

RSN Seminar: Young People in Rural Areas

Date: 2nd March 2022
Subject: Young People in Rural Areas
Chair: [Kerry Booth](#), Deputy Chief Executive, Rural Services Network
Host: Online Event via Zoom

Speakers

Speaker 1: Ben O'Shea, Project Lead - Wellbeing Practitioner for Children and Young People & **Alex Walker**, Operations Manager, [Young Somerset](#)
Speaker 2: James Wingerath, Commercial Director, [Youth Employment UK](#)

Learning Outcomes

Examples of Good Practice/Reports/Information

- Joseph Rowntree Foundation recently published the [UK Poverty Report 2022](#).
- [Youth Voice Census 2021](#) – Youth Employment UK's annual Youth Voice Census allows young people to share their voice on the experiences and services available to them throughout education and possible next steps.
- [Young Professional Programme](#) – an online platform that provides information, skills, and career support for young people.
- [Good Youth Employment Charter](#) – a great free toolkit for employers to use to make their businesses more flexible and friendly when seeking to employ young people. Employers can sign up by visiting Youth Employment UK website. They often share their insights via a newsletter which they distribute to everyone who signs up.
- [Youth Employment UK – Advice for Employers](#) – free resources for best practice in your organisation's youth recruitment, training, support, and development.

Key Learning Points

Young Somerset: Youth and Wellbeing Services

- [The Jigsaw Project](#) – offers one to one mentoring for young people who have had a recent hospital admission for their mental health difficulties or low emotional wellbeing with the goal of reducing hospital readmissions and overall social isolation young people experience. Young Somerset are currently working on expanding on this project.
- Alternative Education Provision – working to expand offerings alternative forms of engagement and education for young people struggling to engage in the “normative curriculum”.

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Rural Services Network

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- [Community Wellbeing & MHST Services \(Somerset based\)](#) – part of a national programme to improve access to psychological therapies for children and young people from 8 to 18 years old. Educational Mental Health Practitioners (EMHP) is part of the Mental Health Support Team (MHST). Delivered in partnership with CAMHS and working in schools who have signed up for the service. Similar services are available across other counties. Open access support provided by trained staff delivering Low Intensity Cognitive Behaviours Therapy (LICBT) in rural local communities. Designed to be used as early intervention service for common mental health issues.
- Community Wellbeing Practitioners (CWP) work within the community, GP surgeries, public buildings and non MHST schools. Providing services on a one-to-one basis, treatment delivered in a range of different ways, usually 6 to 8 sessions, each session lasting about an hour. We specialise in treating mild to moderate common mental health problems, we are not suitable for children with complex and unstable environments or situations.
- We provide open access service within Somerset where anyone can request support, self, parent, or professionals
- [Click here to find out how you can request support from Young Somerset.](#)

Youth Employment UK: Being a Youth Friendly Employer

- Youth Employment UK is a national not-for-profit social enterprise actively tackling youth unemployment. They work with young people across the UK as well as employers of various sizes too. Their main aims are:
 - Giving young people a voice on the youth employment issues that affect them.
 - Support young people on their journey to employment with a range of skills and careers support.
 - Support organisations to develop and be recognised for their youth friendly employment practice and connecting young people to those Youth Friendly Employers.
 - Providing expert insight across all youth employment policy areas.
- [The Youth Voice Census](#) is an annual survey run by Youth Employment UK. It acts as a temperature check of how young people aged 14–24 feel and gives young people the chance to share how they feel about a number of issues related to education, employment, training, work, and where they live.
- Youth Employment UK also has youth ambassadors and an ambassador board to which they report to. These ambassadors are young people in traineeships, entry level roles right the way through to graduate level. They also support young people with skills and career support they need in order to progress through a [Young Professional Programme](#) with career information and support which they can access online.
- [Careers Hub](#) – Youth Employment UK works with number of employers helping them promote various career opportunities available for young people on a national level. Through their Careers Hub, Youth Employment UK seeks to provide information for young people on 17 different sectors and the kind of roles

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and career opportunities available in those sectors. This hub also has a section where actual employers advertise roles and job opportunities, they have available for young people to apply now.

- [Good Youth Employment Charter](#) – has been developed in collaboration with a range of youth employment experts and young people. It aims to provide a framework to support, inspire and recognise all those employers who are committed to providing good quality opportunities to young people. It is a great free toolkit for employers to use to make their businesses more flexible and friendly when seeking to employ young people.
- Youth Employment UK also provides expert insight across all youth employment policy areas, and they share those insights [via their website](#). They also provide the secretariat for the [APPG for Youth Employment](#) working with MPs on various youth employment related matters. They also have strong working relationships with the [Department of Education](#), [Department of Work and Pensions](#) and [The Careers Enterprise Company](#).
- Youth Employment UK has also noticed a huge impact of Covid on young people's confidence, mental health skill-development and opportunities which is likely to have a long-term impact on these generations in the future.
- [Youth Voice Census 2021](#). Report's key findings: growing mental health concerns, catching up, accessing quality work, no place for young people. The census also highlighted that young people find it hard to find the right information about career opportunities and often do not know where to go to access this information. Another challenge they often face is lack of available digital devices to use, and even when they do have working devices, internet connectivity issues (especially in rural areas) pose a big challenge too.
- For more information about Youth Employment UK and their work, you may email them at info@youthemployment.org.uk.

Open Forum Discussion

- **Delegates highlighted the cuts to and loss of youth services across England and how this (as well as Covid) has had a great impact on young people and their feelings of isolation.** Young Somerset highlighted that one of the solutions they are working on as an organisation is looking for ways to capture the collective voice of young people across their area, make their findings academically credible and how they can report these findings to elected Government officials. They are also seeking to work with Young Somerset stakeholders, other organisations (i.e. UK Youth, National Youth Agency) as well as working with organisations in Cornwall, Devon, and Bristol to fight for more funding for youth services across England.
- **ASDAN – Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network.** Like small NVQ workbooks, foundation level accredited learning for young people in secondary education. They show applied learning and points gained can be used for college applications.
- Young Somerset staff have noticed a significant demand for mental health services during the pandemic and they believe the need for mental health

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services will see further increase over the next 5 years. Youth Employment UK have concurred that they have noticed this too.

- Delegates highlighted that another **rural challenge is the lack of competition in Youth Service providers** especially when local providers are very limited in choice.
- **Social Mobility in rural areas** was also discussed and the challenges it presents for young people living in and employers operating in rural areas. Linear career progression (promoting universities as the only option for higher education) discourages young people from looking at career opportunities available locally as well as disadvantages rural businesses from employing, training, and retaining valuable talent. Delegates discussed the importance of encouraging and signposting young people to various other career opportunities that are available to them after leaving school that does not necessarily require them to go to university. And the importance of making them aware of their local career opportunities.
- Nik Harwood, Chief Executive of Young Somerset has highlighted that “**rural areas are job rich but career poor**” and other challenges that young people face when going into employment. He also highlighted that young people these days are likely to have not 2-3 employers but more likely 2-3 different careers throughout their working lives. Therefore we must talk to young people not only about universities but also about non-linear pathways to job opportunities and careers and equip them to be resilient and agile for the future.
- Ben Colson MBE, Chair of [Bus Users](#), discussed **demand responsive transport (DRT)**. About 5-6 years ago Transport Focus (a government funded consumer body) undertook research about DRT. Their findings highlighted that young people do not find this form of public transport to be suitable due to its variability and inconsistency. Bus Users is a charitable organisation that works to highlight to Government that the key elements for transport for young people is to access colleges, six forms and apprenticeship places. We also particularly focus on highlighting that current legislation provides free transport for young people (up to the age of 16) in England. After that age, free transport is very much a discretionary service which local authorities decide on an individual basis. This poses a huge challenge for young people when accessing further education and employment.

Useful Links

- [RSN's Revitalising Rural Campaign Specific Policy Asks](#) of the Government is for fairer distribution of national resources to rural areas and more nuanced national policies. **There are 14 Chapters in the campaign; two of them look specifically at [Rural Further Education, Training and Skills](#) and [Rural Schools and Community Facilities](#).**
- You may be interested in reading our [Learning, Skills & Education Insight which includes an analysis examining overall effectiveness of state-funded schools inspected in England](#).

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- You may also find these links from [English Rural Housing Association](#) useful, as they highlight how important accessing affordable home is for young people in rural areas:
 - [A Young Farming Family Desperately in Need of an Affordable Home – Hear Their Story](#)
 - [Affordable Rural Housing Guide for NFYFC Members](#)
 - [“We Cannot Be More Thankful and Happy to Live In An English Rural Home”](#)
- **You may be interested to find out more about some of our RSN members:**
 - **UK Youth** plays a unique role in addressing the lack of investment into the youth sector. To find out more visit: <https://www.ukyouth.org/>
 - **Young Somerset** works in three key areas: youth work; alternative learning provision and enterprise; emotional wellbeing and mental health. To find out more visit: <https://www.youngsomerset.org.uk/>
 - **Youth Employment UK** is an independent, not for profit social enterprise founded to tackle youth unemployment. To find out more visit: <https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/>

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