Link Up Leigh Park Project: Overview of the Participatory Insight Phase Findings and Systems Map

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Introduction

Leigh Park is a mixed housing estate in Havant, Hampshire, which is classed within the 20% most disadvantaged areas in England with 19.3% of children living in poverty (Public Health England, 2015; DWP, n.d., as cited in Hampshire County Council, 2022). Furthermore, during the COVID 19 pandemic the level of deprivation within the area has increased dramatically, further amplifying the low educational attainment and lower than average pay, especially in the female population. Additionally, health inequalities, smoking related diseases, and a high demand for mental health services are prevalent in the area (The Health Foundation, 2021). Thus, indicating how poverty presents an obstacle for young individuals to continue their education, better manage their health, and seek employment (Malti & Ngoepe, 2021). Moreover, the discrepancy between the existing institutional support such as work setting environments and young individuals transitioning to adulthood leads to unemployment (Settersten & Ray 2010). This can lead to an array of psychological problems such as depression and anxiety, whilst causing a challenge for young people to transition into adulthood due to less opportunities to progress in the workforce (Wanberg, 2012). Not only are the effects of deprivation on young people severe, but the recent changes in societal timetables have affected families as well, as they feel overburdened in supporting their children.

Therefore, it is important to understand the barriers young residents of Leigh Park face to help improve their wellbeing whilst achieving economic and psychological independence. Hence, developing their access to good education, training, and work experience could improve their lives as Thompson (2011) demonstrated that these areas are vital in securing employment. Moreover, previous studies have observed a strong relationship between low socio-economic backgrounds with being uneducated or unemployed. Moreover, negative effects of the pandemic were noticeable for young, low-paid, and female individuals (Blundell, Costa Dias, Joyce & Xu. 2020). Other barriers of employment and training include the lack of contacts and experiences that young people have, putting them at a disadvantage compared to adults in searching and securing jobs because businesses seek employees with experience (Bell & Blanchflower, 2011). Hence, these findings suggest that young individuals of Leigh Park are unable to secure employment and education due to their low socio-economic status, experience, and effects of the pandemic.

Although previous research could suggest barriers young people of Leigh Park may face, our study stresses that a more interactive, community-based participatory approach will help to identify and provide a wider view of the current challenges and obstacles the young residents of Leigh Park may face. This led to the development of the Insight Phase, whereby viewpoints across all stakeholders were explored. These included young people between the ages of 15 to 24 years, their families, organisations working with young residents of Leigh Park, and businesses in Havant. The Insight Phase is part of a wider project which aims to remove the societal, health and economic barriers that young people of Leigh Park face. Thus, exploring the barriers young people face in pursuing education, employment, and

training allows for gaining a developed evidence-based perspective whilst exploring ways to support young people on setting towards a fulfilling and healthy life.

This report provides an overview of the Insight Phase, whereby the methods, analyses and key findings across all stakeholders are summarised. Additionally, this report combines the findings of the Insight Phase with the Systems Map, whereby the *barriers* identified during the discussions in the Insight Phase are matched with the *facilitators*.

Method

The Insight Phase aimed to explore the perspectives of the barriers young people face in the area of Leigh Park across various stakeholders. As a result of this, multiple studies were conducted, with recruitment strategies and data collection differing across the stakeholder groups. Therefore, this section aims to describe the methods used for each stakeholder group.

Participant Recruitment

Young individuals aged between 15 - 16 years: The two main educational institutions in Leigh Park recruited all the young individuals and their parents. Seventy-six young people were recruited, and their parents or guardians provided written consent for their child to take part in the study. Of the 76 participants, 41 young people were selected, based on their availability and timetables, to participate in focus group discussions. This resulted in a total of 7 focus group discussions, consisting of a total of 23 female and 18 male participants.

Young individuals aged between 16 - 18 years: Sixty-four young people in this age group, who were college students from Havant and South Downs college, were contacted by either the Link Up Leigh Park Coordinator (60 individuals) or the Park Community School (4 individuals). Of those individuals contacted, 15 provided written consent and participated in the focus groups. This resulted in a total of 5 focus group discussions, consisting of a total of 7 female and 8 male participants.

Young individuals aged between 18 - 24 years: All young people who were using the services provided at the Youth Hub in Leigh Park were invited by the Youth Hub staff to take part in the study. A total of 35 young people provided written consent to take part in this study, and of those 20 individuals attended the focus group sessions. This resulted in a total of 6 focus group discussions, consisting of a total of 5 female and 15 male participants.

Families of young individuals: A total of 58 parents or guardians of 16 – 24 year olds, whose children were either current or former students at Park Community School in Leigh Park were approached and recruited by the Head of School at Park Community School. These individuals were contacted via text messages, and of those 25 were further contacted via phone calls to take part in the focus groups. Out of the 25 individuals, 10 provided written consent to participate in the focus groups. This resulted in a total of 4 focus group discussions, consisting of a total of 7 female and 3 male participants.

Businesses: In collaboration with Havant Borough Council (HBC), a total of 28 local businesses from Leigh Park and the Havant area were contacted to take part in our interviews. From these, 11 business representatives took part in an interview. These included 7 female participants, aged between 35-65 years old (average age of 51 years of age), and 4 male participants, aged between 45-65 years of age (average age of 52 years old). The overall average age of the participants was 51 years old (SD=9.007). The participants' job roles were Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Retail Assistant, Managing Director, Human Resources (HR) Manager, Operations Manager, Careers Specialist, Key Account Manager, General Manager, Head of People and Culture, Business Development Manager, and Company Director.

Organisations: A total of 18 employment agencies and organisations working with 16 – 24 year olds living in Havant and Leigh Park including but not limited to key workers and community leads were contacted to take part in interviews. From these, 11 individuals agreed to take part in the interview. The overall average age of participants was 41 years, 9 participants were female between the ages of 28 to 59 years old (M = 42 years) and 2 were male aged 43 and 30 years old (M = 36 years).

Focus Group Guide

The focus group topic guide was developed with attention to the following five distinct areas of interest, which evolved into key themes to be explored with young individuals and families throughout the focus groups: Education, Training and Employment, Friends and Family, the Neighbourhood in Leigh Park, and Health and Wellbeing. All focus group discussions consisted of conversations across these areas. The only difference was that questions were tweaked slightly to ensure they were relevant to the experiences of that participant group. For instance, for the area of Training and Employment, young individuals aged between 15 – 16 years old were asked if they knew what qualifications were needed in the jobs they would like to pursue. However, for participants aged between 18 – 24-year olds, the area focussed on Employment instead, and they were asked about what paid or unpaid work they had been involved in since leaving school. Although focus group discussions amongst family members of young people included the same topics, the questions mainly focussed on their involvement with their children and any concerns they had for them. For example, within the area of Employment, families were asked what support their child had in seeking and securing employment.

Interview Schedule

Businesses and Organisations participated in interviews instead of focus groups. Both groups were interviewed on similar topics whereby questions were tailored towards the participant group. For instance, the first topic concerned questions about the participant's business or Organisation (e.g. Is your Organisation local or National? / What type of business do you work for?). The following topics included Employment and Skills, Health and Wellbeing, Local Area and Solutions. For organisations, the questions asked about their perspectives on the topics in relation to their involvement with young people. Whereas for businesses, with

the exception of the topic 'Solutions', the questions focused on their business recruitment strategy and activities more generally. The following points demonstrates how the questions on the topics differed between organisations and businesses respectively;

- Employment and Skills (e.g. What type of skills do you consider to be vital for individuals aged between 16 – 24 years old / How do you recruit your employees?)

- Health and Wellbeing (e.g. What are the barriers that young people have around their health and wellbeing? / How does your business ensure your employees' overall wellbeing is looked after?)

- Local Area (e.g. Is your organisation involved in any programmes helping young people seek education, training and employment? / Is your business involved with the local area of Leigh Park and Havant)

- Solutions (e.g. What do you think may help young people living in Leigh Park overcome potential barriers they may face in seeking and securing education, training and employment?)

- A topic that was exclusive to interviews with business; Barriers (e.g. Do you think there are any barriers for this age group?)

Procedure

The Link Up Leigh Park Project encompassed a comprehensive research methodology involving the distinct participant groups as follows:

For young individuals aged 15-16 years, permission was gained from all collaborating educational institutions to conduct interviews and focus groups on their premises. Gatekeepers, assigned by the Head Teachers, played a pivotal role in supporting the research team during the participant recruitment and data collection process. The research team provided invitation letters, participant information sheets, assent forms, and consent forms to the gatekeepers. These materials were shared electronically with the young individuals and their parents or guardians. Consent and assent were obtained through Google forms.

Focus group sessions, lasting a maximum of one hour, were conducted on the premises of the educational institutions. Each session, led by a two-member research team with a gatekeeper in attendance, included a preliminary ten-minute engagement in a game of Giant Jenga to foster a comfortable atmosphere.

For young individuals aged 16-18 years, collaboration with Havant South Downs College and Park Community School was instrumental. The Link Up Leigh Park Project coordinators and the Head of School from Park Community School supported the research team in participant recruitment. Similar to the younger age group, invitation letters, information sheets, and consent forms were provided. The materials were shared electronically, and consent forms were administered upon arrival at the focus group sessions. The focus group sessions, conducted at Havant South Downs College and Park Community School, were led by a two-member research team and lasted a maximum of one hour.

For young individuals aged 18-24 years, the Youth Hub in Leigh Park played a crucial role as a trusted collaborator. The Youth Hub staff, Project Manager, and Project Officer supported participant recruitment. The research team provided letters of invitation, participant information sheets, and consent forms, and these were shared electronically by the Youth Hub team, with consent obtained via Google forms. Focus group sessions were conducted on the premises of the Youth Hub, led by a two-member research team and lasting a maximum of one hour.

Families of young individuals aged 16-24 years were engaged through Park Community School, with the Head of School facilitating participant recruitment. Similar procedures as for the other groups for invitation, information dissemination, and consent were followed. Focus group sessions, lasting one hour, were conducted on the premises of Park Community School by a two-member research team.

Businesses and organisations were approached differently. Businesses were contacted by the HBC project team and the UoP Research Assistant. Representatives were nominated by their businesses to participate in interviews. Nine interviews were conducted online via Zoom, and two were face-to-face, one at the business premises and the other at the University of Portsmouth. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. Similarly, organisations were approached by the HBC project team and the UoP research assistant, and the organisation nominated representatives to take part in online Zoom interviews, each lasting approximately 45 minutes.

Analysis

The data collected were analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA). TA is a flexible, yet systematic qualitative data analysis method and its application ranges from relatively straightforward descriptive overviews of key features in data to more elaborate and complex, conceptual readings of data that examine the theoretical implications of the analysis (Clarke et al., 2015). There are six steps to TA (Clarke et al., 2015): 1. Familiarisation: facilitated by an in-depth knowledge of, and engagement with the data set by listening to the interviews, reading transcripts, studying notes so that key ideas can be identified; 2. Coding: systematic process of identifying and labelling relevant features of the data – in relation to the research questions. This is the first step in the process of identifying patterns in the data set. Two researchers from the research team independently code the data to ensure inter-rater reliability; 3. Searching for themes: process of clustering together codes to generate a plausible mapping of key patterns in the data; 4. Reviewing themes: check whether the candidate (initial) themes exhibit a good fit with the coded data and with the entire data set with each having a clear, distinct meaning or concept; 5. Defining and naming themes: process of writing theme definitions – brief summary for each theme – and selecting a theme name which will provide a roadmap for the final write-up; 6. Writing the report: bringing together the analytic narrative based on compelling data extracts. Themes provide a structured framework for data analysis; however, conclusions are drawn across themes. For step two, a team meeting was conducted, and two independent coders stated which themes they discovered and as a team we discussed the findings, the commonalities of what we observed and what they may mean. In addition to this, the themes and sub-themes of the group were developed with the consideration of the Theoretical Domains Framework

(Atkins et al., 2017). The Theoretical Domains framework consists of 14-different factors that influence behavioural change (See Appendix A). The Theoretical Domains Framework is useful in identifying factors that act as either barriers or facilitators to address the behavioural change needed to help young people access and secure education, employment and training opportunities.

Results

The focus groups and interviews generated rich information, producing various insights into the barriers and challenges young people of Leigh Park face. The major-themes identified in the analysis were grouped as factors that influenced young people's accessibility, as well as ability to remain in education, employment and training. Whilst the sub-themes highlight the specific areas that are associated with these factors, below is the system map that highlights the factors and sub-factors that influence young people in accessibility and ability to remain in education, employment and training. There were a total of six factors that we identified (1) Individual Factors; (2) Social and Cultural Factors; (3) Technological Factors; (4) Education System; (5) Economic factors, and (6) Policies and Programmes. The Systems Map below demonstrates each of these main factors and how the sub-themes of elements that we identified are connected.

Figure 1. System Map to the barriers and facilitators for 16-24 year olds from Leigh Park.
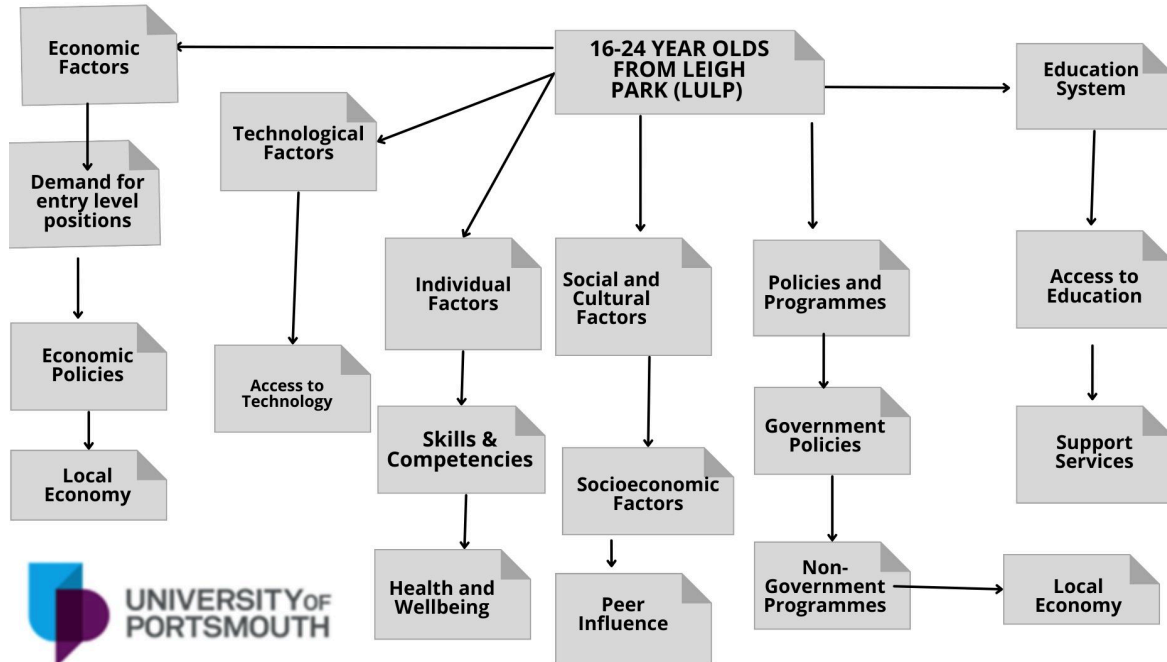
Individual Factors

This theme encompasses various individual factors identified by participants as barriers to accessing higher education and employment. It was noted that these employment-related barriers stemmed from differing levels of skills and competencies among young people. Additionally, challenges in continuing education were often linked to negative experiences within the educational system, raising concerns about the health and well-being of youths from the Leigh Park area.

Subtheme 1: Skills and Competencies

Discussions about the varying levels of skills and competencies were commonly raised in discussions with Organisations and 18–24-year-old participants. In particular, Organisations spoke about the lack of soft skills such as communication skills, which had been a pressing concern even before the pandemic;

> *"...a desire for improved communication skills that people ermm, you know have an understating or an idea about what needed to go on and be a successful adult In education and life and employment... ermm we've obviously seen a decline in THAT not just over the pandemic but prior to that we've seen a gradual decline asss statuary services reduced and stretched and continue to become more underfunded…" OP3*

Furthermore, Organisations highlighted how increased social media use presents a barrier to developing interpersonal skills, as this was thought to remove people from understanding the wider world. They also emphasised the lack of hard skills that young people acquired, such as Math and English - these were identified to be skills employers looked for;

> *"That interpersonal skills is something that is lacking you know I think erm with things like ermmm your gaming and others other you know sites like Discord and things like that there is ermmm there is this tendency to not have those those barriers and those boundaries that we would normally have if we were speaking face to face with people. So can tend to be quite rude. People can tend to be quite homophobic, quite racist erm and that's something that you need to backtrack on." OP1*

Regarding the discussions with 18–24-year-olds, there was a mixture of experiences from the participants. Participants had either acquired work, volunteered, or were unemployed. For those who secured employment, their level of work experience appeared to be a barrier to career advancement, as most participants obtained low-skilled, entry-level positions. This concern was further highlighted by the fact that few participants reported having diverse work experiences, with most experiences being at the same skill level. However, a few unemployed participants spoke positively about receiving support from organisations such as Prince's Trust or the Youth Hub for acquiring employment. Thus, it is believed that utilising such organisations can facilitate access for young people in employment.

> *Um.. I've been a tree surgeon, and a window cleaner. And a roof cleaner. (G3FG6.1)*

Ahh I am currently unemployed but looking for work, I have been recently working with the Prince's Trust on (inaudible) course for two weeks and Thursday this week I have got a ahh exam down near where the xxxxx is so that I can hopefully get one of the construction site cards so I can work on the construction sites, just opens up another option for employment. (G3FG1.3)

Subtheme 2: Health and Wellbeing

It was clear from the focus group discussions there was a difference in young people's understanding of mental and physical health. This was particularly evident among 15 to 16-year-olds, as discussions centred around physical health when participants were asked how they defined 'healthy.' They emphasised the importance of staying active and eating nutritious foods, and they were able to articulate specific actions needed to maintain their physical well-being:

I try and eat healthy cause I'm quite fit from football So, cause I've got games like.. loads of games and loads of training so I'd say I'm quite fit. G1FG1.2

Similarly, discussions with families revealed that they felt their children were healthy in terms of physical activity, however, they did share concerns and frustrations about nutrition, indicating the living cost crisis having an impact on this. Nutrition was also raised in discussions with young people who felt that being surrounded by fast food made temptations omnipresent, and the ease of takeout options, caused participants to prefer fast food over making home meals;

So hard with, obviously cost of living to try and keep meals at a reasonable price again, I mean… G4FG3.1

It's not my fault I live around fast food places. They're just rubbing it in my face. G1FG1.4

Organisations believed the lack of healthy nutrition was a barrier to education as they felt it affected young peoples' motivation and their ability to perform;

Because their opinion is you can't teach hungry children. So if they've got empty bellies then they're not going to be sitting there wondering what happened in the First World War, they won't care whereas if they can feed them a breakfast, lunch and possibly up into the evening, and do some other pastoral stuff with them then they have more chance that those children learning and gaining qualifications. OP4

When it comes to mental health, the perspectives of young people often differed greatly from those concerning their physical health. For example, some 15 to 16-year-olds found it challenging to articulate their experiences and feelings related to their mental health:

> *Mentally it is a whole different story....Potentially, I do not know what my health is. G1FG6.2*

Only a few participants felt they had support with their mental health, it seemed that in these cases participants only confided with those who maintained the participants' privacy, and this led to feelings of entrapment due to not being able to speak to many people and the worry of their families finding out:

> *I refuse to speak to anyone in the school about it because I know they'll repeat it back to my family so I go to Motiv8 and speak to a lady called (name redacted for anonymity) who's our family support worker. She doesn't repeat anything back. G1FG7.5*

Moreover, 15 – 16 year-olds and 16 – 18 year-olds reported their education to be a consistent cause of stress due to feeling overwhelmed;

> *Like homework, college. Like not loads but like when there's like loads of homework. Like recently with mocks I've been getting a bit stressed but it's almost over. One more exam. G2FG1.2*

However, participants did use different strategies to cope with stress, these ranged from individual hobbies such as *"music"* and *"sport"*, whilst others preferred having company such as talking to family. Furthermore, some participants expressed avoidant responses to stress, one even suggested "*headbutting a wall*" which could be a reason for concern requiring further exploration and could also illustrate the sheer frustration felt by some participants.

Another common theme identified among families and 18 to 24-year-olds regarding mental health and its impact on education was the prevalence of negative experiences. Bullying, in particular, emerged as a significant concern for both groups, with families noting that such experiences made it difficult for their children to stay motivated in their studies. Additionally, young people expressed feelings of being let down by teachers, as families perceived the teaching standards to be inadequate. While not definitively established, it can be suggested that the hostile school environment elicited mixed responses regarding progression to higher education, with some participants expressing fatigue towards continued education. The importance of these negative experiences was also highlighted in discussions with organisations, emphasising their role in shaping young people's engagement and retention in education. Overall, this suggests that adverse school experiences can lead to low confidence, diminished motivation, and potential disengagement from both academic and vocational pathways. Furthermore, it underscores the need for targeted interventions to improve school environments and develop support systems that foster positive experiences for students.

Families believed that the increased use of social media has intensified issues related to bullying. However, it was unclear what specific actions they had taken to address these challenges. From these discussions, families acknowledged the important role that schools play in supporting young people and suggested that mental health support for students requires further development, particularly through improved communication strategies.

> *Yeah but I also think the schools need support to be able to do that. Do you know what I mean I think the schools need to do more you know like I say with (redacted for anonymity) she's fantastic, absolutely amazing, but she doesn't have the support even from her own staff because you know the the lack of communication within the school and then you know it's. So actually she could make really good things happen she can't do it all by herself. G4FG2.2*

Social and Cultural Factors

This theme was identified from the social and cultural barriers and facilitators that young people and businesses discussed when searching for employment. These discussions revealed that socioeconomic status such as the stigma of living in the Leigh Park area and lack of social capital were potential barriers to young people in Leigh Park securing employment. However, the young people felt that peer influence through utilising peer support networks helped in their career search.

Subtheme 1: Socioeconomic Status

The socioeconomic status of young people living in the Leigh Park area was identified as an overall barrier from discussions with businesses and young people aged between 16 and 18. In particular, businesses highlighted the barriers due to social capital factors in the recruitment for apprenticeships and work placements. Some businesses revealed that they recruited internally for apprenticeships, either by word of mouth or recruiting family members of employees and one only offered placements to university students, thus posing a disadvantage to the young people from Leigh Park who do not have access to Higher Education and networks.

> *Erm it's some quite informally. Usually it's like a member of staff says my child you know it's come up wants to do work experience can he do it at work you know … BP4*

Another prevalent barrier identified was the stigma associated with living in the area. Specifically, participants aged 16 to 18 expressed that this stigma made it challenging to find employment after completing their education in Leigh Park. While businesses acknowledged the stigma of the area, they reported that it did not manifest in the workplace. However, it is notable that elements of unconscious stereotyping and stigma were apparent in their responses.

> *It's a bit like stressful. Especially seeing as how Leigh Park is seen as like such a bad place for work like if you ask someone oh what do you think of Leigh Park people*

would say oh yeah people are unemployed .. Like we're expected to just be unemployed just because we're from Leigh Park… G2FG1.2

I know I don't know what the schooling is like in Leigh Park but I do know one. I mean I've gone to do a few little charity events with the water bottles in the schools in Leigh Park and they've always been very very good and I've been very impressed with what I've seen there. Erm but the only reason I think that it could be a barrier for that age group coming from Leigh Park is maybe they're in a school which doesn't have such a good erm ... ... Ofsted rating. BP4

Subtheme 2: Peer influence

It was observed that supportive figures were important for young people when it came to exploring career options. This was particularly evident among 15 to 16-year-olds, as many participants found it difficult to articulate their career goals. However, the few participants who did speak about their career ideas discussed the role of their families in career decision-making, indicating that families had an influential role in careers for young people. This is also the case with 16 – 18-year-olds, as a number of participants revealed that they spoke to family or friends for career ideas. Moreover, a few 16 - 18-year-old participants commented on being asked about their career plans by their peers they regularly interact with. It appeared that engaging in these conversations encouraged participants to start their career search to alleviate worries about the future.

Well your parents if they w if they like their job obviously they're gonna try get you a job similar to that and if they've got a good job they're gonna try push you towards that .. and obviously that's what they do. G1FG3.1

I mean uh all of my friends like sort of well no not even just my friends like people around me sort of prompt me as to like you know what you gonna do after this where you wanna go like what are you tryna do with the rest of your life cause I dunno there's no sort of .. I dunno they don't want me to be like stagnant you know just living doing not really much so I get a lot of push back uh no push from people like just around me to you know go on and do better things. G2FG2.3

Organisations have also perceived supportive figures to be important in career support, as indicated in discussions about solutions for overcoming employment barriers that young people face. They proposed several suggestions including additional courses, and developing young people's aspirations by presenting further career options. One participant felt that these solutions could be achieved by creating social clubs or providing role models for young people.

Uhm I think you would start really really small and just kind of like I dunno like uh like social clubs type things that they go and go to like sit and meet other people in the area and talk about and play games uh engage with that kind of thing. OP5

Technological Factors

This theme emerged from discussions about the technological facilitators and barriers that young people face in accessing employment. Overall, it was identified from discussions that poverty related to these barriers as some young people did not have access to technology.

Subtheme 1: Access to technology

Several organisations observed that young people often lacked awareness of how to search for job opportunities and frequently did not have access to devices or email to apply for positions. However, they also acknowledged that these opportunities were primarily available online. This point was reinforced in discussions with businesses, where some participants indicated that their job vacancies were advertised online via social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook), while others relied on recruitment companies to find candidates with specific skills. Consequently, this suggests that young people's unfamiliarity with the job application process can be attributed to the digital divide.

> *Yeeeah again I would if I if a young person said to me I I I'm looking for a job in Leigh Park I I would just be .. Googling and looking at what what is available and I would be assuming that hospitality and retail would be would be ones that would have opportunities for them because those are the ones where we're hearing a lot of uhm companies struggling to maintain staff so we all know of scenarios where you know places are just running on empty because there staff are leaving every 5 minutes so or have never really recovered since the pandemic so uhm I'd be surprised if someone if someone was reasonably reasonably skilled enough to be working in a customer facing environment I'd be reasonably confident that they could find something in either hospitality or retail. OP10*

When asked for solutions for overcoming these barriers, organisations discussed that schools are a useful resource for young people to find information about potential career options. They emphasised that timing was critical and one organisation recognised that once young people have left school it is too late to get in touch with them (OP2). One participant from the 18 to 24-year-old group also commented on this issue, suggesting that the dissemination of information regarding job opportunities could be enhanced by recommending additional online resources to broaden the job search.

> *There's no there's no there's nowhere they can go to find out about jobs and careers and things like that other than what we tell them in school. OP5*

> *Yeah its kind of.. one of the problems I always faced was first finding the information so even when I was working with HSDC I didn't know like half the websites, you always hear about LinkedIn and all that and Indeed but you don't really know about*

half the other sort of websites out there like how they got the .gov websites and when get a tutorial in school or college they are like "oh yeah go on the beat and you will find a place", doesn't work as most people aren't commuting into work. G3FG1.2

Education System

The theme about the barriers and facilitators associated with the Education System was a common occurrence in all the participant groups. The participants perceived that young peoples' limited access to education were due to the lack of support and lack of higher education affordability. However, career support services were revealed to be available for young people from their schools, though it appeared that there was a lack of engagement with these services. Furthermore, discussions about placements, internship and apprenticeships programmes were also raised and were generally perceived as an opportunity for young people, but it was found that a few businesses were averse to providing these due to previous unsuccessful experiences.

Subtheme 1: Access to Education

Education was often described as inaccessible for young people, especially during discussions with families, where all focus groups highlighted the challenges encountered in sustaining motivation to continue their education. While some participants acknowledged that each child is unique and has different experiences in pursuing education, it was suggested that barriers to remaining in school stemmed from a perceived lack of support for children with learning difficulties.

So obviously I had one that was dyslexic, but the school picked up on it quite quickly. But it was I had another one that obviously was struggling, but it wasn't picked up till quite late. And it was obviously missed out with GCSEs. Because they couldn't get the diagnosis to get the help. G4FG3.1

Another barrier to accessing education was the unaffordability of higher education. Both organisations and young people aged 18 to 24 identified this issue, with organisations attributing it to poverty. In addition to concerns about affordability, young people expressed feeling unsupported in their attempts to access higher education, often indicating that they were unsure of how to pursue it. Organisations further identified that barriers to education were exacerbated by young people's lack of awareness of what university entails, their low confidence, the scarcity of role models, and insufficient results in Maths and English in school.

The this this th there is there is less because it's na an area of deprivation there is less people applying for university places 'cause they might not have the opp they might not have the opportun they might not feel that that's an option for them they might not feel that that's something they can do uhm or they might feel that .. that you've got like if you've not had a positive school experience you might think oh that's not for me. OP9

I'm not going to university, I wouldn't be able to afford it, but I might go back to college I dunno. I never really thought of going back. G3FG6.2

Subtheme 2: Support Services

Participants identified a variety of career support services, including career counselling, placement programmes, internships, and apprenticeships. However, opinions on these services were mixed. While some participants found them beneficial, others highlighted challenges in accessing these opportunities, leading to differing views on the effectiveness and availability of such support. Younger participants aged 15-16 shared their experiences of attending career fairs and interacting with career advisers. Many noted that these events provided insights into potential pathways after school. One participant expressed this sentiment by stating:

Yeah, we've had like the colleges come to our school as well obviously like talk to us about all the opportunities that we could be doing when we leave school and that. G1FG4.1.

Despite these interactions, many younger participants were unsure about their career interests or how to pursue their goals. This uncertainty was captured in a participant's candid response, highlighting the lack of clear guidance and the complexity of planning for future careers at a young age:

…how do I plan to achieve this err… (laughter)… I don't know. G1FG6.4.

In contrast, the 16-18-year-olds often mentioned their tutors as their primary source of guidance, emphasising the role tutors play in their career planning. One participant remarked:

Mostly been my personal tutor every, most weeks... um but I think most of it's just my own insight and my interest. G2FG3.2.

However, despite their reliance on tutors, participants noted inconsistencies in the information provided. Some praised workshops aimed at career exploration, which offered practical insights into various professions. One participant recalled:

Like the other week they did like a workshop. Like they were in here and they set up loads of little things and you can go and like learn like different jobs to do. G1FG3.1.

Such workshops seem to support hands-on learning and engagement, yet many participants still felt that overall exposure to career options was insufficient.

Low attendance in tutorial sessions was another concern that hampered their exposure to potential career paths. To address this, participants suggested improvements, such as:

Think maybe if there was more like, mandatory and constant um you know, like making us aware of it… but if there were more like, mandatory, maybe even like speeches, like relatively quick ones, not like massive ones. G2FG3.2.

Regarding placement programmes, concerns emerged about businesses' reluctance to offer these opportunities due to negative experiences in the past. Some businesses cited specific issues, such as a lack of applications, difficulties in the placement clearance process, and poor communication with organisers as significant barriers. Despite this, some businesses remained open to welcoming new talent through these initiatives.

Families and participants aged 18-24 expressed additional barriers to employment during discussions about internships and apprenticeships. This age group felt that there were limited opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities to potential employers. Families noted a trend towards prioritising continued education over vocational paths like apprenticeships, which illustrates a disconnect between educational aspirations and practical career options. This sentiment highlights a gap in the perceived value of these career pathways as participants and their families navigate their futures.

Despite the perceived barriers in accessing support services, participants were able to provide solutions to address these challenges. For instance, the 16-18-year-old participants suggested having mandatory career sessions that were shorter and more focused. They emphasised the importance of early communication about future pathways at the start of their academic year, arguing that this approach would ensure that career tutorial attendance improves, creating *"a universal thing"* (G2FG3.1). Such an initiative could foster a more proactive approach to career planning.

Organisations also discussed the importance of providing role models to help young people increase their aspirations and consider other careers. Providing relatable figures can boost motivation and offer practical insights into various professions. Moreover, some organisations highlighted the necessity for additional funding to address deficits in existing services, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health services, as well as schools who can improve their career support programmes.

In addition to providing role models, businesses stressed the importance of having their own representatives leading initiatives aimed at youth employment. Engaging such role models could help establish structured schemes that encourage other businesses to participate. In order to further support youth employment, businesses suggested several solutions, including offering incentives for providing apprenticeships or employment schemes and strengthening networks with schools, as some participants noted a lack of such connections. One business outlined the significance of supporting young people in developing essential life skills, with a particular focus on interview etiquette and CV writing. This emphasis on CV support was echoed by families, who felt that additional assistance in this area would be valuable given the perceived inadequacy of existing resources. Furthermore, businesses highlighted the necessity of improving communication between organisations, businesses, and educational institutions. One participant acknowledged that effective communication within the Youth Hub played a vital role in helping young people *"broaden their horizons"*

(G2FG3.2). This suggests that a well-coordinated effort among all parties involved could significantly enhance the support available to young people as they navigate their career pathways.

Economic Factors

During discussions about young people's employability in the Leigh Park area, economic factors emerged as a recurring theme. This encompassed job market conditions, economic policies, and the perceived state of the local economy. Participants highlighted these factors while sharing their views on the demand for entry-level positions, wage regulations, and the presence of major employers in the area.

Subtheme 1: Demand for entry-level positions

It appeared that the participants perceived the demand for entry-level positions differently. Organisations felt that the majority of people from Leigh Park go into retail, or manual or skill-based roles, potentially due to the lack of qualifications that young people have and the perceived decline in skills due to COVID-19. Whereas 8 of the 11 businesses that were interviewed spoke about offering entry level positions such as administrative, cleaning, reception, and sales. One business representative felt that there was a demand for entry level admin and customer service positions. According to this participant, these were *"not a basic role"* (BP4) as the role required completing complex tasks that the business representative felt required *"quite a lot of skills"* (BP4). Furthermore, one business spoke about offering entry level positions through an apprenticeship scheme within sectors such as IT and engineering which could suggest that these schemes can facilitate demand for entry level jobs.

> *…we fund the apprenticeship levy. Erm and so we offer entry level roles so … a lot of them started within the IT and the engineering sector this year. As I say the prerequisite would be GCSEs onwards so erm they are at that entry level role and the idea is that they then obviously erm complete and apprenticeship as part of that that role. BP5*

Despite the availability of entry-level positions, businesses and 18 to 24-year-olds spoke about challenges in employing young people which related to skills. Business participants spoke about experiencing difficulties finding employees with a specific skill set (e.g., driving large vehicles, or special operator licences). For 18 to 24-year-olds, these requirements for skills were perceived as a barrier because it required acquiring further qualifications that prolonged access to employment opportunities.

> *Uhm there's not much experience that you would need just like a year, two years and then you would need like qualifications and all these different things like a driving licence. G3FG4.3*

Another barrier that was highlighted included the relationship between the lack of qualifications and low ambition. One business representative believed that poor

performance in schools was associated with the lack of ambitions that young people have. Organisations have also felt that young people lacked ambition and qualifications and proposed that this barrier can be overcome by promoting collaboration with young people to build their ambition.

> *Erm so we have got a few … schools that probably don't perform very well which must have an impact on some of the children that come from that school that don't have the necessary qualifications they may not have in erm encouraged to have interests in different careers if the school wasn't particularly good at you know encouraging them what they wanna be and how you can get there! You need this you need that. BP4*

> *I think what we're NOT doing is asking young people what is that that would happen do you know what I mean? … but also scaffolding some some opportunity in there. Scaffolding some some ambition in there cause that I think we don't marry those two up. OP1*

Subtheme 2: Economic Policies

Economic policies were not discussed across all groups, but a family member perceived it to be a barrier, as they felt the minimum wage laws for young people were unreasonable.

> *The minimum wage as well. You see the minimum wage for 16-year-olds, it's ridiculous. It's still five pounds something.. G4FG4.1*

A business representative also addressed the issue of reduced wages, framing it within the context of increased unemployment and cuts to government grants due to COVID-19. They expressed the view that lower wages resulting from the reduction in government support could present an opportunity for local individuals to enter the industry. However, the participant implied that this would primarily apply to sectors with high demand, as it would minimise the risk of job loss for those entering the workforce. However, the participant suggests that while certain market conditions may create new job opportunities, these openings are dependent on the stability of the respective industries.

> *During Covid. Erm … so there were long periods of time where they weren't working and where they were on reduced wages as a result cause they were only getting the eighty percent … erm government grant. Erm … and and so I think most people when they come into the bus industry they see it as almost a a bullet proof industry you know you whatever happens they're always gonna need bus drivers, never gonna under threat, you know one thing I'm I'm never gonna do as long as I behave myself I'm never gonna lose my job! BP2*

Subtheme 3: Local Economy

It was highlighted by young participants, in particular with focus groups among 16 –
18-year-olds and 18 -24-year-olds, that local areas lacked availability in job opportunities, so
they relied on seeking opportunities further away. One participant even suggested that the
stigma of the Leigh Park area may have related to the lack of career options available locally
which caused them to consider seeking opportunities elsewhere.

> *It's a bit like stressful. Especially seeing as how Leigh Park is seen as like such a bad
> place for work like if you ask someone oh what do you think of Leigh Park people
> would say oh yeah people are unemployed .. Like we're expected to just be
> unemployed just because we're from Leigh Park, Uhm I think I would have to move
> away just because Leigh Park doesn't have many acting opportunities like don't get
> me wrong like if maybe it will change in the future but I don't see it happening.
> G2FG1.2*

Participants suggested that the lack of job opportunities could be addressed by increasing
the presence of major employers in the local area. Businesses acknowledged that large
companies could attract young people to the industry by providing career development
opportunities that lead to high-level positions and long-term employment. For example, one
business representative expressed optimism about training programmes offered by major
companies, noting that these programmes often provide greater opportunities "to progress
and climb the career ladder" (BP6) compared to those in smaller firms. However, one
organisation pointed out that despite major companies showing interest in the local area,
there were challenges in advancing these plans. While the reasons for these hurdles were
not explicitly stated, another business representative shared a differing perspective,
highlighting a perceived lack of interest from major employers in the region.

> *…so the reason I wanted to try and get people their forklift drivers licence was
> because if they got a job now they could perhaps go into Amazon when Amazon start
> recruiting as like team leaders and things like that as opposed to going in at the
> beginning. But I just I just couldn't get it organised. OP4*

> *…when I think to myself (removed for anonymity) are a relatively new, small
> company and we do a HUGE amount of work in the local community! Why doesn't
> everyone else do that? My clients, you know, they they count their income in
> hundreds of thousands of pounds erm hundreds of millions of pounds a year! BP10*

Policies and Programmes

This theme explores the Government and Non-Government policies and programmes that
participants identified to support young people's wellbeing and access employment. This
theme was brought up in the discussions with families, businesses and organisations who
highlighted that government policies such as employment laws were perceived to be a

barrier. However, youth employment programmes were perceived to be good opportunities. For Non-Government programmes, existing mentorship opportunities were discussed.

Subtheme 1: Government Policies

Employment laws were perceived to be a barrier among few family members, as they believed that the requirements for businesses to gain insurance for those under the age of 18 was a barrier to acquire work experience after leaving school for young people.

> *And then after I would say it's the type of jobs that are available, um or sectors they're in. Because.. yes, there are jobs out there but there's a lot of jobs that a 16 year old won't be able to do when they leave school um.. For whether it's age or because of insurance… G4FG1.1*

However, the extent to which age requirements affect young people's opportunity for employment was perceived differently among businesses. When businesses were asked if they provided apprenticeship or work placement opportunities, only one of the businesses interviewed did not offer apprenticeships because of legal requirements of people having to be over 18 years old.

Additionally, some businesses spoke about youth employment programmes such as T-levels or other Government initiatives in which young people, even below the age of 18 were employed. Although T-level initiatives were yet to be implemented, the participants shared positive views about them. One participant even expressed how the introduction of T-levels encouraged their business to engage with local schools in providing employment support for young people. In addition to this, another business representative spoke about their previous involvement in a government initiative employing 16- to 24-year-olds, where their employees have secured further employment opportunities after undertaking this initiative.

> *We do! So we we do erm so from an end to end perspective we recently just got involved in the the T level process so the technical levels have been introduced. Erm so we work with local colleges, I think Fareham is the one that's mostly been been erm requesting our support from a work experience placement. (BP5)*

> *Erm … individuals, 16- to 24-year-olds and we took 2 of those people on, neither of who stayed in childcare. But one of them got a permanent position ermmm in research which absolutely was right for her. And the other person went out and got secretarial work somewhere which is also fine. (BP11)*

Subtheme 2: Non-Governmental Programmes

In addition to Governmental programmes, participants spoke about non-governmental programmes that support young people and discussions about mentorship opportunities

commonly arose. One business representative suggested that having a mentor could improve young people's understanding of available opportunities.

> *…But if I can say it for for any young person for having the being given those opportunity, having that awareness of what opportunities are around them. Erm and as I say having the erm having necessary contacts or or yeah a a a support programme in place to to be able to to help them and guide them. Whether as I say as a mentor or or you know a work coach. (BP5)*

Organisations and families also spoke about existing mentorship programmes. The mentoring support offered by organisations were typically one-to-one and targeted to support a range of health and wellbeing needs. One organisation even stated that their mentor support was unique through provision of spaces for young people to participate in various activities and building connections. However, some family members discussed a specific mentoring programme, VBP, whereby work experience support was provided along with mentorship.

> *.. uhm we also provide one-to-one mentoring … So yes we do provide support and that would encompass often a range of health wellbeing support but sometimes it might be that we support them to access the gym or we go swimming or we go for walks uhm so the more kind of physical side (OP8)*

> *Um they have a lot of involvement with VBP, are you aware of VBP? They come in do challenge days. So then they have different like, they have work experience interviews or have mentors (G4FG3.2)*

Although, all organisations recognised that there were barriers towards supporting young people. It was suggested that this barrier was either due to previous negative experiences with support, or the generational gap between young people and organisations which causes young people to feel reluctant to receive support.

> *Cause I think as a young person you don't wanna walk into a room of 40-year-olds. You're not gonna relate. (OP9)*

Discussion

In this report, discussions with young people across different age groups, families of young people, businesses and organisations from Leigh Park were held to develop the understanding of the challenges young people face in employability, education, the local area in Leigh Park and their health. The discussions with the participants were held through focus groups, and businesses and organisations were interviewed. The result of these discussions developed multi-faceted perspectives on the various factors that are associated with the barriers young people face in Leigh Park. The findings from these studies were connected to the Theoretical Domain Framework (see Appendix A), with relevant sections referred to in italics throughout the following discussion (Atkins et al., 2017).

One frequently mentioned barrier to employment in discussions was the lack of knowledge among young people regarding how to search for job opportunities. It was observed that those aged 15 to 16 struggled to understand the necessary steps to acquire skills for future employability. In contrast, participants aged 16 to 18 raised concerns about inconsistent attendance at tutorials. This lack of attendance is concerning, as it means these young people are missing out on crucial career information, which increases their likelihood of facing challenges in achieving positive educational outcomes (Bergin & Ferrara, 2019).

Organisations noted that poverty limits young people's access to technology, further exacerbating the difficulties in finding information on job vacancies. This notion of the digital divide has been extensively studied, revealing that it not only restricts access to information but also impacts professional growth. Research has indicated that the digital divide contributes to skill gaps (Hargittai, 2002) and limits young people's ability to secure meaningful employment outcomes (Helsper et al., 2015).

In order to address the barriers related to knowledge about career opportunities, participants recognised the vital role that schools play in providing this information. It was noted that the 16 to 18-year-old participants received career advice from their tutors, aligning with the Gatsby Benchmarks (Holman, 2014). The Gatsby Benchmarks serve as a framework that outlines what constitutes effective career guidance for supporting young people, with research supporting their effectiveness in enhancing career readiness and improving educational attainment (Hanson et al., 2021). Therefore, strengthening career advice and guidance in schools by utilising the Gatsby Benchmarks may help to address the low engagement in tutorials and fill knowledge gaps for participants aged 15 to 16. Additionally, utilising social media platforms like TikTok could be an effective way to disseminate accurate career information in an engaging manner. Previous research has demonstrated that accessing content on these platforms significantly influences young people's acquisition of job search knowledge (Lakodjanga, 2023).

Moreover, discussions with young people revealed that families are involved in discussions around *career goals* and have *social influences* towards the career decisions of the young people. While it is positive that careers are a subject of discussion among families, it can also raise concerns, as parents might unintentionally share outdated information based on their own work experiences. (Otto, 2000). The *knowledge* gaps in families' understanding of the current employment field were evident in this study, as they perceived higher education opportunities were heavily promoted when this does not seem to be the case as that is contrary to the Government's aims with the introduction of 'T Levels' and apprenticeships (Skills for every young person: Government Response, 2021). Therefore, providing support to parents through educational institutions may enhance their knowledge of career options available for their children, enabling them to offer more current advice. This could be achieved by involving parents in classroom activities related to careers and employability guidance or inviting them to participate in their child's career guidance sessions (Barnes et al., 2020). Additionally, it is crucial to emphasise the value of vocational and technical training, including T Levels. Promoting these opportunities outside of traditional academic

pathways can diversify young people's choices and alleviate the pressure to pursue higher education (Mason, 2020).

Another interesting finding that links to the barriers in employment was that some businesses offered work placements and apprenticeship opportunities internally to their employees' friends or family. Although this method is easier for businesses, it poses a disadvantage to those young people who do not have access to such a network. Therefore, it is recommended that young people cultivate such a network, potentially through the introduction of role models, as suggested by various organisations. Beyond simply helping to establish a network, role models can play a crucial role in fostering ambition and achieving success (Flores-Taipe, 2023). This is particularly important, as higher aspirations are linked to improved economic outcomes for both individuals and society as a whole (Serra, 2022). This addresses the concerns of organisations and businesses as they perceived that young people lack ambition. Establishing a robust network that elevates the aspirations of young people can be accomplished by engaging employees from local businesses in Leigh Park, enabling them to connect with students through schools and colleges. Another effective strategy for developing this network could involve mentorship programmes that partner with organisations such as The Girls' Network (The Girls' Network, 2023) or The Prince's Trust (The Prince's Trust, 2023). These organisations can offer a structured framework for matching mentors with mentees, aimed specifically at increasing the aspirations of young individuals.

Furthermore, businesses suggested establishing "Business Role Models"—successful local businesses actively engaged in the community—to promote the recruitment of young people. This initiative could benefit the local area by encouraging companies to participate in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR; Mintzberg, 1983), which has been shown to positively impact the economic, social, and environmental aspects of society. By nominating role models for community engagement, businesses can gain insights into how to collaborate effectively with the local community and identify the services and support they can provide.

From the focus group discussions with 18 – 24-year-olds, it was observed that a number of participants have already acquired work experience in entry level positions. Entry level work is essential for individuals who are beginning their careers as it develops their *skills* and *knowledge base* which they can utilise in their future (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023). Longer term employment contributes to their *optimism* and *belief in their own capabilities*, enabling them to develop their own *goals* for career progression. While it is expected that participants from this age group obtain entry-level experience, it is concerning that some individuals had held multiple entry-level roles, which warrants further investigation. This situation could have detrimental effects on their career progression, as these young people may struggle with the motivation, time, and energy required to seek new employment opportunities. Additionally, they may have to relinquish interpersonal connections that provide positive social influences (Holtom et al., 2008). Consequently, these factors could pose significant barriers to the professional development of young individuals, highlighting

the need for further exploration in this area.

In addition to employability barriers, mental health emerged as a recurring topic in discussions from this research, with participants perceiving a connection between mental health issues and young people's hesitance to continue into higher education opportunities. Families and participants aged 18 to 24 particularly highlighted that negative experiences, including bullying in school, significantly contribute to the difficulty in keeping young people engaged in education. Previous studies have documented the impacts of peer bullying, which include diminished self-esteem, feelings of disconnection from the school environment (including peers, teachers, and the institution itself), and a general lack of motivation to succeed academically (Skues et al., 2005). Furthermore, families discussed the relationship between social media use and bullying, a viewpoint supported by earlier research indicating that bullying can be exacerbated through social media platforms. This extension of bullying into digital spaces creates additional challenges for young people, hindering their ability to find a safe and supportive environment (O'Higgins Norman, 2020).

In order to overcome the barriers related to bullying and cyberbullying, previous studies have argued that a whole school and community approach is utilised (Smith, 2004). For a whole school approach to be effective, it is emphasised that a voice is provided to everyone involved, especially young people and to not include actions that are 'one-off' or 'add-on' (O'Brien and Dadswell, 2020). In a review of the literature, it was found that whole-school interventions that include multiple groups such as the families of the young people, present more positive results and efficacy in reducing bullying in comparison to interventions that only target one group (Silva et al. 2017). Therefore, by utilising a whole school and community approach, the school environment can be more pleasant for young people which might make them feel more motivated to learn.

Families also suggested that schools should play a crucial role in providing mental health support. While some participants mentioned that such support is present in schools, organisations reported that mental health services in educational settings often suffer from funding deficits, which leave these important services inadequately supported. However, prior studies have found that placing the focus on mental health school-based provision can reduce the long-term costs in terms of exclusion (in excess of £60,000 per child; Brookes et al. 2007). Furthermore, increasing this form of support has the potential to improve early intervention and access to treatment, such as by collaborating with different agencies which would also reduce stigma (Gee et al., 2021; Weist & Evans, 2005). Currently, Hampshire CAMHS provides services to improve access to psychological therapies for young people as well as support to schools in adopting a whole-school approach to positive mental health and wellbeing (Mental Health Support Teams in Schools, 2023).

Conclusion

The Insight Phase addresses the challenges faced by young people in Leigh Park in accessing education, employment, and training opportunities. Information was gathered through a comprehensive approach involving various stakeholders, including young people, businesses,

organisations, and parents. The findings reveal a range of challenges related to employability, education, and mental well-being.

A key barrier identified was the lack of understanding regarding career opportunities and the steps necessary to achieve them, attributed to limited engagement with career advice and technology access. Recommendations include enhancing career information in schools through tutorials aligned with the Gatsby Benchmark and involving families in their children's career decision-making processes. This ensures that families remain informed about the current employment landscape, as they play a vital role in shaping young people's career choices. However, further exploration is needed regarding barriers related to limited career development, particularly for those who have held multiple entry-level positions. Additionally, the lack of networking opportunities was highlighted, with businesses often advertising jobs internally. This barrier could be addressed by providing role models for both young people and businesses to foster aspirations and promote community engagement and Corporate Social Responsibility.

The Insight Phase also emphasises the link between bullying and a young person's motivation to learn. Families expressed that negative experiences, exacerbated by social media, hinder their children's educational engagement. To combat these issues, a community-wide approach is recommended, ensuring that all voices, especially those of young people, are heard. It is also suggested that schools play a crucial role in providing mental health support, which could enhance service accessibility and address financial deficits.

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Appendix A: The Theoretical Domains Framework, Factors and Explanations (Atkins et al., 2017)

Theoretical domain	Definition [21]
Knowledge	An awareness of the existence of something
Skills	An ability or proficiency acquired through practice
Social/professional role and identity	A coherent set of behaviours and displayed personal qualities of an individual in a social or work setting
Beliefs about capabilities	Acceptance of the truth, reality, or validity about an ability, talent, or facility that a person can put to constructive use
Optimism	The confidence that things will happen for the best or that desired goals will be attained
Beliefs about consequences	Acceptance of the truth, reality, or validity about outcomes of a behaviour in a given situation
Reinforcement	Increasing the probability of a response by arranging a dependent relationship, or contingency, between the response and a given stimulus
Intentions	A conscious decision to perform a behaviour or a resolve to act in a certain way
Goals	Mental representations of outcomes or end states that an individual wants to achieve
Memory, attention and decision processes	The ability to retain information, focus selectively on aspects of the environment and choose between two or more alternatives
Environmental context and resources	Any circumstance of a person's situation or environment that discourages or encourages the development of skills and abilities, independence, social competence, and adaptive behaviour
Social influences	Those interpersonal processes that can cause individuals to change their thoughts, feelings, or behaviours
Emotion	A complex reaction pattern, involving experiential, behavioural, and physiological elements, by which the individual attempts to deal with a personally significant matter or event
Behavioural regulation	Anything aimed at managing or changing objectively observed or measured actions