police and with his ex partner's daughter. There were issues about access to his child. We supported him fully with time off. He said there was something he was 'caught up in.'"

Aggressive behaviour
"He was renowned as the leader of the pack. He was very boisterous, alpha male. He was used to being in charge and leading a group of people. He tried to do that here but it was a different environment. It blew up a couple of times."

Staff attitudes
"Colleagues said 'I don't want to work with this guy.' There were staff concerns about personal safety and behaviour."

Lack of interest
"She wasn't very engaging but this of course comes from being shy and worried about doing anything wrong. She isn't confident with the computers or phones or dealing with monies."

Cultural differences
"He had an altercation with the Project Manager to do with the fact that he kept leaving the site to go to pray at the local mosque."

GOOD ORDER · GOOD WORK · GOOD HEALTH

Berkeley
Designed for life

The biggest challenges…

A young adult's perspective

> "Being told what to do was hard for me as growing up there was no **authority**."

Street Elite graduate

Business jargon
"Construction is a completely different language. The first meeting I sat in I didn't understand 90% of things."

A sense of unfairness about career progression
"I was thinking why am I not moving up? I didn't realise why was I never getting promoted. If I don't go nowhere, I'm just gonna quit."

Adjusting behaviour and language
"They told me to be polite. It's a working environment. I have to speak to people in a professional manner."

The working environment
"I'd never worn a suit. I didn't know I could have coffee whenever I wanted to."

> "Initially he was too **unconfident** to pick up the phone."

Manager of young person

A manager's perspective

Keeping them engaged and motivated
"There was no self-drive or discipline without our undivided attention."

Sense of self entitlement to quick promotion
"He thought he deserved to be made Site Manager after a few months."

Mental health issues
"She didn't come in because she was too anxious about travelling alone."

Colleagues' reactions
"Overcoming the idea that they haven't got talent because of where they come from."

Playing on mobiles
"A lot of external distractions which tended to come through his iPhone. He was big on Instagram. All his gang mates tended to use it."
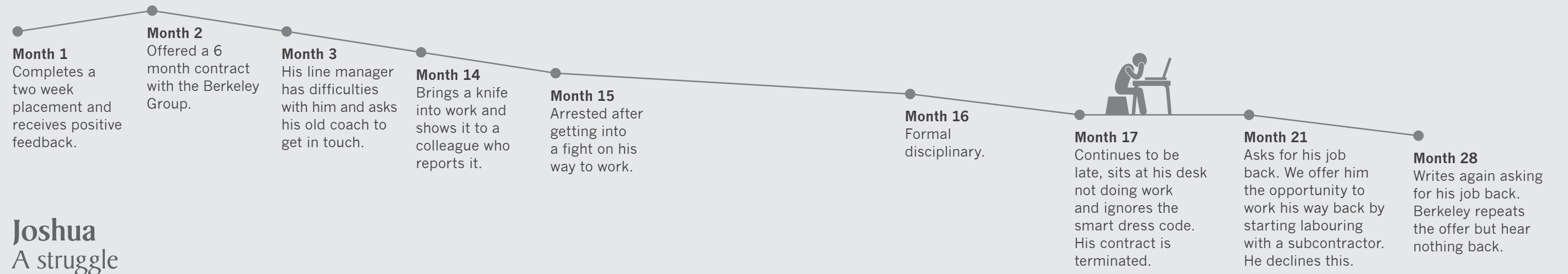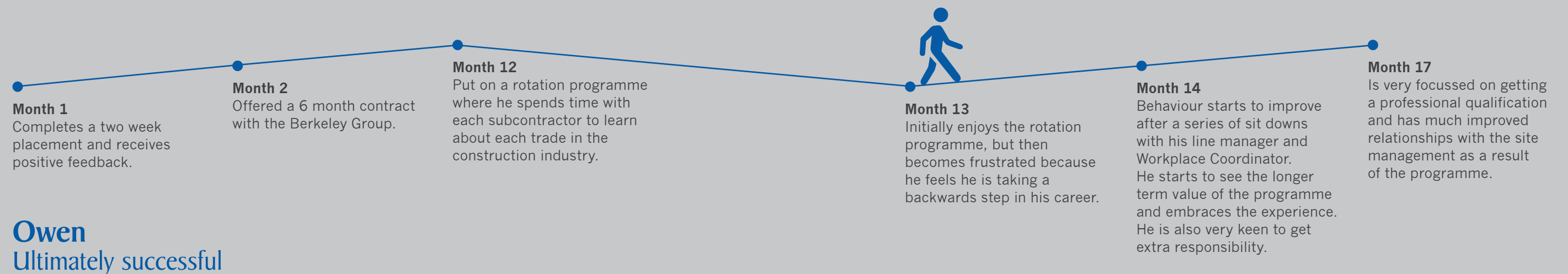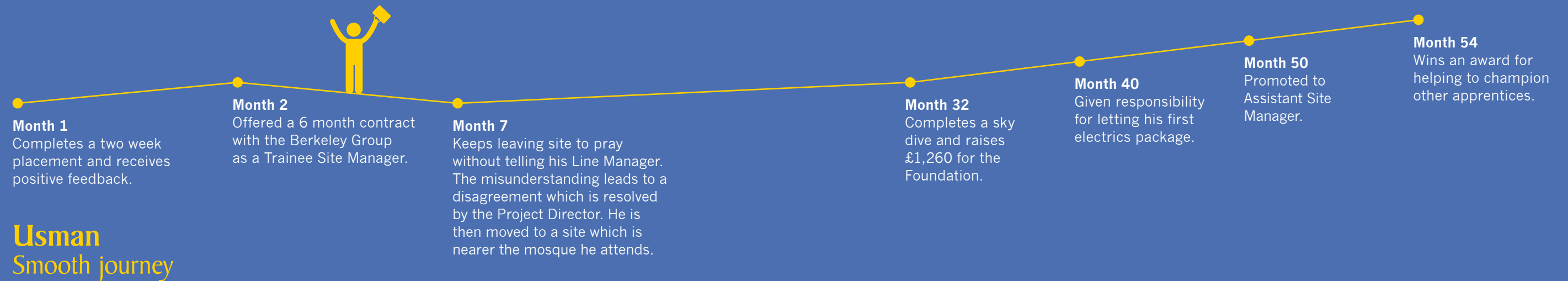
Ties with gangs and old friends
"Reading between the lines his banding within the gang was quite considerable."

Lack of confidence
"Initially he was too unconfident to pick up the phone."

Case studies

Usman
Smooth journey

Month 1
Completes a two week placement and receives positive feedback.

Month 2
Offered a 6 month contract with the Berkeley Group as a Trainee Site Manager.

Month 7
Keeps leaving site to pray without telling his Line Manager. The misunderstanding leads to a disagreement which is resolved by the Project Director. He is then moved to a site which is nearer the mosque he attends.

Month 32
Completes a sky dive and raises £1,260 for the Foundation.

Month 40
Given responsibility for letting his first electrics package.

Month 50
Promoted to Assistant Site Manager.

Month 54
Wins an award for helping to champion other apprentices.

Owen
Ultimately successful

Month 1
Completes a two week placement and receives positive feedback.

Month 2
Offered a 6 month contract with the Berkeley Group.

Month 12
Put on a rotation programme where he spends time with each subcontractor to learn about each trade in the construction industry.

Month 13
Initially enjoys the rotation programme, but then becomes frustrated because he feels he is taking a backwards step in his career.

Month 14
Behaviour starts to improve after a series of sit downs with his line manager and Workplace Coordinator. He starts to see the longer term value of the programme and embraces the experience. He is also very keen to get extra responsibility.

Month 17
Is very focussed on getting a professional qualification and has much improved relationships with the site management as a result of the programme.

Joshua
A struggle

Month 1
Completes a two week placement and receives positive feedback.

Month 2
Offered a 6 month contract with the Berkeley Group.

Month 3
His line manager has difficulties with him and asks his old coach to get in touch.

Month 14
Brings a knife into work and shows it to a colleague who reports it.

Month 15
Arrested after getting into a fight on his way to work.

Month 16
Formal disciplinary.

Month 17
Continues to be late, sits at his desk not doing work and ignores the smart dress code. His contract is terminated.

Month 21
Asks for his job back. We offer him the opportunity to work his way back by starting labouring with a subcontractor. He declines this.

Month 28
Writes again asking for his job back. Berkeley repeats the offer but hear nothing back.

Expectations and realities…

Expectations

"I thought it was going to be all matey like being around all my friends all my time. I was naive about what it would be like."

"I was thinking would I get on with everyone? I felt a bit odd. Everything would be new to me. I thought it would be very corporate."

"I thought the working environment would be a lot more serious. I thought it was a big company and I was surprised the project team was not that big when I started."

"I was expecting it to be very difficult working with people who initially didn't want to work with a kid from 'Street Elite'"

Realities

"It's work, you have to adapt your behaviour to each person. You have to change. I've learned you've got to be committed, show enthusiasm and be organised. But be who you are you at the same time."

"When you're inside it's different. You realise just how much goes on. I've learned how to build a house. I started from scratch but I've now got a construction background. It's built my confidence."

"I have learned a lot generally about construction and also how to work in an office - email etiquette, how to be productive and prioritise work."

"It's been the complete opposite. I have realised there is still hope, I have learnt to never give up."

The kinds of behaviour you might encounter...

Every individual you take on will be different, but you may experience a different combination of the below characteristics.

Enthusiastic   Fixation with prestige

Shy   Lack of interest   Polite   Humble

Poor academic skills   Too much time on mobile

Overly grateful   Bad timekeeping

3

Dos and don'ts

This third chapter provides **practical guidance** for people who are directly line managing **young adults** with little experience of professional working life.

It draws on interviews with young adults, line managers and a range of **specialists** within the employment industry to summarise the dos and don'ts for the short, medium and long term.

Share it widely.

Do

Right at the start...

- Remember they may not have had any **experience** in the workplace. You are responsible for **integrating** them into the working environment.

- Make sure they **know** exactly what they're doing, who they're working with and for how long for at least the first 12 months.

- Manage **expectations**. Give clear **timescales** for career progression so they don't expect a quick promotion.

- Get them to co-create and stick to a set of minimum **standards**. These should be clear about the use of mobiles, punctuality and what levels of absenteeism are acceptable.

- Get your colleagues to buy into their **development**. Their support is just as important as yours.

- Assign them a line manager and have regular **1:1 catch ups**. These should be weekly at the beginning, then move to fortnightly and then monthly. Make sure that line managers are reliable and punctual; avoid postponing, cancelling or reducing these catch ups.

- Make sure there is always an open, neutral route to **communication** with someone they can talk to if they are struggling with something.

- Recognise all the implicit **rules** they won't know. Imagine you were going into a gang situation – you wouldn't know who was at the top of the hierarchy.

- Have an open conversation about **mental health** and the company policy so they feel comfortable to speak to their mentor if they are triggered at work.

- Record their clock in and clock out times: **consistency** is key and you need to demonstrate taking an active interest in their **progress**.

- Talk them through their **journey** to work and work backwards so they are clear what time they need to get up and leave the house to get there on time.

- Consider that if they are a parent, they may need extra **support** to cover child care costs and have **flexible** working hours.

- Let them know about food and facilities. It's important for them to know what's **available** and what they have to provide.

- Give them **clarity** about the type of clothing to be worn at work and the appropriate use of mobile phones.

- Tell them about any **procedures** and **support** that can be offered around travel and expenses.

- Make sure you are **understanding** when you are setting tasks. What seems like a straightforward task to you might not be so easy for them. They may not have had the same **experience** or education.

Do

A few weeks in...

- Take the time to find out their **personal** situation – do they have a child they need to look after? Are they having family problems? Do they have concerns about their safety? Are they religious? Are they fasting at the time of the work placement?

- Keep them **motivated** with varied and exciting work.

- Keep in touch with their coach or previous training programme to talk to them about how they're getting on and get **advice** on any issues you may have.

- Make sure they have at least 15 minutes with their **mentor** twice a week to talk about what they have learnt and ask any questions.

- Praise for a job well done and show that you **believe** in them.

- Make them feel part of the **team** by making sure they have people to sit with at lunch and inviting them to work **socials**.

- Encourage them to keep a **diary**. It not only consolidates their learning, it also helps them start to write in a **business** language, teaching them that they can't use words like 'lol' or go into detail about unprofessional behaviours or actions.

- Find out what they're really **interested** in. Be forensic and identify their top three **talents** and interests. It's not charity, it's talent spotting.

- Try not to make assumptions about the **behaviours** you see. Instead, try to understand why they behave that way and what you can do to **support** them.

Medium term...

- Build their **knowledge** from the ground up. It's better to lay the foundations first, rather than realise too late and ask them to take a backwards step.

- Give them **responsibility** and show that you **trust** them.

- Celebrate **milestones** in their careers with vouchers and lunches.

- Mentor them in an **informal** situation. Why not take them out for pizza? It can help them talk more freely about what's going on in their work and lives.

- **Encourage** them to break with bad influences.

- **Teach** them time management skills for managing their time during work.

Don't

Right at the start...

- Assume they know anything. Like **industry jargon**, how to greet senior people, when it's acceptable to make personal calls or that they have basic skills like Maths and English.

- Forget to ask about **religious/cultural practices** that they may adhere to (holidays, dress code, fasting etc).

- Presuppose that they can **afford** to get to work. Until they receive their pay cheque, it's a good idea to pay for their travel and lunch. Do they have enough money to buy smart clothes for work?

- Give too many **glamour** stories. Yes directors drive very nice cars, but they have worked long hours and had a hard slog to get there!

- Over praise at the beginning. It creates unrealistic **expectations** of what working life is like and sets them up to fail later.

- Be **judgmental** about their personal lives. Often they will worry about being perceived differently to their colleagues.

- Don't expect a young person to read policies. Make sure you **talk** them through them.

In the first few weeks...

- Create made up roles for them. They need to be in a proper job with **responsibility** and a clear career path.

- Give them lots of **exams**. Often, they may have had negative experience with tests and education. It's not the best way to build their **confidence** and **motivation**.

Medium term...

- Change the team they're working in. Stability and **consistency** is key as many of them have experienced a lot of upheaval or broken promises in their life.

- Let them think they will receive different **treatment** from any other employees.

- Think that they'll be the **finished product** in 6 months time. It takes constant and long term **mentoring.**

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