The Wise Group

CashBack Connections Evaluation Voor 1 Poport

Year 1 Report





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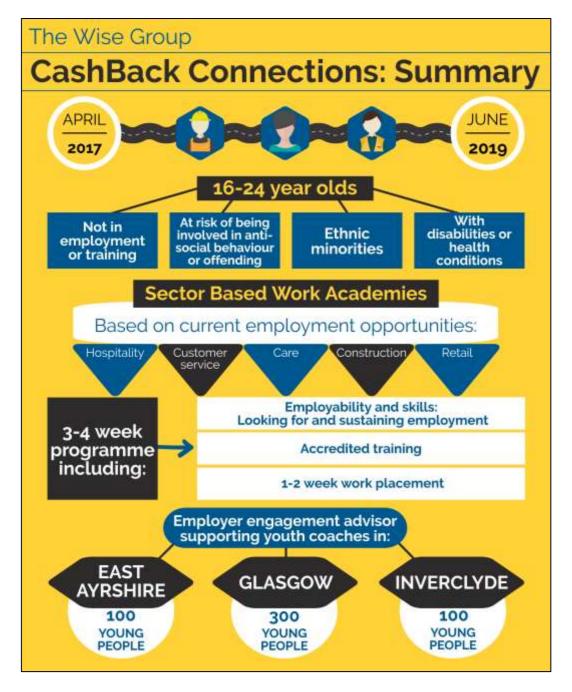
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1 Introduction and context

The Wise Group CashBack Connections programme runs from April 2017 to June 2019 and seeks to support the development of employability and skills for young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, training or employment in Glasgow, Inverclyde and East Ayrshire. The programme is funded by the Scottish Government via the CashBack for Communities Scheme which since 2008 has committed £92 million, recovered under the Proceeds of Crime Act, to community initiatives.



Outcomes

The programme seeks to achieve various outcomes including four which are mandatory for Phase 4 CashBack for Communities projects, plus an additional two outcomes:

Phase 4 CashBack for Communities mandatory outcomes

Outcomes	Measurement and indicators
	Changes to the self-reported confidence of young people
Outcome 1: Young people build their capacity and confidence	Stakeholders (e.g. coaches and employers) reporting increases in a young person's confidence
	Increasing the young person's ability to achieve more in what they do and go on to do new things.
Outcome 2: Young people develop their physical and personal skills	Personal skills such as learning, team work, leadership and career management
	Physical skills such as coordination and movement
	Changes to skills are indicated through self and stakeholder reporting and accreditation for learning and skills development.
Outcome 3: Young people's behaviours and aspirations change positively	Increased aspirations and positive changes in behaviour, indicated through self and stakeholder reporting.
Outcome 4: Young people's wellbeing improves	Increased self and stakeholder reported feelings amongst young people of being safe, health, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included (SHANARRI indicators).

Additional CashBack Connections outcomes

Outcomes	Measurement and indicators
Outcome 5: Young people participate in activity which improves their learning,	Participation in training which improves soft, core and/or vocational skills
employability and employment options (positive destinations)	Participation in learning, progression to employment and taking part in volunteering.
Outcome 6: Young people participate in positive activity	Level of participation in positive activity and the extent of any increase in positive activity.

The CashBack Connections programme initially focused broadly on the provision of one-to-one employability support for 16-24 year olds who were not in employment, education or training. A Sector-Based Work Academy (SBWA) approach was since introduced.

The SBWA approach involves Youth Coaches engaging with and supporting a young person to register for a suitable academy. Youth Coaches focus on providing holistic support including taking steps to address any potential personal, health or housing related barriers to the young person's employment.

Once a young person is enrolled on a programme they are provided with support around finding and sustaining a job including help with their CV, preparation for job interviews and information relating to travelling to work. Accredited training is provided to allow young people to gain skills and qualifications in preparation for employment. Following the classroom-based learning element of the programme, young people complete a work placement which allows for the development of practical skills.

2 Evaluation activity

Rocket Science was appointed in March 2018 by the Wise Group to conduct an independent evaluation of the CashBack Connections programme.

This Year 1 Report on progress to date has been informed by the following data:

- Interviews with four young people who have participated in the programme
- Interviews with the three Youth Coaches from Glasgow, East Ayrshire and Inverciyde
- Development/action plans for Glasgow, East Ayrshire and Inverclyde
- Development/action plan for employer engagement
- Outcomes and output monitoring data collected by the Wise Group and analysed by Rocket Science.

To assess the impact of CashBack Connections, the following data will be collected and analysed as part of the evaluation:

- Monitoring and performance data collected by the Wise Group and analysed by Rocket Science including:
 - The number of young people participating in the programme
 - o Qualifications gained
 - Placements completed
 - Number moving onto positive destinations
 - o Impact data related to skills development (e.g. confidence)
- Telephone interviews with young people:
 - 3 months after their completion of the programme
 - o 6 months after their completion of the programme
- Telephone interviews with Youth Coaches and other relevant stakeholders
- Survey sent to employers every 6 months
- Area Development Plans gathered every quarter.

During initial engagement, Youth Coaches expressed a willingness to be in touch with Rocket Science over the course of the evaluation by telephone and email.

Following this Year 1 report:

- A Year 2 report will be delivered in June 2019
- A final evaluation report will be delivered in June 2020.

3 Programme outcomes to date

Client engagement

Since April 2017, a total of **104 young people** have been registered onto the CashBack Connections programme across Glasgow, East Ayrshire and Inverciyde.

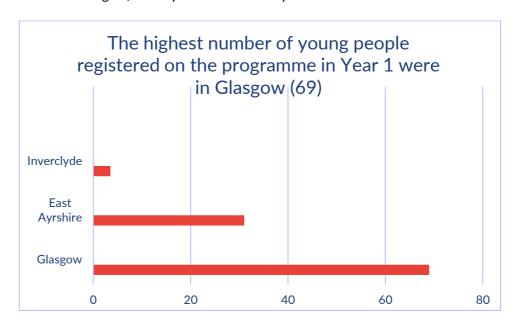


Figure 1: Number of young people registering on to the CashBack Connections programme during Year 1 in Inverclyde (4), East Ayrshire (31) and Glasgow (69).

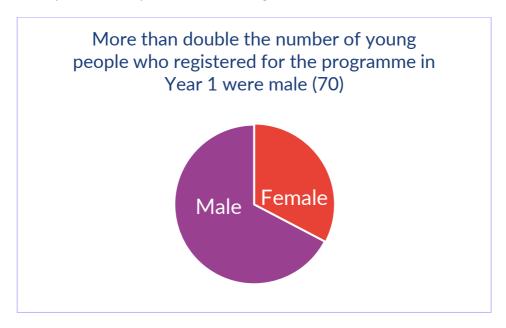


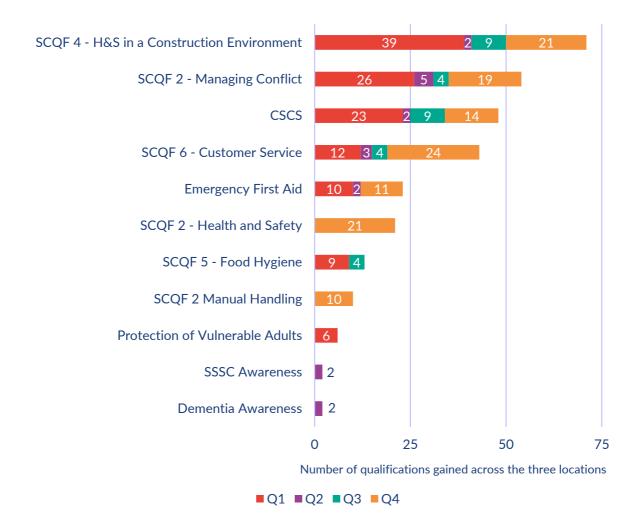
Figure 2: Gender split of young people who registered on to the CashBack Connection programme in Year 1

Qualifications gained

The SBWA approach provides young people the opportunity to gain qualifications in a range of areas including:

- Construction
- Care
- Customer Service
- Hospitality
- Retail.

SCQF 4 – Health and Safety in a Construction Environment was the most frequently gained qualification (71 in total gained across all three locations):



Completed placements

Following employability and practical training, where possible, young people progressed onto a one or two-week work placement.

A total of 65 placements have been completed by young people in quarters 1-4 in Inverclyde, Glasgow and East Ayrshire.

These placements were undertaken with the following employers:

Employer	Total placements
McTaggart Construction	14
Keep Moat/Engie	10
DWP	10
Oakminster Care	6
B&M	4
Robertson	4
CCG	3
Key Care	2
Marriot	2
Premier Inn	2
The Range	2
Operetta	1
Scruffy Duffys	1
Red Lion Prestwick	1
Spruce Carpets	1
Change Recruitment	1
Number 10 Hotel	1
Total	65

Employment

Of the 104 young people who registered with the programme, 49 gained employment in Glasgow, Inverclyde and East Ayrshire. Between April 2017 and March 2018, 12 young people gained employment with the same employer under which they completed their placement.

4 Programme delivery to date

The CashBack Connections programme has been focused since its inception on helping young people aged 16-24 who are not in employment, education or training to develop skills and increase their readiness for employment. However, the programme has evolved over time to utilise a three to four-week Sector Based Work Academy approach (SBWA) to employability.

In addition, one Youth Coach described a shift in the programme from an initial focus on the provision of a **one-to-one** type of employability support to support within a **group setting**. This was beneficial for young people because being part of a group during the academy was seen to be similar to what would be experienced in a work environment. In addition, it was expressed that the opportunity to see how a young person operates in a group setting was useful for Youth Coaches in gaining a better understanding around the work-readiness of that young person.

Youth Coaches expressed the following challenges in establishing the CashBack Connections programme in their local settings:

- Getting the word out about what the programme was and how young people could be supported by CashBack Connections
- Getting referrals into the programme (see Chapter 8)
- Reaching those who were not necessarily involved with statutory services: the 'hidden unemployed'
- Operating in a "saturated" employability market.

Across the locations, main differences in the typical engagement of a young person with the CashBack Connections programme were noted. Specifically:

1. The length of the programme

Young people taking part in programmes in Glasgow and Inverclyde have in cases received both employability support and accredited training within one rather than two weeks, before beginning their placement. This was due to:

- A reduced availability of facilitators due to annual leave
- Fewer young people enrolled on courses enabling facilitators to cover content faster
- Keeping on top of the numbers ensuring that a greater number of young people could progress through a CashBack Connections programme.

It was noted that in cases where young people completed a programme within a condensed period, a greater emphasis was placed on the provision of one-to-one support from the Employer Engagement Advisor. Covering content within one rather than two weeks was seen to reduce the amount of time in which a young person could be supported to overcome barriers and become prepared for employment. On the other hand, it was expressed that some young people do not want to be in a classroom environment and therefore would not mind gaining qualifications within a shorter period.

2. Meetings with a Youth Coach prior to beginning on the programme

In East Ayrshire it was emphasised that a young person could come in and have a meeting with a Youth Coach to obtain more information about a sector-based work academy **before** deciding whether they wished to participate. Elsewhere, a young person's first contact with the Wise Group was their attendance on the first day of the 3-4 week programme.

3. Duration of support

While all Youth Coaches expressed a willingness and enthusiasm to continue supporting young people following their engagement with the CashBack Connections programme, the extent to which this was possible varied across locations:

In Glasgow, the higher number of young people engaged with the programme reduced the ability of the Youth Coach to actively follow up with all participants after the end of the programme to monitor their progress.

On the other hand, it was expressed in East Ayrshire that the Youth Coach would continue to work with someone until they had entered a positive destination:

"I continue to work with someone until they are supported into a positive destination, there is no cut off, as long as they are engaged I will continue to work with them. Joanne [Employer Engagement Advisor] will continue to look for a job for the young person."

Youth Coach, East Ayrshire

5 Programme impact

Data collected in interviews with Youth Coaches and participants demonstrated the impact of the CashBack Connections programme in the following areas:

Both participants and coaches explained the impact of CashBack Connections on helping young people to make positive changes to their routine:

[When discussing increases to participants' wellbeing]: "It is about mental stimulation, they need to get up and have a purpose."

Youth Coach, Inverclyde

Changes to routine

"Before starting my job I would sleep in, now I need to wake up earlier. This is a big change. Before I started working I was sitting around, now I'm active and out and about."

CashBack Connections participant

"It [the programme] provides a routine, you get up at a specific time, you are busy and challenged."

Youth Coach, East Ayrshire

Participants described increased motivation and independence through their involvement with CashBack Connections.

One young person described that **gaining employment** had helped them to feel motivated and another explained that since taking part in the programme they were more willing to take on additional hours at work.

Motivation and independence

It was felt that being given the opportunity to learn new things through employment increased motivation. Within a work setting, one participant explained that they felt independent because:

"I know what I'm doing, if someone tells me what to do at work I can get right on with it."

CashBack Connections participant

Youth Coaches felt that 88% of young people reporting an increase in their wellbeing¹ matched their experience of working directly with participants. They emphasised the importance of the programme helping young people to develop a positive routine and make friends for improving wellbeing.

Wellbeing

Despite reported increases in wellbeing amongst young people, it was described that some young people can "fall by the wayside" due to mental health issues or anxiety. It was felt that Youth Coaches could either personally help or seek additional assistance for e.g. mental health or housing issues. One Youth Coach described being able to access counsellors within the Wise Group for mental health support:

"There is a lot of support in the organisation that I can draw on."

Youth Coach, Glasgow

Despite the availability of additional support for young people within the Wise Group, providing the right assistance to participants was seen to depend on their **disclosure** about any issues.

Youth Coaches felt that the programme **did** assist in breaking cycles of unemployment but that this did not happen in every case. It was explained:

Breaking cycles of unemployment

"You are trying to end second or third generation unemployment through showing young people that there is a different way. We try and nurture a view that work, education and training is about adding meaning to your life."

Youth Coach, East Ayrshire

"We try to give them the belief that they can be they can be the first person that breaks the cycle of unemployment."

Youth Coach, Inverclyde

The employability week of the programme was felt to help break cycles of unemployment by providing young people with everything they would need to know in order to gain and sustain employment.

¹ Wise Group (2018), CashBack Connections: Annual Report 2017/2018, p. 8

Young people described increases to their confidence as a result of their involvement with CashBack Connections including feeling more able to **speak to others** and more equipped to **apply for jobs**.

Participants described that they felt more confident due to gaining training. This was supported by the view of one Youth Coach:

"They [young people] **are** getting qualifications and becoming more employable, it can increase their confidence, they might have come from school without any qualifications and this [gaining qualifications] boosts their morale."

Youth Coach, Inverclyde

Confidence

In addition, one participant described a growth in their confidence derived from being able to "sit down and talk to someone who understands [a Youth Coach]".

All three Youth Coaches expressed that the development of **friendships** and bonding between members of a cohort was important for increasing participants' confidence.

One Youth Coach explained that increases in confidence were especially visible amongst those who began the programme with very low confidence, whilst those who were reasonably confident to begin with seemed to sustain this level of confidence throughout their engagement with the Wise Group.

General life skills

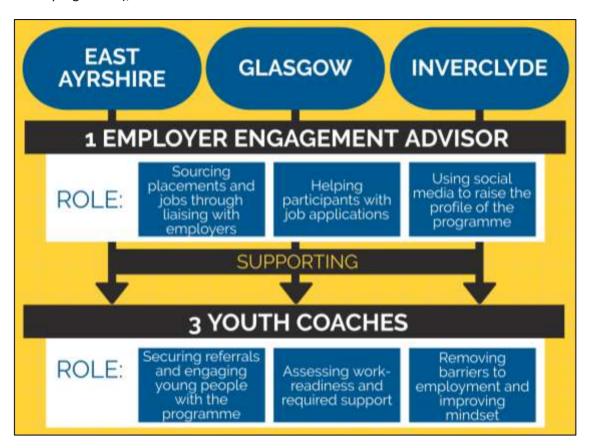
It was described by one youth coach that some participants had previously never left their local area and that therefore feeling able to go on public transport was a big achievement.

Cashback Connections was explained to help young people to develop "general life skills" that help a young person to be out and about.

6 Youth Coach and Employer Engagement Advisor support

Staff roles

Youth Coaches described a positive and collaborative working relationship with the Employer Engagement Officer operating across the three areas. While there were some shared aspects in the types of support provided by the Youth Coaches and the Employer Engagement Advisor (e.g. in matching young people to placements and raising the profile of the programme), the functions of these two roles differed:



Flexibility and personalisation of support

A need to adapt support depending on a young person's circumstances was explained:

"Support is specific to the person: you can be a mentor, coach, facilitator or teacher. It depends on what the person needs from you. It is about adapting. Once the young person has moved into work, it is just about keeping in touch, their reliance lessens."

Youth Coach, East Ayrshire

Participants expressed that Wise Group staff were keen to support them into positive destinations. One young person described that Wise Group staff helped them to overcome their issues with attending job interviews through interview preparation and that this had helped to nurture a positive outlook to finding employment in the future.

Youth Coaches demonstrated that they were willing to provide various types of support depending on the needs of each young person. This included:

Induction

Meeting with the young person prior to the programme to provide detail about engagement

Helping the young person to settle into a group

"Barrier removal" and improving a young person's mindset around engagement:

"Mental health, housing issues, relationship issues, stuff going on at home. It's about removing barriers and getting them into a mindset where they can commit to the programme."

Youth Coach, Glasgow

Skills development and preparation

Helping the young person to develop their CV

Ensuring young people are facilitated to complete training and employability classes

Nurturing changes in a young person's attitude or behaviour:

"[The Youth Coach] tried to help with my temper and way of seeing things - I would say a contract is shite and they would say no it's not. I see work differently now."

CashBack Connections participant

"It is not just about getting the job, it's about staying in employment. I will correct bad language and emphasise the importance of how they conduct themselves."

Youth Coach, East Ayrshire

Entering and sustaining work

Keeping in touch with the young person after completion of the programme to provide ongoing employability support e.g. sending them information about vacancies or helping them to apply for employment

Applying to external organisations (e.g. Princes Trust) for financial support for a young person to ease their entry into work:

"I will apply to Princes Trust for financial support. These are small grants of up to £500 that could be for clothing, tools, travel – anything that will ease entry into work."

Youth Coach, East Ayrshire

7 Training, qualifications and placements

Being provided with the opportunity to gain qualifications and take part in training was described as important for enhancing a young person's employability and increasing their confidence. While engaging a young person with the programme as part of a cohort was beneficial for facilitating bonding between participants, in some cases young people would be facilitated to engage with specific elements of programmes such as sessions on mindset or conflict management without completing the full three to four-week programme.

Sector Based Work Academies have been designed around the needs of local employers. For example, a SBWA in Inverciyde on customer service was focused on call centre work as this was identified as an area with potential for youth employment. The **tailoring** of academies around current employer needs was described as helping the CashBack Connections programme to stay "proactive and dynamic" by one Youth Coach.

Participants described the suitability of provided training for enabling a smooth transition into work:

"They teach us everything, they teach us health and safety, all the stuff you need to know on site. Once you go onto site you aren't clueless."

CashBack Connections participant

The placement element of the programme was designed to ideally act as a trial period for a young person to gain an interview or ongoing employment with the same organisation. However, this transition most often **does not** occur at present.

The following problems and potential changes to the provided training and placement elements of the programme were suggested:

- One Youth Coach felt that some young people only wanted to be engaged with the programme to gain qualifications but were not willing or able to enter employment
- Accredited training could include more practical elements to help with a seamless entry
 into work. For example, in the hospitality industry, young people can be unaware of how
 fast-paced work is and therefore running a community café as part of the programme was
 seen as potentially helpful for practice.

- There is a need to ensure a quick succession from training to placement. It was described
 that delays in getting all elements of a CSCS qualification could prevent a young person
 from being allowed to go on site for a placement and this could lead to their
 disengagement.
- While programmes are currently designed around employer needs, this could be enhanced to include the provision of training dependent on **current vacancies**. Employers could explain exactly what skills they would need to fill a vacancy and the Wise Group could provide this training, leading to a placement and then interview for ongoing employment.

8 Programme promotion and referral pathways

Encouraging engagement with the programme

Across areas, Youth Coaches interacted with various organisations and programmes to secure referrals to the CashBack Connections. These included:

- Jobcentre Plus
- Skills Development Scotland
- Princes Trust
- Glasgow City Council
- Street League
- Centrestage on the Road Kilmarnock.

Youth Coaches described the importance of **developing relationships** and **building trust** with organisations to encourage a steady stream of referrals into CashBack Connections. It was explained that these relationships had strengthened over time, easing the process of engaging young people in the programme:

"The big challenge was the referrals, but now I'm good at it, I have the contacts and I maintain the relationships, there are good relationships with all the job centres in Glasgow, they are proactive in helping [providing referrals]."

Youth Coach, Glasgow

In some cases, the development of a relationship with a referring organisation allowed the Youth Coach to follow up on incoming referrals:

"It was not easy working with SDS and the job centre in the beginning, it could be hard to get them on board. In Inverclyde I need 16-24 year olds who are not engaged in employment, education or training — the job centre will have hundreds of them but wouldn't take the time to give me [the details of] twenty. In a lot of the areas this can be tough. In the job centre the managers know me now, I can go and say, 'come on where are my referrals?'. This was a case of building a relationship over time."

Youth Coach, Inverclyde

Coaches were involved in delivering presentations about the programme to relevant audiences to increase levels of engagement, for example in the local Jobcentre Plus. In addition, recruitment involved emailing stakeholders about upcoming academies.

It was emphasised that Youth Coaches needed to think creatively about how to encourage young people to join CashBack Connections **beyond** those already engaged with another employability services or programmes. This included going into local schools, leaving leaflets in I Youth Zones (Inverclyde) or speaking to those involved with a dignified food provision scheme (East Ayrshire).

The four interviewed participants described hearing about the programme in the following ways:

- Through a parent who had been researching opportunities online
- Through their engagement with a job centre
- Through a careers advisor at their school
- Through an employability programme running in a local church.

The diversity of referral routes into CashBack Connections demonstrates the programme's success in establishing multiple ways of engaging young people with employability support.

The potential for the use of social media to assist in recruiting 'the hidden unemployed', i.e. those not already involved with employability services, to CashBack Connections was stressed and it was felt that the Wise Group was aware of this:

"Social media is a way to reach young people – this would make a massive difference. This could be better and targeted to reach the hidden unemployed. This has been recognised [by the Wise Group]"

Youth Coach, East Ayrshire

CashBack Connections' selling points in a crowded employability market

It was felt that the evolution of the programme into a Sector Based Work Academy approach was clearer and helpful for encouraging referral organisations to "buy-in" to the programme:

"Referral organisations needed to know what they were referring into. The accredited training was a tangible aspect of the programme for the young person and the referring organisation to see."

Youth Coach, East Ayrshire

Youth Coaches in Glasgow and East Ayrshire described a "saturated" employability market in their local areas. The Inverciyde Coach stated that while there were other similar employability programmes in the local area, the market was not considered to be saturated. A crowded employability market was seen to have negative implications for referrals into CashBack Connections, particularly where other programmes were able to offer young people wage subsidies:

"It is a saturated employability market. It makes it harder to secure referrals, some programmes do what we do and also offer subsidised wages, and this is more attractive [for young people]."

Youth Coach, East Ayrshire

"Glasgow is saturated with employability programmes. In construction a lot of the programmes are wage subsidied and for 16-18 year olds this is a massive incentive."

Youth Coach, Glasgow

Despite potential challenges to securing referrals in circumstances where other organisations offer similar types of support, Youth Coaches emphasised the positives of multiple programmes seeking to help young people in their local areas:

"We can work together, we are all working to help youth. It doesn't matter who gets the young person. For too long it has been each to their own. I try to be open and just say 'what can we do?'."

Youth Coach, Inverclyde

"It is an absolutely saturated market but that is a positive in that it means there are lots of groups working to support young people."

Youth Coach, East Ayrshire

9 Work readiness and challenges to securing employment

The CashBack Connections programme has sought to help young people of varying levels of work-readiness into employment. Across Glasgow, Inverclyde and East Ayrshire there was some variation in Youth Coaches' perceptions of the proportion of participants which would be considered to be work-ready. In Inverclyde and East Ayrshire, it was felt that the majority of participants were work-ready, while in Glasgow it was felt that more young people were **not** ready for work than those who were.²

Youth Coaches described using the following indicators to assess a young person's work readiness:

- Previous work history
- Medical history and details about mental health issues
- The level of help that is needed for the young person to engage, write or speak to others
- SHANARRI indicators (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included).

It was expressed that in some cases, young people required support to remove barriers to work before being able to successfully enter and sustain employment, for example those relating to mental health issues, problems at home or housing difficulties.

Youth Coaches felt that the limited duration of the programme could limit their ability to help the young person to overcome barriers to work, particularly where classroom-based support was limited to one rather than two weeks (see Chapter 4):

"There is a limited amount you can do in the two weeks, they will present themselves well but then when they leave you they can let you down a bit."

Youth Coach, Inverclyde

"My passion is working with young people, they should be nurtured and helped. The programme needs to be longer to help them into sustainable employment."

Youth Coach, Glasgow

² A single definition of work-readiness was not provided during interviews with Youth Coaches and it is therefore likely that their understandings of 'work-readiness' would have varied.

In addition, one Youth Coach described growing up in a workless household as a potential barrier to sustaining employment:

"We work in deprived area postcodes – young people may have not grown up in a working household. They don't know any different, so it can be hard to get them to engage well with an employer."

Youth Coach, Inverclyde

The importance of a smooth transition from employability support and accredited training into a placement and employment was stressed:

"The social aspect of their engagement is fantastic. It is not until reality hits when they are offered a long-term position that there is a rabbit in the headlights scenario. Suddenly they are faced with work rather than a gentle easing in."

Youth Coach, Glasgow

10 Recommendations

Raising the profile of the programme	In order to maximise engagement, particularly amongst young people who are not currently involved with any other services, the Wise Group should look to develop a social media strategy to promote the programme across various platforms. This could be an opportunity to involve young people currently engaged in the programme, gathering their ideas and suggestions on what approach would be most effective.
Duration of the programme	Where possible, young people should be engaged in classroom learning for the full two-week period to allow for sufficient time to address barriers to employment and increase work readiness.
Referrals	The unique selling point of the Sector Based Work Academy approach should continue to be emphasised to encourage ongoing referrals into the programme. This includes: Being tailored around employers' needs The provision of accredited training and employability support The opportunity for a young person to be part of a cohort and learn in a group setting. In addition to nurturing existing relationships with referring organisations such as SDS and Jobcentre Plus, the Wise Group should consider incorporating the promotion of these specific features into the social media strategy. Doing so should attract the interest of other relevant organisations and
Shaping the programme around employer needs	broaden the external referral network. In order to increase the number of meaningful job outcomes for participants, programme staff should continue to work closely with employers to ensure that their needs are met. The employer survey conducted by Rocket Science as part of the independent evaluation should provide more insight. It will also be important that the Wise Group stay on top of developments in the local labour market and provide training tailored to fulfilling the requirements of live vacancies.
Practical training	Young people should be provided with the option to complete practical forms of training to smooth the transition process between CashBack Connections and employment.

Smooth transitions	Where possible, gaps in the process of moving from the training to placement elements of the programme should be eliminated to avoid disengagement. It will be important to understand what other reasons there might be for dropout. Rocket Science will seek to explore this through the interviews with young people and staff in Year 2.
Assessing suitability	Where possible, introductory meetings between Youth Coaches and young people (prior to the young person starting on the programme) should be used to assess their suitability for the programme and enrolment in the most appropriate SBWA. This should help to ensure that the programme is the appropriate option for all young people registering, reduce the risk of dropout at this early stage and ensure young people gain relevant skills and experience.
Signposting young people to support	Youth Coaches should be supported to develop internal (within the Wise Group) and external relationships to enable them to signpost young people to appropriate services such as counselling, housing support or legal advice. Management teams should consider suitable options for achieving this, for example networking events and promotional activities. Investing in these activities should help Youth Coaches to offer holistic support provision.
Placements leading to employment	Understanding should be developed around the reasons for young people not being kept on as employees following their placement. This issue can be addressed directly by Rocket Science within the survey of employers conducted in September 2018 as part of the independent evaluation. Rocket Science will also liaise with the Wise Group to ensure that young people who have not been kept on by their employer are included in the sample for longitudinal interviews. Building an understanding of the reasons why this is happening should help us to identify ways of increasing the number of young people achieving successful, sustainable, job outcomes.