

DYW

NORTH EAST

The vital link connecting
schools and businesses

DYW

MORAY

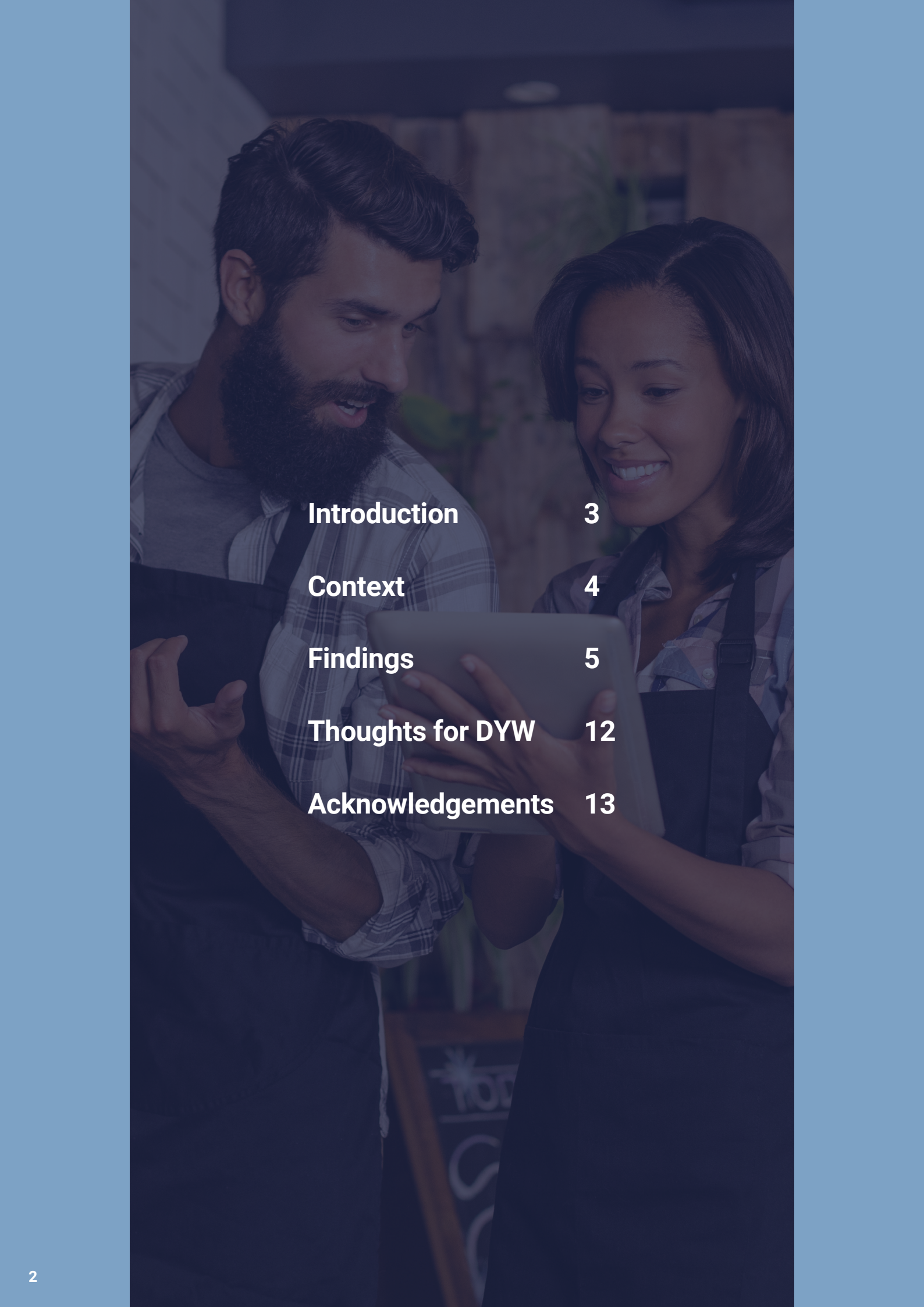
Developing the
Young Workforce

DYW

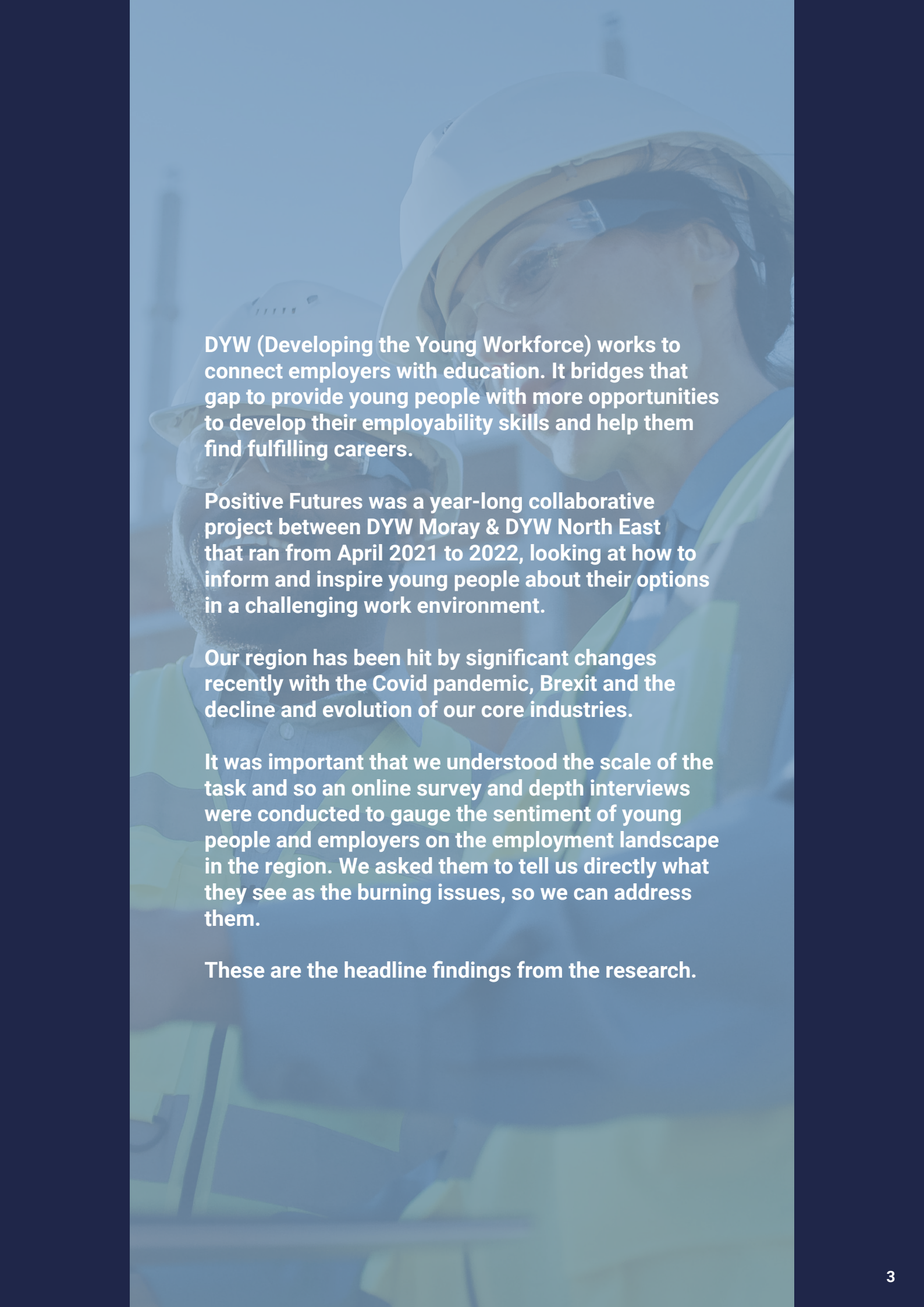
Positive Futures research report

April 2022



A man with a beard and a woman, both wearing aprons, are looking at a tablet together. The man is pointing at the screen while the woman smiles. They appear to be in a kitchen or food service setting.

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DYW (Developing the Young Workforce) works to connect employers with education. It bridges that gap to provide young people with more opportunities to develop their employability skills and help them find fulfilling careers.

Positive Futures was a year-long collaborative project between DYW Moray & DYW North East that ran from April 2021 to 2022, looking at how to inform and inspire young people about their options in a challenging work environment.

Our region has been hit by significant changes recently with the Covid pandemic, Brexit and the decline and evolution of our core industries.

It was important that we understood the scale of the task and so an online survey and depth interviews were conducted to gauge the sentiment of young people and employers on the employment landscape in the region. We asked them to tell us directly what they see as the burning issues, so we can address them.

These are the headline findings from the research.

Context

DYW North East and DYW Moray commissioned the Research Chamber insight team at Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce to conduct research amongst employers and young people about pathways to work, available support and their engagement with each other.

They conducted an online survey in summer 2021 with **401** young people and **145** employers.

They then followed this up with depth interviews in spring 2022, asking **12** employers and **18** young people about their experiences in more detail. (see table below)

The employer research was conducted with a spread by business size. All have premises located in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire or Moray. The young people were a mix of age, at school/left school/further education/working, gender & region.



Method	Online Survey		Depth Interviews	
How many, when	546 surveys, in Summer 2021		30 depth interviews, in Spring 2022	
Profile	401 Young People A mix of ages (all between 16 and 24), at school/left school/further education/working, gender & region (across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire or Moray). 153 were still at school, 248 had left school before May 2021.	145 Employers All had premises located in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire or Moray. There was an even split by business size: micro (36%), small (31%) and medium-large (34%) businesses.	18 Young People 9 had left school and 9 were still at school. There was a spread of gender & region (across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire & Moray)	12 Employers All had premises located in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire or Moray. There was an even split across the three areas & there was a spread by business size.



The initial survey

1 - There is a disparity between young people and employers' perceptions of entering the world of work

Employers and young people were asked about how they view the employment landscape in the region, which threw up some differing views.

When young people were asked if they felt they faced barriers to entering the world of work, **43%** said they did.

Nearly a quarter (**23%**) said that confidence and anxiety-related concerns held them back, while more than a fifth cited the demand for previous work experience.

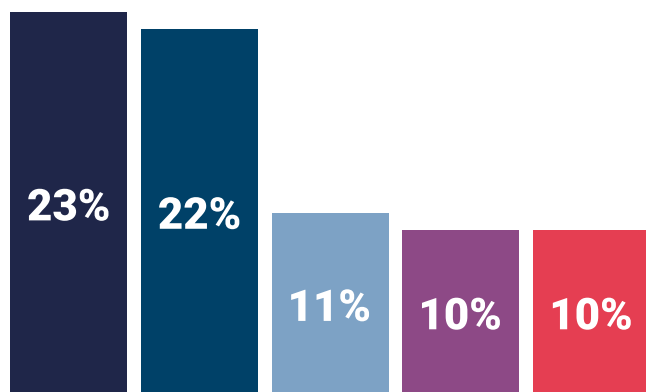
Only one in five of the young people felt they didn't face any barriers at all.

However, three-quarters of employers who responded (**75%**) believe they inspire young people to gain skills for the world of work.

More than four-fifths (**82%**) believe they help young people achieve their potential, with nearly two-thirds (**65%**) of employers satisfied with how they connect with young people.

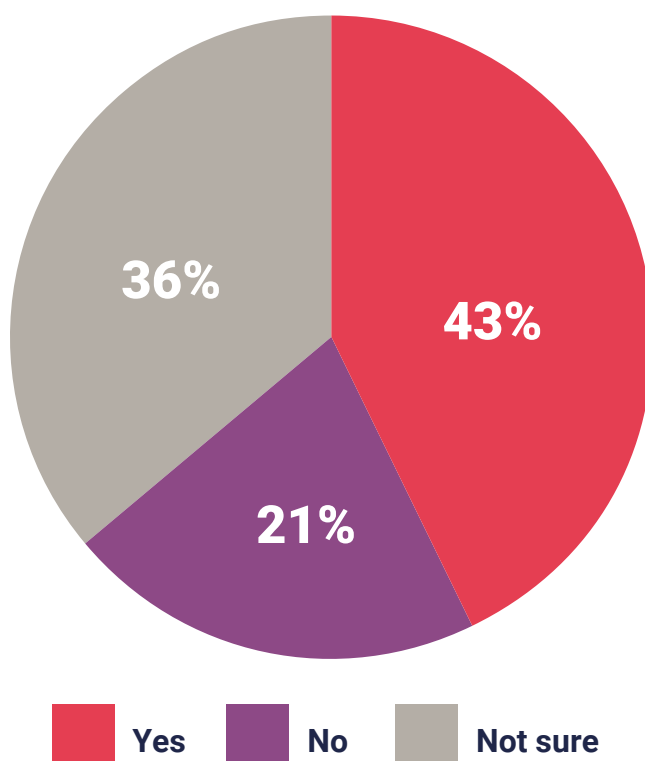
Barriers faced

Q: Some people feel that they face barriers when entering the world of work. Do you think that you face any barriers?



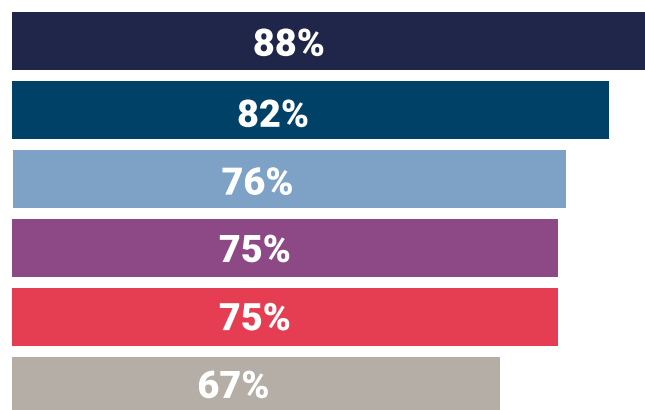
- Anxiety & confidence issues
- Need for previous experience
- Discrimination on age, gender or race
- Health conditions
- Lack of opportunity

Do you feel you face barriers to entering the world of work?



Employers' views

Q: Number of employers who agree with the following statements



- We create an inclusive workplace
- We help young people to achieve their potential
- We invest in work-based training and upskilling opportunities
- We inspire young people to gain world of work skills
- We are looking to grow our young people workforce in 2022/23
- We create jobs/employment opportunities for young people

The initial survey

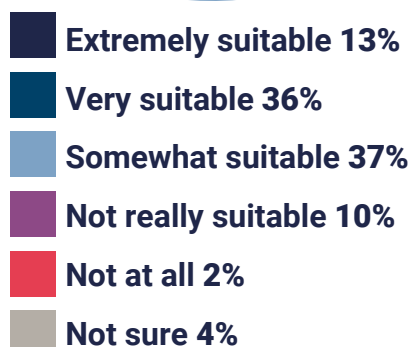
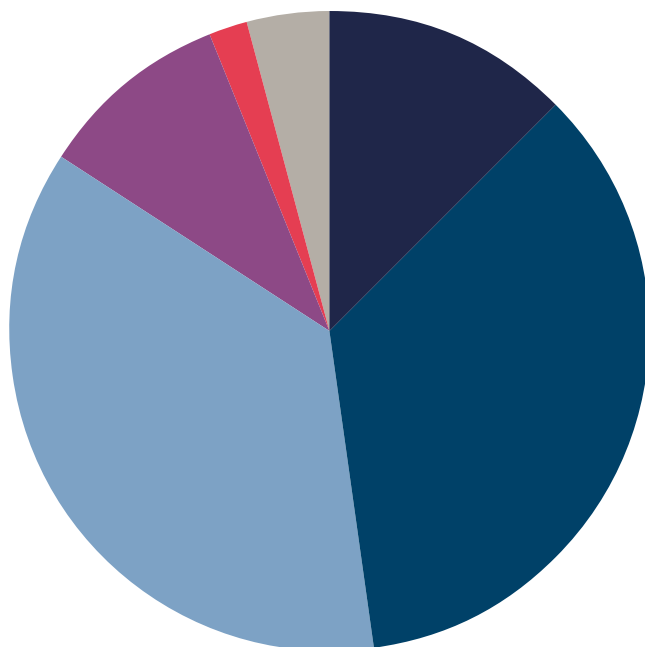
2 – There is positive news for the regions as both employers and young people see them as suitable places to work, study and train

Nearly half of young people (49%) see the North-east & Moray as an extremely or very suitable place to work, study or train, and more than half of employers (55%) see it as very suitable.

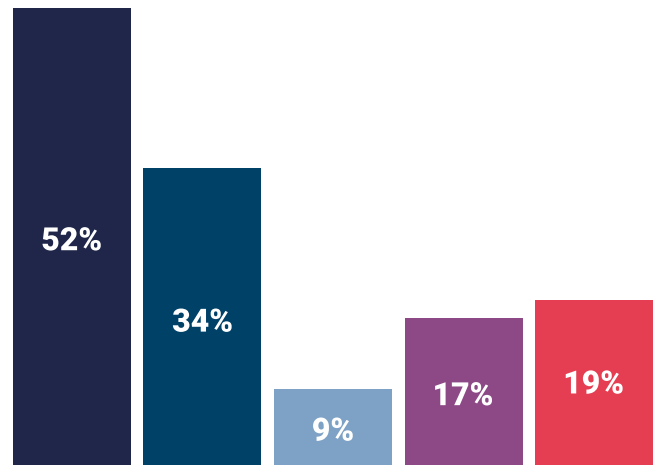
Only 12% of young people and 4% of employers see the region as not really or not suitable at all.

And 49% of young people were extremely or very hopeful about their future work prospects, with only 6% not very or not at all hopeful.

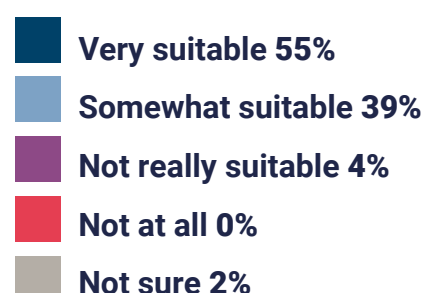
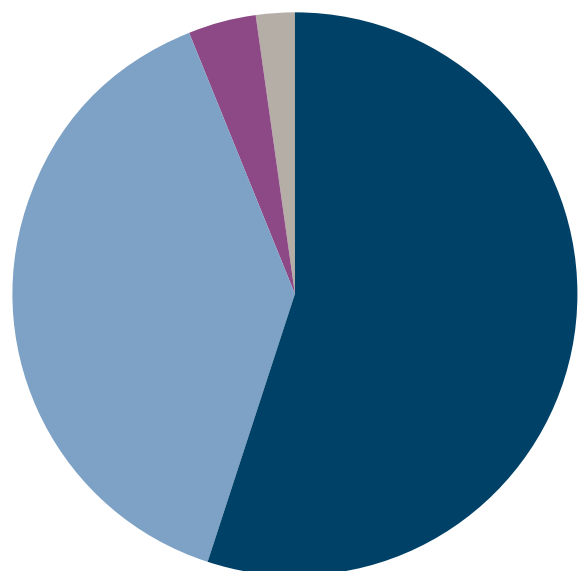
Young people - how suitable is Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray as a place to find work, study or train?



Young people - thinking about the next few years, do you intend to remain in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray to work, study or train?



Employers - how suitable is Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray as a place to find work, study or train?



The initial survey

3 - Some sectors need a PR boost among young people in the region

Young people were asked how interested they are in working in certain sectors.

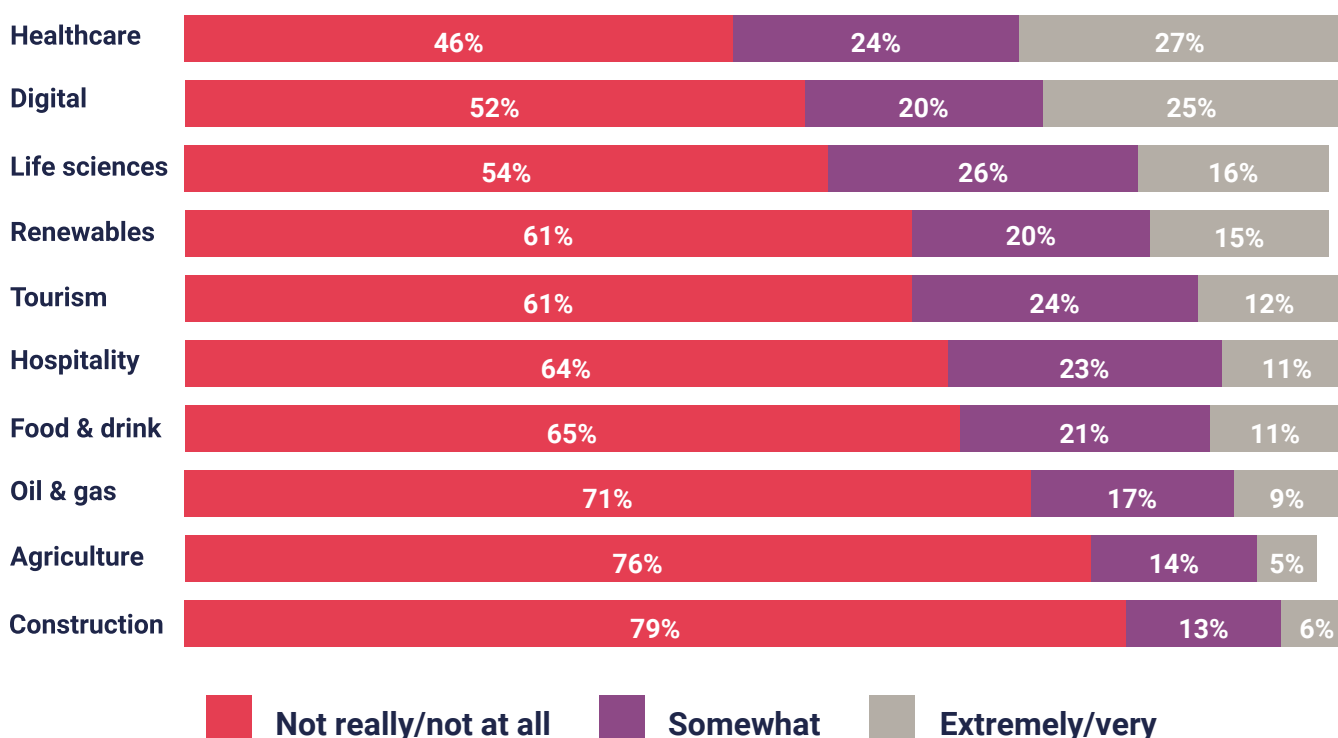
Healthcare and the digital industries came out well, with more than one in four (**27%**) extremely or very interested in a career in healthcare, and **25%** in a career in the digital industries.

The hospitality and food & drink sectors had more mixed results with one in 10 (**11%** in both cases) extremely or very interested in a career in these industries. But nearly two-thirds of respondents (**64%** and **65%** respectively) said they are not really or not at all interested.

When it came to oil & gas and construction, the results are even starker. **71%** of young people said they are not really or not at all interested in a career in oil & gas. This rose to **79%** when they were asked about working in the construction industry.



% Young people interested in sectors, scale extremely interested to not at all interested



The initial survey

4 - There is a widespread lack of regional awareness about apprenticeships among young people

Young people are keen to enter the world of work.

Nearly nine out of 10 (**88%**) are motivated to gain the skills to get a job they want. But while over half (**53%**) understand the skills and qualifications needed to get into the world of work, more than two-thirds (**68%**) understand those needed to get into further education.

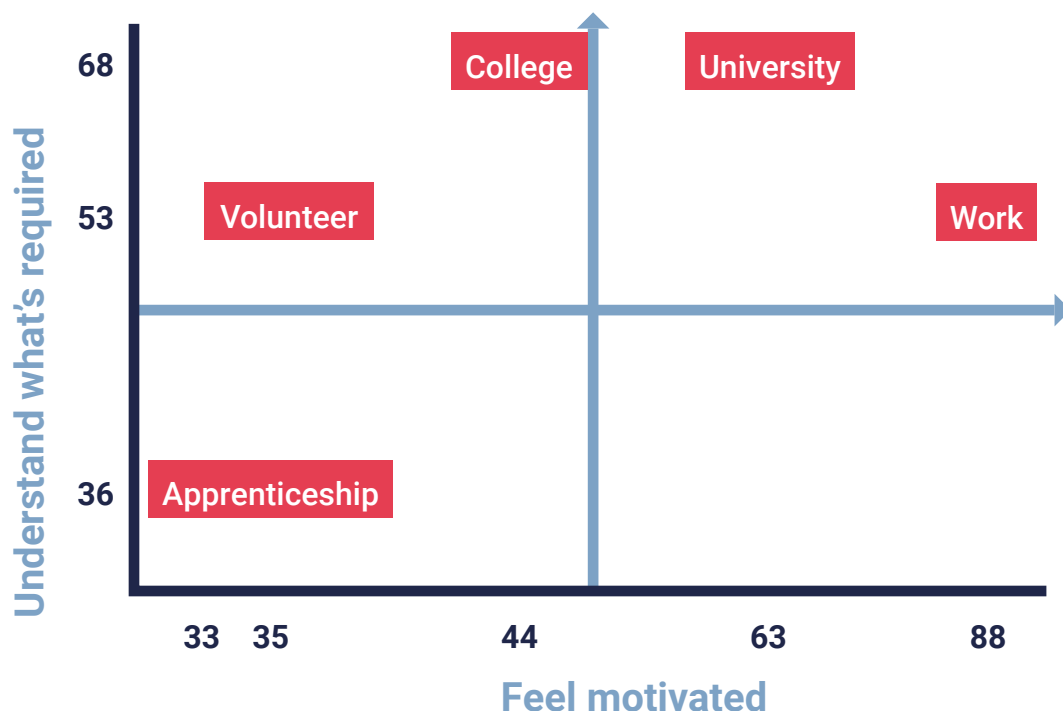
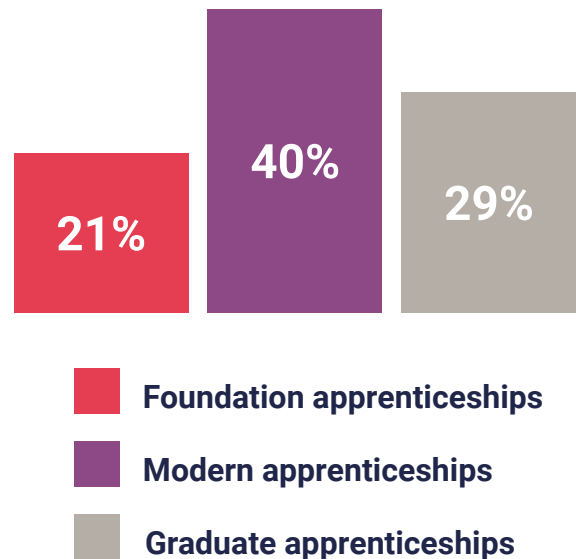
However, only a third of young people either understand the pathway into an apprenticeship (**36%**) or feel motivated to take one up (**33%**). This compares to the **63%** of the young respondents that are motivated to go to university.

As the apprenticeship family – from foundation, to modern through to graduate – gives both useful experience of the workplace and offers helpful first steps to getting a job, this lack of awareness and interest raises some concerns.

Speaking to employers, around **40%** say that they either don't know about the three types of apprenticeships or they are not applicable to them. There is most engagement (**40%**) with modern apprenticeships.

This would appear to indicate that there is capacity for more employers to offer foundation apprenticeship placements.

Employers who offer



Note:

What's required scale is % who say they understand extremely/very well.
Motivated scale is % who say they are extremely/very motivated

Follow-up interviews

5. Employers have a lot invested in young people's success

Employers believe they go to a lot of personal effort, going the extra mile to make employment initiatives aimed at young people work in their business.

They have a range of motivations, including a desire to see young people succeed (some are parents too, some want to replicate the chances they themselves were given) and to see their community enriched, meaning young people don't have to leave to find opportunities.

Getting young people interested in their business is a necessity too. Their businesses rely on a constant stream of new talent and energy, and that has been put under strain through things like the Covid pandemic and Brexit.

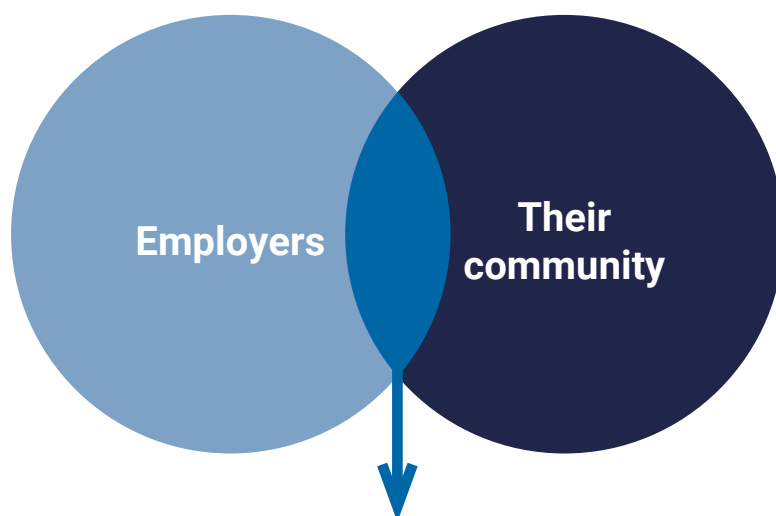
Employers also think that young people and their parents don't realise what assets their businesses are. They want to shout about how much innovation, excitement and opportunities that young people can access by joining their business, dispelling outdated myths about their industries.

“

Engaging with young people helps me make sure that people have a positive perception of the industry

Employer,
Aberdeenshire

”



**Help young people in their region
Support their community
Sustain their business**

Follow-up interviews

6. Employers think that young people's technical skills are often more developed than their life skills.

Many young people agree.

When thinking about young people, employers split technical skills from life skills.

Employers recognise that the world of education is proficient at teaching technical skills theory; and that employers can help young people learn the practical side 'on the job' and via training and repetition.

But employers believe that a number of young people lack the basic life skills needed for work, like personal responsibility, concern for others and listening skills.

Many young people don't feel ready for work. They see it as another world, one that is some way off in the distance. They see further education as a mid-step, helping them gain life skills (like flat sharing, away from home comforts) as preparation for both work and adult life. To them, the pandemic felt like it slowed their progress though, limiting their opportunities.

“

When Covid hit, everything was up in the air for a little while to be honest ... [I was] applying for things but a lot of employers just weren't taking graduates on because everything was so uncertain

Young person,
Moray

”

	Technical Skills	Life Skills
Employers' view of young people	Medium: good on theory, can teach the practical on the job	Low for many. An issue as they need young people to be up and running
Young people's view of themselves	Medium: on track to acquiring them, via education pathway	Low for many. Keen to have time and space to develop them. Higher if they have had part time jobs.

Follow-up interviews

7. Young people's sense of employment purpose influenced by whether or not they are on a vocational pathway. Sometimes the only connection with employers is via the intimidating application process.

For young people on a vocational pathway, their route to employment is clear. For some, their journey started in S3, via their subject choices. It continues through their school exams, into further education courses, practical work experience and on to work. Their main concerns are getting their grades and maintaining their enthusiasm for their life choices.

For young people who are not on a vocational pathway, their route to work is much less clear. For them, identifying a career or potential employers is a much more fraught experience with - in their eyes - not much in the way of support.

For many, their only interaction with employers is through the intimidating job application process. They see it as impersonal, where the employers are asking for a superman or superwoman – with experience and multi-layered skills – all while in competition against the next new crop of leavers.

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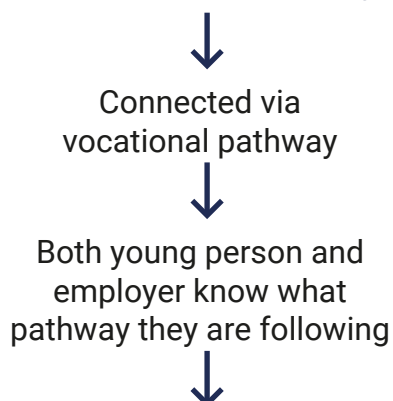
**Most of my time
at uni, I didn't
really know what
I wanted to do**

Young person,
Moray

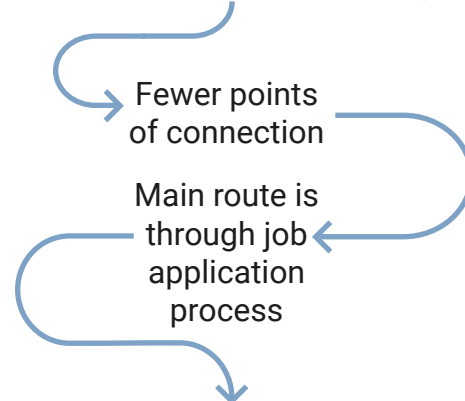
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Young people

On vocational pathway



Not on vocational pathway



Potential employers

Follow-up interviews

8. Employers and young people who know the Developing the Young Workforce organisation praise the people. The others, where DYW is not in their field of vision, universally love the idea of an organisation designed to bring employers and young people together, for the good of all.

Those who know DYW are full of praise for the DYW team. They feel a two-way personal connection. They think that DYW is a helping hand into schools for employers but that the DYW people are reliant on the willingness of the school.

For those less aware of DYW, they universally love the concept of an organisation dedicated to bridging the gap between employers and young people.

Both employers and young people love the idea of an organisation being on their side in this effort, helping them work through all the issues they face.

There is a belief that DYW can be a real force for good in the community, helping it to become sustainable (young people not having to leave the region to pursue opportunities, employers not having to be under-resourced or closed to new ideas).

“

I think there needs to be a big focus on helping people have the inspiration and have the confidence in themselves to do whatever they feel like they need to do

Young person,
Aberdeen City

”

Thoughts for DYW from the research

Research Finding	Thoughts for DYW
Employers and young people who know DYW, praise the people. The others, where DYW is not in their field of vision, universally love the idea of an organisation designed to bring employers and young people together, for the good of all. There is widespread lack of awareness about apprenticeships in the region.	Be clear with all (employers, young people, parents and schools) why DYW exists, what DYW does and how you do it. Show that there is an overall plan (for the region, for each employer and for each young person) and how the individual actions fit into the whole picture.
Young people's sense of employment purpose is influenced by whether or not they are on a vocational pathway. Sometimes the only connection with employers is via the intimidating application process.	Be there for young people through their journey, be focused on the outcome for the individual young person. Target effort at those who will benefit most.
There is a disparity between young people and employers' perceptions of entering the world of work. Employers think that young people's technical skills are often more developed than their life skills. Many young people agree.	Help demystify employment for young people by creating 'Foundation Work Skills' to prepare young people for work.
Employers and young people see the region as a suitable place to work, study and train. Some sectors need a PR boost among young people in the region.	Build regional showcases, highlighting the wealth of opportunities that employers have to offer young people. Run them at key times, for example in early school years and around subject choices.
Employers think they have a lot invested in young people's success.	Go the extra mile in supporting employers who show willing. Manage them one-to-one, exploring different ways for them to engage with young people.

Thank you

DYW North East and DYW Moray would like to thank all the employers and young people who contributed to this research.

They extend their gratitude to the Research Chamber at Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce who conducted this research on our behalf but also to partners and stakeholders, including Skills Development Scotland, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Moray Council, North East Scotland College, Moray College UHI, and other employer partner organisations, that helped support engagement around the survey.

DYW (Developing the Young Workforce) works to connect employers with education. It bridges that gap to provide young people with more opportunities to develop their employability skills and help them find fulfilling careers.



