

# HATCH

UK YOUTH × KFC



**Building futures:  
how youth work unlocks employment opportunities**

# Acknowledgements

**A huge thank you to KFC for funding the programme and providing vital opportunities for young people.**

Another thank you to the young people who took part in Hatch for sharing your feedback.

A very special thank you also goes to our delivery partners – they are incredible youth organisations that made Hatch possible.

## **Delivery Partners 2022-2024:**

- Albion Foundation
- Achieve, Thrive, Flourish
- Blackburn Youth Zone
- Brighter Futures for Children
- Burnley FC in the Community
- Catch 22
- Employability Solutions
- Foundation 92
- Greater Manchester Youth Network
- Manchester Youth Zone
- Merseyside Youth Association
- Sport 4 Life
- Street League
- The Community Foundation
- Together as One (formerly Aik Saath)
- Wigan Youth Zone
- Wolves Foundation
- Youth Options
- Youth Scotland



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# Executive Summary



“Hatch gave me the chance to get into a decent job when I really needed it”– Hatch participant

This report presents findings from Hatch, a social mobility and employability programme that was delivered in partnership between UK Youth and KFC for young people aged 16–25 who were not currently in education, employment or training, or were at risk of becoming so. The programme aimed to break the cycle of inequality, disadvantage and unemployment that many young people face by offering something different – vital upskilling, real-world experience and ongoing 1:1 tailored support from youth workers.

During its three years of delivery between 2022 and 2024, Hatch reached over 1,200 young people, engaging them to develop their employability skills, gain indispensable work experience and develop their confidence.

Hatch is an example of what can be achieved when the youth sector and business collaborate to unlock opportunities for young people. Bringing together young people, youth workers and employers can be transformational for youth employment outcomes. This impact is amplified when initiatives can offer tangible experiences such as work placements.

We’ve learnt a lot while delivering Hatch and so have some best practice guidance to share for commissioners, youth delivery teams and employers. These tips cover topics such as cross-sector communication, relationship building and programme design. Check these out via the [Best Practice Checklists](#).

## Hatch achieved fantastic outcomes for the young people who took part

Overall, young people have given the Hatch programme a

**Net Promoter Score<sup>1</sup> of**

**+52**

After completing the programme

**71%**   
of young people improved their **employability skills**

**62%**   
saw an improvement in **socioemotional skills**

While **only 18% of participants** were in education, employment or training at the start of the programme,

**this rose to an incredible 66%↑**

of participants in education, employment or training, **three months on** from the end of Hatch

# Introduction

## The context

At the time of writing, 948,000 young people aged 16-24 in England and Wales are not in education, employment or training (ONS, 2025). In the UK, young people aged 16-24 are four times more likely to be unemployed than those over the age of 25 (PwC & Youth Futures Foundation, 2022). Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or with low qualifications are disproportionately likely to be not in education, employment, or training (NEET). This has significant long-term “scarring” effects where NEET young people are at risk of repeated periods of unemployment (Impetus, 2019). The economic impact of this is forecast to be £14.4 billion over the next seven years (Prince’s Trust & Learning and Work Institute, 2021). Young people need urgent support to access and stay in work. Committed policy focus on this challenge is essential to the UK’s future economic growth.

In particular, young people have repeatedly raised the alarm about the limited and unequal availability of work experience opportunities (UK Youth, 2023; Prince’s Trust, 2023). Almost 1 in 2 young people feel that a lack of work experience is a barrier to employment (Youth Employment UK, 2025). Additionally, too many young people have harmful experiences at work, facing discrimination, exclusion and being denied their employment rights (Resolution Foundation, 2023). 93% of young people have experienced negative treatment at work due to their age (UK Youth and KFC, 2024). These experiences can have long-term effects with more than 1 in 4 young people feeling worried about working again following age discrimination (UK Youth and KFC, 2024).



**“Really appreciate what Hatch has done as I don’t think I would have got this job without them”**

– Hatch participant

## The programme

Hatch directly addressed these issues, aiming to support young people who are already not in education, employment or training or at high risk of becoming so. Hatch offered an employability skills curriculum alongside the crucial additional element of a work experience placement. Perhaps most importantly, participants received consistent, long-term support from local youth workers right from their first contact with the programme.

### The impact

The benefits of a cross-sector approach to youth employability are clear across the data and feedback that tell the story of Hatch's impact. Young people have shared that Hatch provided essential relational support – encouragement, advice and confidence-building – coupled with the tangible benefits of interview skills, real-world experience and a workplace reference. Youth workers strengthened their links to local employers and developed their understanding of employers' key challenges. Businesses gained talented employees and new skills in supporting young people at work.

Specifically, Hatch aimed to achieve the following outcomes, which are discussed further in the [Outcomes section](#) of this report.

- 01 Increased engagement of young people who are 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' in meaningful employment or training opportunities
- 02 Young people have developed essential socioemotional skills
- 03 Young people have developed essential employability skills
- 04 Youth workers have the capacity and connections to deliver youth employability programmes

### Learning and best practice

In addition to evaluating the programme outcomes, this report explores programme learning regarding how to best engage and support young people through employability programmes and how to optimise youth workers' unique role in youth employability work. Specifically, we sought to answer the following questions:

- ✓ **What are the effective components of Hatch that provide engaging, positive experiences of youth employability support?**
- ✓ **How can we enable youth workers to play a unique role in building young people's employability skills, aspirations and outcomes?**

These are discussed in more detail in the [Learning section](#) of the report. This learning has been developed into tangible tips shared in the [Best Practice Checklists](#) included at the end of the report.

Insights and learning from Hatch have also informed the development of our Summer Jobs Programme, in its second year of delivery in 2025, which offers a similar model of supported work experience placements. Summer Jobs Programme builds on learning from Hatch at scale, engaging nearly 800 young people to date and aiming to support another 800 in 2026. Funded by £9 million from Youth Endowment Fund, Youth Futures Foundation and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Summer Jobs Programme is using a randomised control trial to understand whether programmes of this type can have a positive effect on outcomes for young people at risk of becoming involved in violence, as has been seen in the US.

Read more about the evaluation approach (i.e. methodology) of Hatch in the [Appendix](#).

# Programme delivery - what was Hatch?

Hatch was an employability programme designed by UK Youth and funded by KFC. It aimed to help young people facing barriers to employment to build skills, confidence and work experience. Young people aged 16-24, who are not currently in work and may be struggling to start or re-enter work, were referred to the programme by employment services and youth work organisations in their local area.

Hatch was delivered around the UK, beginning with a pilot in Manchester in 2022 and growing to involve 19 youth organisations in various regions of England and Scotland by 2024.

The programme involved an employability curriculum across seven modules delivered by youth workers in an informal setting. These modules included topics such as achieving goals, preparing for job seeking, navigating the workplace, and mock interviews. Another key element of the programme was a four-week work experience placement at a KFC restaurant or other workplace, during which each young person continued to be supported by a youth worker. Young people were guaranteed an interview at the same KFC restaurant and many went on to get paid jobs at KFC and other companies as a result. The journey of a young person participating in Hatch is shown below.

## Young Person's Hatch Journey

### Event: Building Partnerships

Networking event for young people, employers and KFC staff that introduces the programme. Hosted by youth workers.

### Employability curriculum

15-20 hours of pre-employment workshops in a group setting.

### Real interview with KFC

Young people have the opportunity to attend a real interview with the possibility of a job if successful.

### Introductory 1:1

Young people have an initial 1:1 conversation with a youth worker to discuss whether Hatch is right for them, placement options and any additional needs they may have.

### Work experience placement

Young people attend 4-week placement at a KFC restaurant or other employer. Youth workers continue to support young people.

## PROGRAMME DELIVERY - WHAT WAS HATCH?

As with many UK Youth programmes, Hatch offered an 'Access Fund' that provided an additional funding pot for youth workers to use where needed to support young people with particular expenses and access needs such as transport costs or supportive equipment.

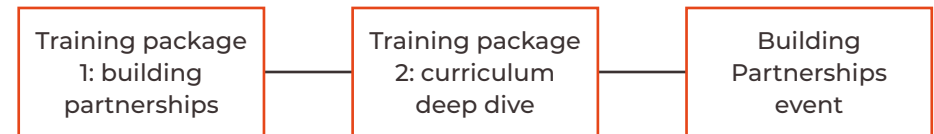
Youth workers also went on a learning and development journey through the Hatch programme, participating in two distinct phases shown in the diagram below to ensure they had the confidence and knowledge to deliver the programme.



## Youth worker's Hatch Journey

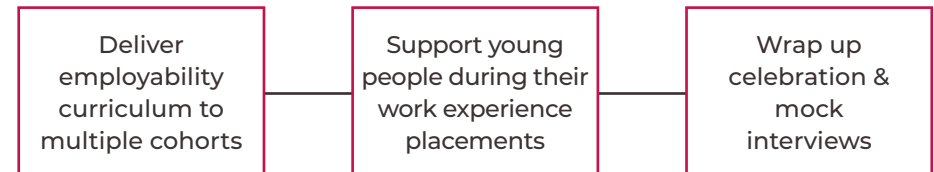
### Phase 1: Building Partnerships

**Aim:** to develop and strengthen relationships with local employers, KFC staff and young people to set the foundation for successful programme delivery.



### Phase 1: Building Experience

**Aim:** to deliver an employability curriculum that increases young people's workplace confidence and skills and to support participants during their work experience placement.

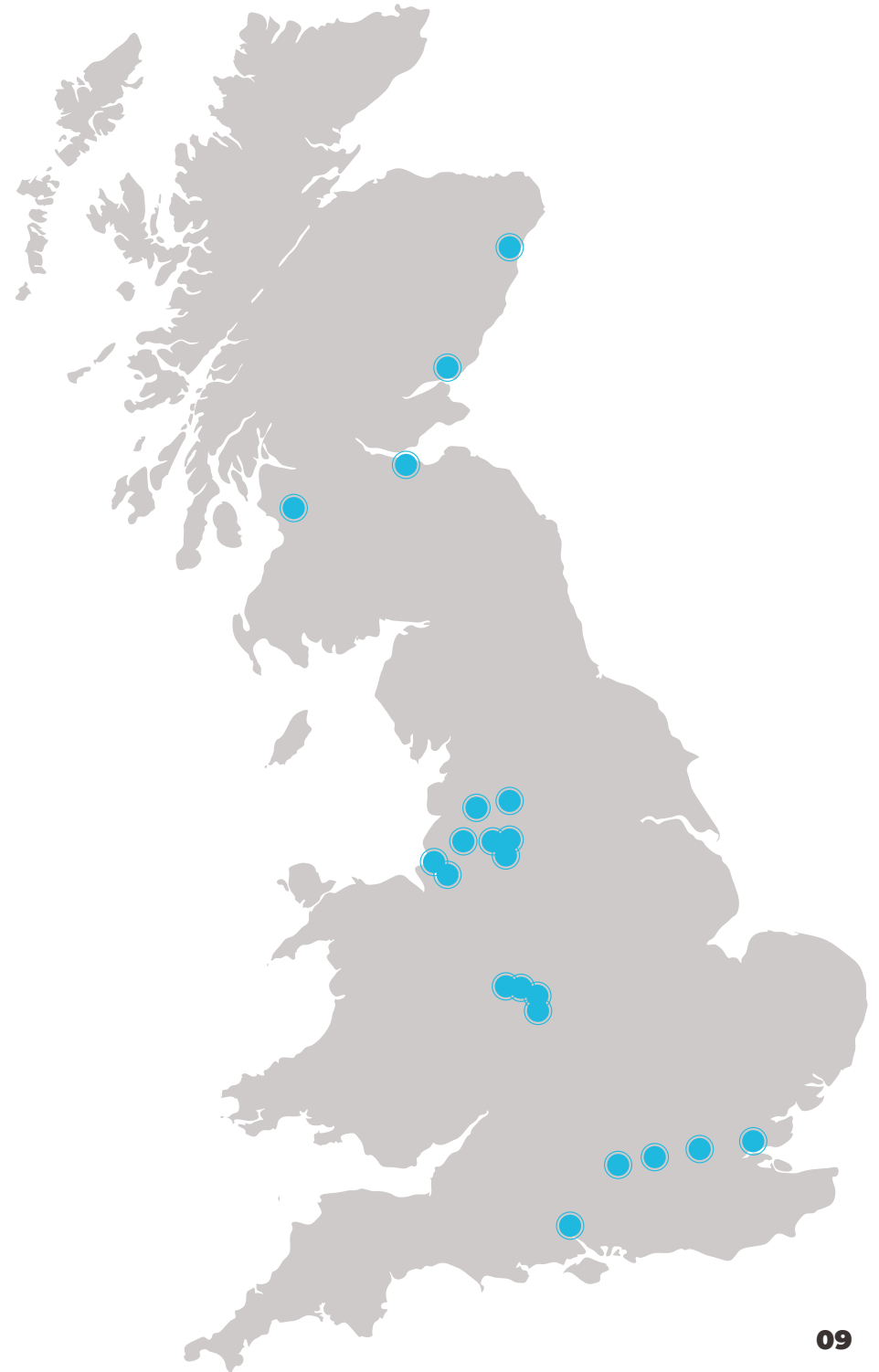


# Programme delivery - who did Hatch reach?

In total, the Hatch programme has reached an incredible 1,251 young people. It was delivered by 19 youth organisations from across Scotland and England, in urban and rural areas. A list of these delivery partners can be found in the [acknowledgements](#).

The table below shows the breakdown in participants starting and completing the programme by year.

Year	Participants starting	Participants completing
Year 1 (pilot)	127	87 (69%)
Year 2	605	410 (68%)
Year 3	519	351 (66%)
<b>Overall</b>	<b>1251</b>	<b>848 (68%)</b>



## PROGRAMME DELIVERY - WHO DID HATCH REACH?

There has been a roughly equal completion rate for each year of the programme although tweaks have been made each year to try to improve retention. Although more can still be done to facilitate programme completion, this data also indicates the challenges that young people who are currently NEET face regarding participating in employment support activities. Participants often have many inter-related personal circumstances and challenges that have led to them currently being NEET and make consistent attendance challenging. Youth workers have provided wrap-around support to meet young people where they are and help them to work through these challenges where possible. Additionally, the programme was designed with several points of flexibility to accommodate participants' often complex needs – this is discussed further in the [Learning section](#).

### Reach via Hatch events



Building Partnership events, introduced in Year 2, have been a valuable means of introducing young people and local employers to the Hatch programme and kick-starting engagement in the programme.

Events have engaged over 360 young people overall, with 211 in Year 2 and more than 150 in Year 3.

The impact of Building Partnerships events is explored further in the [section on learning](#) regarding what worked to support young people with their employability.

## Demographics

Overall Hatch has generally reached high proportions of the groups of young people we know are mostly likely to struggle to obtain and sustain employment due to societal barriers, discrimination or personal challenges (Impetus, 2019). The table below compares the proportion of Hatch participants from these groups with the national average. It is clear Hatch has reached those who are most likely to need additional support to access employment.

Indicator of employment challenges	Proportion of Hatch participants (Years 1-3)	National average
Not in Education, Employment or Training	82%	12.8% <sup>2</sup>
Fewer than 5 A*-C grades at GCSE	54%	18% <sup>3</sup>
Global majority heritage	40%	32% <sup>4</sup>
Living in 30% most deprived geographical areas	49%	30% <sup>5</sup>
Receive(d) free school meals	26%	26% <sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ONS (2025)

<sup>3</sup> Farquharson, C., McNally, S., Tahir, I., (2024)

<sup>4</sup> ONS (2023)

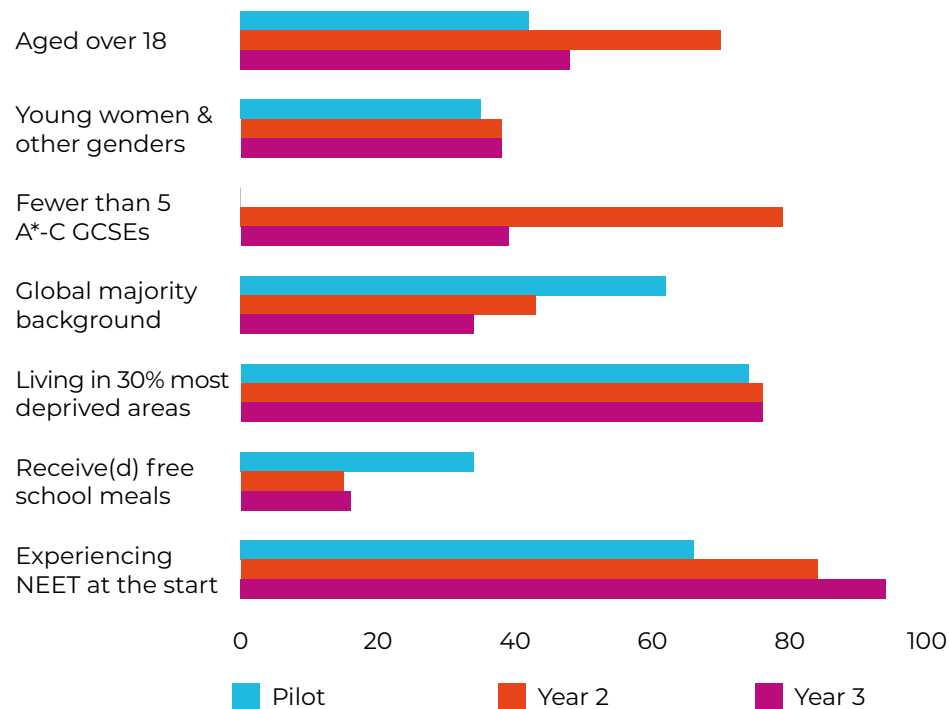
<sup>5</sup> GOV.UK (2020)

<sup>6</sup> Department for Education (2025)

## PROGRAMME DELIVERY - WHO DID HATCH REACH?

As seen in the graph below, over the three years some participant demographics have remained the same, while others have evolved. Although demographics have changed and the representation of some experiences among participants has reduced, the proportions of each group have not dropped below the national level benchmark set out in the table above.

### Programme demographic representation by year



We hypothesise that these changes in demographics are due to various factors. The particularly stark changes from Year 1 to Year 2 are likely due to the difference in cohort size – from less than 130 to more than 600 respectively. It can be easier to target young people with particular experiences when cohort sizes are smaller. When cohort sizes are much larger, youth organisations may rely more on advertising and word of mouth rather than recruiting directly and this means demographic representation will be more difficult to target. It is worth noting that it appears easier to engage young people from specific geographic areas (e.g. areas of high deprivation) than young people from specific backgrounds or experiences, at least for the organisations who have delivered Hatch.

This data also demonstrates that multiple data points are needed to accurately determine whether an employability programme is reaching those most in need of its support. For example, while the engagement of NEET participants was highest in Year 3, this was contrasted by reduced engagement of participants from global majority backgrounds, those who had received free school meals and those with lower qualifications, all of which are markers for increased risk of becoming NEET.

 “[Hatch] has given me the tools to find a job”  
– Hatch participant

# Outcomes for young people and youth workers



In this section we discuss the difference the programme has made for young people and youth workers taking part. The outcomes evaluated across the differed years of Hatch have evolved and been refined year-on-year. In this report we have looked in detail at the outcomes set for year 3 of Hatch but compared data from across all three years where this was possible.

**Outcome 1 - Increased engagement of young people who are 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' in meaningful employment or training opportunities**

**Outcome 2 - Young people have developed essential socioemotional skills**

**Outcome 3 - Young people have developed essential employability skills**

**Outcome 4 - Youth workers have the capacity and connections to deliver youth employability programmes**



**"Hatch is really good to help you gain the skills you need in a workplace and in general life"**

– Hatch participant

**Outcome 1 -**

Increased engagement of young people who are ‘Not in Education, Employment or Training’ in meaningful employment or training opportunities

**Only 18% of participants** starting Hatch were **in education, employment or training (EET)**. This **rose to 66% in EET following participation in Hatch**. Specifically, 48% of responding participants were in work.

**68% of participants** completed both the **curriculum and work experience** placement.

**85%** of those who started a **work experience placement** were able to complete it.

Young people gave the Hatch programme a **Net Promoter Score of +52**.<sup>7</sup>

At the beginning of the programme 82% (1,030) of participants were not in education, employment or training. To gain a picture of young people’s ‘engagement’ we have considered both levels of participation in Hatch and completion of the programme and work experience placement. We also used Net Promoter Score as a marker of participants’ satisfaction with the programme and tracked how many young people went on to be in employment, education or training beyond Hatch.

**Participation**

Of the 1,251 young people who began the programme, 68% (848 participants) were able to complete it (i.e. attended at least 60% of curriculum modules and completed the work experience placement). In contrast, of the 1,002 young people who began a work experience placement, 85% (855 participants) were able to complete it. A comparatively smaller proportion of young people completing the programme than the placement is perhaps explained by the design of the programme - the final curriculum module was delivered following the placement. Several youth workers noted that this timing meant many young people were by then engaged with education, employment or training. Another

explanation could be that participants are simply not motivated to attend following the conclusion of the placement, which was often most valued element of the programme.


**Number of young people completing each stage of the programme, by year**

	Year 1 (Pilot)	Year 2	Year 3	Overall
Attended Building Partnerships event	n/a	211	150	361
Started programme	127	605	519	1251
Completed work experience	119 (94%)	390 (70%)	346 (67%)	855
Completed programme (work experience + curriculum attendance)	87 (69%)	410 (68%)	35 (68%)	848
In EET after Hatch	29 (71%)	257 (68%)	185 (63%)	471 (66%)

<sup>7</sup> Net Promoter Score is a standardised metric for measuring customer experience. It recognises whether a ‘customer’ (or participant) is likely to promote a service or good to another potential customer. This NPS is an overall score including scores from young people who were not considered NEET, and can be considered ‘excellent’ by the benchmarks established by the creators of the NPS. ([Qualtrics](#))

## OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH WORKERS: OUTCOME 1

Three months after the end of the programme, 66% of the 713 young people we were able to follow-up with were in education, employment or training (EET). In contrast only 18% of participants starting the programme were in EET, which demonstrates the huge impact of the programme on young people's engagement in EET and the need for tailored, supported employability support. Specifically, 48% of respondents were in work and 44% were in education.<sup>8</sup> 63% of those in work were working at KFC, demonstrating the value of work experience that can follow on to a guaranteed interview for a job.

 **“Was really good way of getting me back into work and reintroducing skills and engaging with people”**  
– Hatch participant

### Enjoyment and satisfaction

Looking across all three years of Hatch, young people have given the programme a Net Promoter Score<sup>9</sup> (NPS) of +52, which can be considered 'excellent' according to benchmarks suggested by the creators of NPS. This indicates young people would be highly likely to recommend the programme to a friend. This enthusiasm for - and satisfaction with - the programme is also reflected in qualitative data, as discussed in the [Learning section](#).

The NPS score increased enormously between Year 1 (+24) and Year 2 (+60) – and jumped up again for Year 3 (+73) – indicating that improvements made to the programme made a notable difference, improving participants' experiences. To read more about changes made to the programme, go to the [section on programme learning](#).

 **“One of the best things I've ever been able to do”**  
– Hatch participant

<sup>8</sup> N.b. There was some overlap of these groups with some young people studying and working.

<sup>9</sup> See explanation of Net Promoter Score [above](#).

### Adaeze

Before starting Hatch, Adaeze was feeling really low in confidence about looking for work after several job rejections. She told her youth worker that she felt like she had tried everything and got nowhere.

Initially, she was worried about taking the placement, which was at a museum in Manchester, as it was the first time she had travelled to the city from Oldham. However, she took to the placement brilliantly. Adaeze gained recognition from management for her exemplary attitude to work, consideration of colleagues and customer service. Gaining work experience while actually being paid really boosted Adaeze's confidence.

During the placement, Adaeze faced a significant personal challenge that caused her and her family uncertainty and worry. Despite this, Adaeze continued to impress staff at the museum and eventually the personal challenge was resolved.

Originally, the museum stated they were not able to offer jobs through the Hatch programme. However, the staff were so impressed with Adaeze that they offered her part-time employment beyond the programme. Adaeze is so proud of her achievement in obtaining ongoing paid work, which is particularly impressive at an organisation that largely runs on volunteers.

### Programme NPS score by year



**Outcome 2 -**  
Young people have developed essential socioemotional skills

**Socioemotional skills increased overall by 4.18% across all surveys** and by 4.32% across matched surveys (i.e. individuals' start and end surveys could be compared) between the start and end of the Hatch programme.

Overall, **62% of participants experienced an increase in their socioemotional skills** between the start and end of Hatch.

Young people described how they **felt more confident and gained several transferable skills** through the programme, such as communication and teamwork.

Well-developed socioemotional skills (SES) increase the chances of attaining positive outcomes across a person's lifetime such as obtaining qualifications, secure work, fulfilling relationships and a healthy lifestyle (YMCA George Williams College, 2023a).

Young people shared that the experience of the programme had helped them to feel more confident overall, including with applying for jobs and feeling prepared for future work. For many young people, even travelling to the placement was a personal challenge that they had to push themselves to do, meaning that they felt more confident travelling on their own by the end of the programme.

 **"Hatch is really good to help you gain the skills you need in a workplace and in general life"** – Hatch participant

Additionally, young people felt that the placement had helped them to gain key skills that were transferable to other jobs and to life in general. Particularly noteworthy was the frequency that interpersonal skills were mentioned, such as communication (speaking and listening) and teamwork.

 **"It taught me a lot of fundamental skills I can use in different types of workplaces"** – Hatch participant

Overall, 62% of young people improved their socioemotional skills while taking part in Hatch. The exact socioemotional metrics are not exactly comparable across all three years as different metrics were used in Year 3 compared to Years 1 and 2. This is because, in Year 3, the evaluation moved to use a more robust, standardised method of measuring SES, drawing from a sector-leading outcomes framework that examined skills across six domains (responsibility, empathy, problem solving, initiative, teamwork and emotion management).<sup>10</sup> However, we are able to compare averages across all metrics.

Changes in socioemotional skills scores were modest across all years; however, this is expected in SES measurement where the duration of the programme is relatively short (YMCA GWC, 2023b). Between Years 1 and 2 there was an increase in average percentage change improvement. However, the average percentage change dropped in Year 3. This may be primarily explained by the change in SES metrics used to apply more rigorously tested measures. Overall, socioemotional skills scores increased by 4.18% across all surveys and 4.32% for surveys where the start and end survey responses of individuals could be matched and compared.

## OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH WORKERS: OUTCOME 2

### Young people experiencing positive change in socioemotional skills (matched surveys†)

	Year 1 (Pilot)	Year 2	Year 3
Matched†	65%	71%	51%

### Average percentage change across all socioemotional skill domains

	Year 1 (Pilot)	Year 2	Year 3	Overall
Unmatched†	+4.80%	+5.66%	+2.07%	+4.18%
Matched†	+4.40%	+6.59%	+1.96%	+4.32%

### Largest average percentage change in socioemotional skills (matched surveys†)

	Metric	Percentage Change
Year 1 (Pilot)	Setbacks never stop me	+10.50%
Year 2	I know what I'm good at and what I want to get better at	+25.73%
Year 3	I seek help from others when I need it	+10.21%

### Tyler

Before joining Hatch, Tyler faced significant personal challenges. He had experienced severe bullying at school including a traumatic incident of being threatened with a knife. These experiences, compounded by the isolation of lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic, resulted in Tyler struggling with depression and social anxiety. Ultimately, he was unable to finish school and found it difficult to leave the house.

The turning point came when his mum sought help and Tyler was referred to The Albion Foundation and was supported to join the Hatch programme. With support from a youth worker, Tyler was placed in a paid work experience role at KFC. The change was immediate – through the programme's structured support, training and real-world experience Tyler's wellbeing, communication skills and confidence grew rapidly.

After completing the programme, as testament to his progress and contribution to the team, Tyler was offered a job with KFC. He is now happier and more confident. He is able to spend more time with his family, leave the house more easily and has rediscovered a sense of purpose.

Tyler explained, *"I just wanted my confidence back ... I think Tom's [youth worker] really helped me achieve that. I'm happy to come to work and I'm never anxious to talk to anyone or meet new people. It just feels great to feel like I belong somewhere."*

Adapted from: [www.wba.co.uk/news/i-belong-somewhere-hatch-project-gives-tyler-new-lease-life](http://www.wba.co.uk/news/i-belong-somewhere-hatch-project-gives-tyler-new-lease-life)


**Outcome 3 -**  
Young people have developed essential employability skills

Employability skills increased overall by **7.32%** across all surveys and by 8.06% across matched surveys (i.e. where individuals' start and end surveys could be compared) **between the start and end of the Hatch programme.**

Overall, **71% of participants** experienced an **increase in their employability skills** between the start and end of Hatch.

Young people **described how valuable they found the work experience placement** as a way to gain a real understanding of the world of work and what would be expected of them as an employee and colleague.

In qualitative feedback, young people expressed how valuable the work experience placement was to their development of practical work-ready skills. Many young people had little to no exposure to the workplace environment prior to Hatch and so appreciated the chance to have a 'practice run'. They learnt what to expect from a job and what colleagues and managers will expect from them. Young people felt this set them up for success when beginning a job 'for real'.

 **"I think it has really help[ed] me shape my skills and qualities and bring me out as a person I thought I would not be"**  
– Hatch participant

 **"It's given me a picture of what I can expect from a job with KFC or any other franchise. I know what people expect from me now"**  
– Hatch participant

Gaining this experience also meant some young people were surprised by what work was like and what they enjoyed. Several

expressed surprise in their own abilities and capacity to succeed at work. They noted their lack of belief in their own particular skill or thinking that something just 'wasn't for them' – until they were proved wrong by testing and succeeding in these skills during their placement. Additionally, young people found they enjoyed a job they didn't expect to – expanding their assumptions about what kind of jobs they should consider. The placement then expanded young people's horizons about the opportunities available to them and their own abilities to meet those challenges.

 **"I didn't think I'd enjoy this industry but I really enjoyed it"**  
– Hatch participant

Participants were also asked to rate themselves on a range of employability skills at the beginning and end of the programme to provide an indication of their 'work readiness' – i.e. how prepared they feel to look for, apply for and stay in work. Generally comparable measures were used across the three years although the wording differed slightly year-to-year as the evaluation evolved and indicators and concepts were refined.

## OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH WORKERS: OUTCOME 3

Overall, 71% of young people experienced an improvement in employability skills between the beginning and end of the programme. On average, the mean change in score between the beginning and end of the programme was +7.32%. This indicates that the programme achieves some positive improvements in employability skills.

### Young people experiencing positive change in employability skills scores (matched surveys)

	Year 1 (Pilot)	Year 2	Year 3	Overall
Matched	74%	70%	69%	71%

### Average percentage change in employability skills

	Year 1 (Pilot)	Year 2	Year 3	Overall
Unmatched	+5.80%	+9.24%	+6.93%	+7.32%
Matched	+10.60%	+6.59%	+7.00%	+8.06%

### Largest average percentage change in employability skills (matched surveys)

	Metric	Percentage Change
Year 1 (Pilot)	I know what it takes to be in a work environment	+11.30%
Year 2	I have relevant experiences I can include in job applications	+27.33%
Year 3	I have relevant experiences I can include in job applications	+20.43%

### Samira

Samira had been struggling with her job search, facing multiple rejections from job applications. She was referred to the programme by her job centre coach as she hoped to improve her employability by learning new skills and knowledge. During the four-week pre-employment curriculum, she found a sense of community with other young people and developed the skills needed to enhance her chances of securing a job.

Just as she was about to begin the work placement at KFC, racist rioting caused unrest in the community. Samira and her family had to stay indoors for their safety. Despite this, Samira soon began her role at KFC. The Regional General Manager made the placement more accessible by scheduling her for day shifts – accommodating her family's request for her to be home by 6pm.

Samira enjoyed the placement, demonstrating her determination and skills gained from the curriculum and work experience. The supportive environment provided at KFC further enabled her to thrive at work. Samira went on to successfully transition into a full-time position at KFC!

**Outcome 4 -**

**Youth workers have the capacity and connections to deliver youth employability programmes**

Youth worker **capacity increased across every indicator** (confidence, experience, understanding and knowledge) between the beginning and end of the programme.

The majority of youth workers (70%) had experience of delivering employability support programmes for young people before taking part in Hatch. This meant they were able to start the programme from a position of relative confidence and knowledge. Although, for many youth workers, Hatch was different from other employability programmes so there was still a benefit to training and ongoing support from UK Youth. If Hatch or other youth employability interventions are delivered with youth workers who do not have this level of employability experience in future, careful consideration of training and support needs will be required.

Youth workers were asked to express the extent to which they agreed with various statements regarding their confidence, experience and understanding in supporting young people with their employability and entering work. The results of this survey are summarised in the tables on the right:

Percentage agreeing with statement (unmatched survey responses)			
	Start (n=52)	End (n=34)	Change (% points)
I am confident in supporting young people to find work	88%	97%	+9
I have strong experience supporting young people in developing their employability skills	83%	94%	+11
I fully understand the challenges young people who are 'not in employment, education or training' face in finding work	92%	100%	+8
I know the essential skills that young people need to find work	63%	91%	+28
Percentage agreeing with statement (matched survey responses)			
	Start (n=22)	End (n=22)	Change (% points)
I am confident in supporting young people to find work	82%	91%	+9
I have strong experience supporting young people in developing their employability skills	73%	86%	+13
I fully understand the challenges young people who are 'not in employment, education or training' face in finding work	82%	95%	+13
I know the essential skills that young people need to find work	79%	86%	+7

## OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH WORKERS: OUTCOME 4



“The young person felt they had constant support for whatever concerns or questions they had going into KFC knowing I was always on the other end of the phone. I made them feel like I was a safe space to share their concerns and this helped their placement as they attended their shifts fine”  
– Youth worker

These findings demonstrate that most youth workers began the programme with a high level of confidence, experience and understanding of employability support. However, after upskilling, support from UK Youth and delivering the programme, more youth workers felt confident and experienced in delivering employability support and were equipped with the knowledge and understanding required.

We know anecdotally that youth workers delivering Hatch developed new connections with KFC Regional Managers and with other local employers as they sought work experience placements for young people who did not attend a KFC placement. The benefits of this model, where the funder provides the majority of placements, protects youth workers' time and resources as they do not have to expend these excessively on searching for a large number of employer placements. However, it also reduces the need for youth organisations to create and strengthen connections with local employers, having a detrimental impact. For example, these connections may support youth organisations to sustain employability support longer term, with engaged employers offering valuable resources such as funding, premises or volunteers to deliver mock interviews, taster days or further work experience.

# Learning more about youth employability support

**What are the effective components of Hatch that provide engaging, positive experiences of youth employability support?**

## What worked?

### **Programme structure and work experience placement:**

each element of the programme provided benefit to young people, with feedback indicating the events, curriculum and placement were all valuable. However, the work experience placement was consistently emphasised as the key element that made a difference.

### **Youth worker support:**

consistent support from youth workers throughout the programme provided reassurance and holistic support that placement managers were not all able to provide. This included workplace advocacy on young people's behalf.

### **Mix of placement host organisations:**

having a choice of placement providers beyond KFC provided exposure to a diverse range of organisations and increased accessibility for rurally based young people.

### **Led by local youth organisations:**

programme delivery by local youth organisations has ensured the participation of young people most in need of employability support.

Qualitative feedback from young people, through surveys and focus groups has been overwhelmingly positive about the programme. Young people expressed the value of a programme that provides access to real-world experience with the support of a youth worker and preparation through pre-placement training. For many it was an introduction to the world of work, while for others it was a

valuable bridge back into work after time out. Many young people spoke about gaining confidence, making friends and now being employed following the programme. This was echoed in feedback from youth workers who felt Hatch had been a very impactful programme evidenced by witnessing tangible growth in young people, the development of transferable skills and making friends.

### What worked?

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

Overwhelmingly, young people were most excited about - and grateful for - the work experience placement element of the programme. The work experience specifically provided young people with an opportunity to experience the workplace, many for the first time, in a more supportive and less pressured way. The most common benefits highlighted by young people were: preparedness for work; increasing their confidence; and improving or gaining new skills, as has been discussed above in the [Outcomes section](#).

#### CURRICULUM

Overall, most young people found the pre-employment modules helpful in preparing them for their placement. Young people described the curriculum as informative, relevant and interactive. Some young people were expecting more restaurant-specific training or felt that it covered topics that were too basic for people who may already have some experience of work. There was also mixed feedback about the value and relevance of the social action module. In addition to the content itself, these sessions also provided an opportunity for young people to meet others who may be having similar experiences to them. The session also enabled them to build relationships with youth workers before the placement – an important step if they were new to the youth organisation supporting them.

#### EVENTS

Building Partnerships events were introduced in Year 2 and brought together local employers, youth workers and young people to exchange and develop understanding about youth employment. The events provided informal spaces for young people to discuss their perspectives on accessing work and to make contacts in local businesses, developing self-confidence as well as essential employability skills such as communication. Delivered before the main programme, these also offered a 'hook' to raise awareness and interest of the Hatch programme among young people. The events provided an informal opportunity for young people to ask questions and consider what kind of commitment participation in the programme might involve. A high proportion of event attendees did go on to participate in the main programme<sup>11</sup>, indicating that the events were a successful mechanism for engaging young people in the programme.

<sup>11</sup> We can't accurately provide a specific figure for event attendees who went on to participate in the programme due to the way data was collected. However, we can see that 43% of Year 3 participants who completed at least 2 modules previously attended a Building Partnerships event.

### YOUTH WORKER SUPPORT

Young people told us how much they valued the consistent support from youth workers throughout the programme. They felt that youth workers were always there to listen, encourage, advise and answer questions, however big or small an issue might be. In this way, youth workers offered a different level of support to what placement managers were able to provide. Young people often developed a stronger relationship with their youth workers than with staff at their placement, considering them their 'first port of call', often preferring to go to them with questions or concerns.

Youth workers also played a vital role as advocates for young people and as intermediaries between young people and placement staff. Young people sometimes experienced a lack of communication from placement managers – for example, regarding their next shift - and youth workers would follow up with managers to answer these questions on behalf of young people. Additionally, where young people faced other workplace challenges such as concerns regarding Right to Work paperwork or misunderstandings during their shift, youth workers were able to step in and work with the young person to overcome these issues.

### Additional beneficial elements of programme design

#### **Having a mix of placement host organisations, including KFC and others**

While the majority of work experience placements were with KFC, many young people attended placements with other organisations. These were particularly valued in rural locations where it would have been extremely difficult for young people to travel to their nearest KFC franchise. Non-KFC placements in particular opened young people's eyes to the diversity of the many behind-the-scenes jobs in different organisations, as well as how each organisation functions and organises itself differently.

#### **Rooted in local youth organisations**

Youth organisations delivering the programme have consistently demonstrated their ability to reach and engage young people facing the biggest challenges to accessing work – those from areas of high deprivation or who have few qualifications (Impetus, 2019). Local youth organisations were able to reach young people most in need of programme support, as demonstrated from the demographic reach data [discussed above](#). Additionally, local organisations understand the specific challenges experienced by young people – one example from Hatch was youth workers supporting young people living in rural areas or poorly serviced urban neighbourhoods to navigate public transport and using the programme's Access Fund where transport costs were a barrier to a young person's participation. Furthermore, where youth workers have strong local connections, it is easier to generate more work experience placements through word-of-mouth networks and greater local understanding of the youth organisation's work and young people's needs.

## LEARNING MORE ABOUT YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT

### Refining future practice

The programme has been improved each year by acting on feedback from young people, youth workers and KFC staff. This is summarised below, followed by details of feedback received in Year 3 that has informed UK Youth's wider employability offer. The [practice checklists](#) included at the end of this report aim to inform future youth employability programming more widely.

### Programme improvement to date

Between Year 1 and Year 2 'Building Partnerships' events were introduced to the programme. These provided an opportunity before starting programme delivery for youth organisations to start generating interest in the programme among local employers who could offer work experience placements. Event case studies demonstrated that this was effective, with several examples of connections made via Building Partnerships events leading to the offer of work experience placements.

Between Year 2 and Year 3 the following changes were made to address delays between curriculum delivery and work experience placements as this was the point at which many young people had previously lost momentum and dropped out of the programme.

- ✔ Sharing work experience participants' details with placements hosts earlier to provide more time for contact and address any accessibility requirements.
- ✔ Specific training and guidance for youth workers on supporting young people with their 'Right to Work' documentation.


### Learning for the future


In Year 3, young people shared feedback regarding how to further improve the placement experience and this is summarised on the next page. This learning has influenced the design of similar UK Youth programmes and has been built into the [best practice checklists](#) included later in this report. These checklists provide guidance on running similar programmes for funders, commissioners, youth workers and employers.




### Learning for programme design:


 **Improvements to placement design:** Offering taster days would give an opportunity to check whether a placement will work for a young person, helping to reduce mismatches and improve retention. More flexibility within the existing hours could make placements accessible to more young people with irregular or unpredictable schedules - for example, those with caring responsibilities.


 **Greater variety of placement hosts:** KFC placements have provided a consistent, well-received option for young people taking part in Hatch. However, not all young people felt able to work in the restaurants due to a variety of access needs. For example, those with experience of disordered eating, young people with Autism who might experience overwhelm in restaurant settings, or young people living somewhere that made travel to a particular restaurant near impossible. A broader range of employer placements would allow youth workers to better match young people according to their interests and skills as well as their logistical and access needs.

 **Support beyond the programme:** For young people who did not gain a permanent job through the programme, the lack of follow-up support was a missed opportunity. More support to find alternative opportunities would be appreciated and valuable after young people have invested time and effort in the programme. This support could include referrals to other employers or continued engagement with youth workers, providing a safety net to maintain momentum in participants' job search.

### Learning for work experience hosts and employers:

 **Placement-specific briefing:** Young people would have found it helpful to have a briefing before beginning their placement to discuss specific skills that would be needed on site and how that particular workplace was run. An example 'day in the life' overview of a typical shift would also have been helpful preparation.

 **More consistent and structured support at the workplace:** Some young people felt that support tapered off during the placement, with initial training provided and then an expectation to 'get on with it'. More training for managers and a structure of support, e.g. regular check-ins, were viewed as helpful. This has been built into UK Youth's Summer Jobs Programme, for example. Some KFC restaurants provided a 'buddy' during the placement so that young people could ask questions and gain informal support. The young people who had a buddy found this helpful, particularly when the buddy was a fairly similar age to them.

 **Stronger communication from placement hosts:** Participants frequently reported lack of communication from placement managers, particularly around onboarding, shift scheduling and pay slip issues. These delays in providing important information led to feelings of uncertainty, anxiety and isolation. Youth workers often needed to step in to chase updates, adding pressure to their workloads.

## How can we create the conditions for youth workers to play a unique role in building young people's employability skills, aspirations and outcomes?

### What worked?

**Time:** the length of the delivery window – and the option for young people to sign up to one cohort but attend at a later date – meant that youth workers had time to develop relationships with young people. This strengthened trust with participants and meant youth workers were aware of the nuances of each young person's personal experiences, circumstances and needs, enabling them to best support them.

**Flexibility:** the 'core and flex' curriculum design allowed youth workers to tailor the programme to suit the specific needs and interests of each group of young people while consistently covering the key curriculum topics.

**Building foundational links with employers:** the guidance and requirements for communication between youth workers and placement hosts did provide some opportunities to develop working relationships. Where both sides were able to fully engage and invest some time in relationship building, this worked well for information sharing and supporting young people.

**Building Partnership events:** running events at the start of the programme provided a valuable 'hook' to facilitate early engagement and introduction for young people and employers. This allowed delivery to start more smoothly and with pre-existing lists of potential participants and placement providers.

Youth workers generally felt well-prepared to support young people with their employability skills from the get-go. Many youth organisations delivering the programme are very experienced in providing youth employability support, or even specialised in this type of provision, and so were able to bring significant expertise to the programme. Youth workers generally felt the programme was

well-designed with an effective curriculum and delivery approach that was easy to adapt and deliver. However, the biggest challenges for youth workers revolved around the work experience placement when limited or ineffective communication caused issues between young people and employers or for youth workers and employers.

### What worked?

#### TIME TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

The long delivery window and rolling sign-up model allowed young people to stay connected with the programme but to participate when the timing was best for them. Additionally, the multiple programme elements including event, curriculum and placement meant that young people were engaged over a longer period than on many other employability programmes. This allowed youth workers to work more closely with participants and gain insights into their specific circumstances well before the placement. Youth workers were able to meaningfully tailor support to suit young people's needs, build trust and meaningfully prepare young people to step into work.

#### FLEXIBILITY

Youth workers appreciated the design of the Hatch curriculum and its 'core and flex' elements. This gave them freedom to deliver the modules according to their organisation's style and young people's preferences. The flexibility enabled youth workers to keep the programme inclusive and engaging, maintaining participation and ensuring relevance for participants.

#### SUPPORTING STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS




While frequency and consistency of communication between youth workers and placement hosts varied, the structure provided by the programme was seen as valuable. Recommended touchpoints such as regular check-in calls and particularly face-to-face conversations were important for building relationships and facilitating communication. This supported better information sharing as well as smoother onboarding and more timely support for young people. Where youth workers had built relationships with other employers or had existing links to local businesses, communication was easier and more effective as trust was established and these organisations had 'bought in' to the programme.


#### BUILDING PARTNERSHIP EVENTS

While adding events to the programme may have initially been perceived as simply an additional element to plan and deliver, Building Partnership events became a beneficial and valued addition to the programme. Youth workers found the events to be useful for kick-starting interest and engagement in the programme - both for young people and employers - setting a positive tone and helping to build momentum. Additionally, they helped to manage expectations for young people and employers on how the programme would work and their relevant responsibilities.

### Refining future practice


#### Programme design and support

-  **Bite size training and guidance:** Youth workers found the volume of information coming from UK Youth overwhelming, particularly at the outset of the programme. This could often lead to missing some content or confusion about processes. Spreading out training into multiple sessions and providing a shorter handbook with clear checklists and a one-page summary of requirements would ensure youth workers are more easily able to stay on track.
-  **Reduce, streamline and/or automate data collection:** Tracking young people's progress was extremely time-consuming as well as error-prone due to reliance on manual data input through spreadsheets. Using a centralised and/or more automated process would significantly reduce the administrative burden and improve data quality.
-  **Breaks and breathing room:** The rolling rhythm of recruiting, training and delivery back-to-back was stressful and overwhelming for some youth workers. Introducing scheduled programme breaks such as a 'holiday' in the middle of delivery or buffer periods between groups would allow youth workers to pause, reflect on delivery to date and better prepare for the next cohort. This could also make space for midpoint training for youth workers and placement hosts, which would provide another opportunity to strengthen programme relationships and train new staff.

-  **Flex the programme based on participant needs:** Youth workers found that different young people could benefit from different lengths and depths of curriculum delivery. Some young people with additional learning needs would benefit from more time with the curriculum. Other young people, for example, those with experience on other employment programmes or who have previously been employed, may be better suited to a more condensed version of the curriculum with different optional modules to prepare them for their specific placement.

#### Relationships between youth workers and work experience hosts

Youth workers suggested tweaks to programme design and set-up that would facilitate stronger working relationships with placement hosts.

-  **Employer attendance at Building Partnership events:** Events were seen as a valuable tool for starting the programme on a positive note and getting everyone engaged and on the same page. Many KFC restaurant managers did not attend these events, which could lead to limited engagement or challenging communication from the outset. Encouraging or requiring (where reasonably possible) placement hosts to attend events would strengthen relationships from the start, allowing hosts to clarify expectations and start building rapport with young people and youth workers.

## LEARNING MORE ABOUT YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT



**Simpler communication:** Communication challenges were a recurring theme in feedback, causing workload pressures for youth workers and uncertainty for young people. More streamlined processes such as a single point of contact and young person employment information presented in a simple, single form would reduce confusion. Additionally, paid youth worker time to visit young people in placements would provide another opportunity for relationship building with placement hosts and for face-to-face communication.



**Actively facilitate relationship building and learning between youth workers and placement hosts:** Where there were good working relationships between youth workers and placement hosts, placements worked more smoothly for all involved. Youth workers suggested that funded time to attend 'day-in-the-life' experiences could help youth workers understand the working environment young people will be entering, gain understanding of the placement host's processes (e.g. induction and training for new staff) and further build relationships with placement hosts. Check-in calls between youth workers and placements hosts were useful, but it was felt that fewer sessions with mandatory attendance would be more useful than the frequent but sometime poorly attended existing cadence. In-person programme training attended jointly by youth workers and placement hosts was an effective means of starting face-to-face relationship building where this took place. In these sessions, youth workers could share their expertise with placement hosts to support them to engage and manage young staff and placement hosts could share their challenges and concerns regarding supporting the placement.



**Cross-sector working:** Youth workers and many employers developed a deep understanding of the challenges faced by young people experiencing not being in education, employment or training (NEET). Creating or facilitating further opportunities for young people, youth workers and employers to connect with organisations and services involved in youth employability policy and practice more widely (e.g. Department for Work and Pensions) was suggested. This would provide the opportunity to testify to the impact of Hatch and inform the wider roll-out of youth employability support, including relevant Government initiatives such as Young Futures Hubs.



# Conclusion



“I feel every young person should have this opportunity”  
– Hatch participant



**Over three years from 2022 to 2024, Hatch engaged 1,251 young people in innovative employability support.**

The programme provided vital in-work experience for over 850 young people, the majority of whom were not in employment, education or training at the start of the programme.



**Young people have testified that this experience has made a meaningful difference to their confidence, knowledge and ultimately their employability.**

This is backed up by quantitative data: while only 18% of young people were in employment, education or training (EET) before participation in Hatch, this expanded to 66% in EET following participation. Crucially, young people also enjoyed the programme – granting Hatch an ‘excellent’ Net Promoter Score<sup>12</sup> of +52.



**Youth work is a bridge between employers and young people.**

When youth workers are supported with adequate funding, training and employer engagement strategies, they are able to help young people effectively navigate the challenges of in-work placements. Youth workers are their supporters, advocates, guides and mentors – this is critical additional support to young people and ensures that work is both accessible and sustainable for them.



**Youth workers are also a vital support to employers hosting work placements.**

Many employers are happy to provide work experience placements to young people but may struggle to find the resources to offer wraparound support. The additional presence of a youth worker can provide practical help and a confidence boost that they are not alone in safeguarding a young person’s experience.



**There is no doubt the Hatch model can be scaled further to deliver supported work experience to thousands of young people.**





Hear about our scaling work in action by checking out [UK Youth’s Summer Jobs Programme](#) – an intervention that was built on learning from Hatch and is being independently evaluated through an efficacy trial.

Those interested in funding, delivering or supporting similar work can read the [best practice checklists](#) included in the next section.





# Best practice checklists – supported work experience programmes

Look out for more learning from the [Summer Jobs Programme](#) evaluation via the UK Youth website!





## Checklist for funders and programme commissioners/brokers/infrastructure organisations

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|    | <b>Budget generously for youth worker time</b>                              | Youth workers emphasized the benefits of having more time to develop strong working relationships with employers and to visit placement sites, gaining 'day in the life' insights that helped them to support young people.   |
|    | <b>Simplify communication and data collection</b>                           | Youth workers and placement hosts have a lot to juggle – make their lives easier by keeping communication snappy and data collection simple. Use data sharing systems such as CRMs where possible.  |
|  | <b>Provide flexibility wherever possible</b>                                | A curriculum with both 'core' and 'flex' elements allowed youth workers to adapt learning to young people's needs while the flexibility for young people to join any cohort in the delivery window increased retention. Flexibility for employers is also valuable – providing training in bite-size chunks can facilitate participation. |
|  | <b>Develop your own bank of employers to support delivery organisations</b> | A starter list of trusted and enthusiastic employers would help to reduce some of the burden of sourcing placement opportunities. The Hatch model of the funder providing the vast majority of placements worked well to avoid a lot of this friction.  |

## Checklist for youth workers

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|    | <b>Invest time in building relationships with employers</b> | Where youth workers were able to spend time getting to know and understand the workplace of placement hosts, placements were more successful and challenges could be more easily overcome. Face-to-face time was particularly effective for relationship building.   |
|    | <b>Adapt the programme to meet needs</b>                    | Where the programme allows, youth workers should feel comfortable adapting the programme to provide tailored support to young people, addressing specific needs such as travel anxiety, Right to Work documentation or understanding a paycheck.   |
|    | <b>Develop back-up plans with trusted employers</b>         | Delays caused by changes in placement host availability often lead to young people losing motivation, feeling let down and even dropping out of the programme. Having a back-up option with a trusted employer (or even your own organisation) can protect young people's engagement and allow them to complete the programme.   |
|  | <b>Have further pathways ready</b>                          | Maintaining momentum for a young person's employment journey is crucial. Having further opportunities available beyond the programme can support a young person to continue on a positive trajectory. Where this isn't possible, staying in contact through the occasional check-in call or inviting them to take part in other activities at your youth organisation can be enough to encourage them to keep going. |

## Checklist for work experience placement hosts

- 
- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|    | <b>Guarantee a supportive, inclusive workplace for young people</b> | For many young people this will be their first time in the workplace, for others it will be the first time they are returning after bad experiences or challenging times in their life. Ensuring they are well informed about what is expected of them and who they can go to for help will set them up for a successful placement and a better chance of a happy working life.   |
| <hr/>   |   |   |
|    | <b>Invest time in building relationships with youth workers</b>     | Youth workers are a crucial link to young participants and hold lots of knowledge about the specific young people they support as well as working with young people generally. Connecting with youth workers will likely facilitate the success of the placement and will kick off a working relationship that brings mutual benefit to your organisation and local young people. |
| <hr/>   |   |   |
|    | <b>Support staff engagement</b>                                     | Hosting a placement can be stressful for many staff who can't help but feel it is just another responsibility added to a never-ending to do list. Protect time and capacity for your staff to get involved with supporting placement attendees, to attend training and to engage with youth workers when needed.  |
| <hr/>   |   |   |
|  | <b>Communicate requirements and logistics early</b>                 | Some of the most stressful experiences for young people on the programme occurred when they didn't have the right documents, uniform or information to be able to start their placement. Check in with youth workers and young people as early as possible and run through a jointly created checklist to ensure everything is ready for the placement to start smoothly.         |

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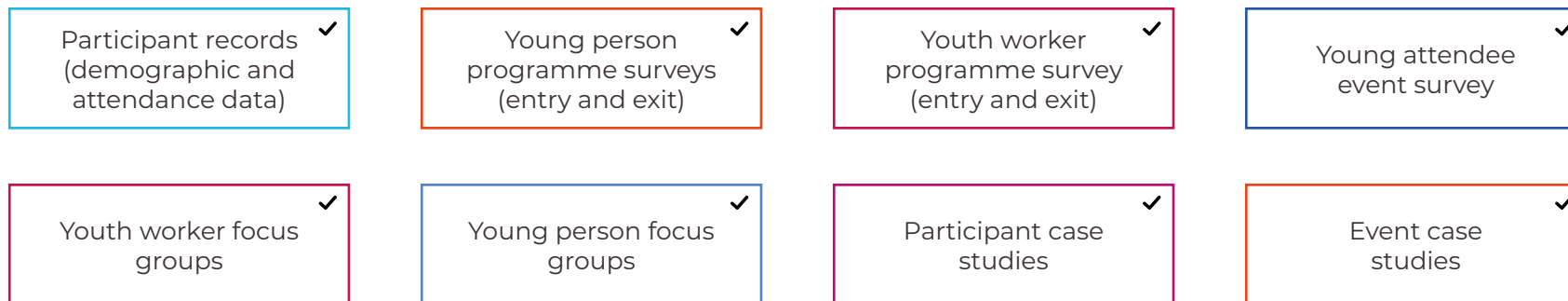
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# Appendix: Evaluation approach

While the specific evaluation tools and learning questions have evolved over the lifetime of Hatch, the aims of the evaluation have remained consistent – understanding the outcomes and experiences of young people and youth workers in order to iteratively improve the programme and inform future practice.

By Year 3, the evaluation relied on the following methods:



The evaluation has evolved over the years, with some tools being changed or removed to better serve the evaluation questions, to move to more standardised tools or to reduce the amount of required data collection. Some examples of tools included in Years 1 and 2 that were later removed:



In future iterations of Hatch we would amend the evaluation approach to further reduce the administrative burden on youth workers, in response to feedback that this amount of data collection was challenging. This might involve amending how data is collected, reducing the amount of data collected or using data collection software that can streamline processes.

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