



Supporting young people into work

A report for Community Links

Report for Community Links by

**Community Development Students
Intake 2008-09**

linksUK

Our purpose is to champion social change. We pioneer new ideas and new ways of working locally and share the learning nationally with practitioners and policy makers. As a result, we are recognised as national leaders in regeneration and social policy.

© Community Links 2009

Authors: Community Links' Community Development Students 2008 -2009

- ▶ Elizabeth Acosta
- ▶ Ana Fuentes
- ▶ Michelle Green
- ▶ Martini Kamara
- ▶ Etienne Oblado
- ▶ Femi Oguntomi
- ▶ Shahinur Rahman
- ▶ Mila Site
- ▶ Nojrul Tafador
- ▶ Su Huei Wych

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical or otherwise) without the advance consent, in writing, of both the copyright owner and the publisher. However, brief passages may be reproduced for non-commercial or training purposes provided the source is acknowledged and the publisher is informed.



Contents

Acknowledgements	4
Introduction	5
Methodology	6
Themes of the research	7
Findings	9
Recommendations	20
Conclusions	21
Appendix 1: About Community Links ‘New Deal for Young People’	22
Appendix 2: Questionnaire	24
Bibliography	28

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of all the students who carried out this research.

A special acknowledgment goes to Geraldine Blake, (LinksUK) for her help and support.

We would like to thank New Deal for giving us access to their students.

Thanks also go to Cwti Green, Doreen Jules-Lewis, and Barbara Luckhurst (course tutors) for their help and support.

The students involved in producing the report were:

- Elizabeth Acosta
- Ana Fuentes
- Michelle Green
- Martini Kamara
- Etienne Oblado
- Femi Oguntomi
- Shahinur Rahman
- Mila Site
- Nojrul Tafador
- Su Huei Wych

Introduction

East London has high levels of unemployment amongst young people. In Newham and Tower Hamlets, the population tends to be young (more younger people than older people). Educational achievement is low and unemployment is high. Both Newham and Tower Hamlets aim to reduce the numbers of unemployed young people.

Young people aged between 16 and 18 years of age who are not in education, employment or training (NEETS) are 20 times more likely to commit a crime and 22 times more likely to be a teenage parent. Youth unemployment is therefore an issue of concern for the whole community.

Since 1997, Community Links has been delivering New Deal programmes which support young unemployed people into work (see Appendix 1). The purpose of our research was to explore the support that young unemployed people need in order to access employment. We also wanted to find out what kind of service Community Links was providing to young unemployed people, as well as what other services are available to them.

The young people we interviewed were based in Newham and Tower Hamlets, aged between 16 and 24 and not in employment. We wanted to understand the kind of work young people would like to find, to identify the barriers young people face in finding work, to explore with them the support they need to move into employment, and to identify possible solutions and new projects or services.

Some of our interviews were conducted with young people using Community Links New Deal, and some were conducted by the students with friends and family and in places where young people are available (for example colleges).

Our report will focus on the methods that were used to collect our data and will highlight the main findings and themes of the research. It will then draw conclusions and propose recommendations.

Methodology

The focus of our research was on young people and unemployment in Tower Hamlets and Newham. We wanted to find out the young people's attitudes to unemployment, their experience of work, and what they saw as the barriers to finding work.

Originally we had intended to have half the interviews carried out at Community Links New Deal, and the other half with friends and family, so that two different groups were interviewed. In the event we interviewed less than a sixth of the young people we were targeting at New Deal. Our team then compensated for this by interviewing more friends and family, also young people in places where they are to be found (for example colleges).

As our main focus was on young people, we decided to carry out face to face questionnaires (Appendix 2). This was so that we would get more reliable information and we could go into more depth. In order to do this, we used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative questions in our questionnaires to gain statistics and young peoples' own opinions. Using the quantitative research we were able to obtain statistics. In addition, the views and comments received from the qualitative questionnaires backed up our results from the quantitative questionnaires and gave us more information.

Geraldine Blake, a researcher from LinksUK, had already devised the questionnaires. The whole group viewed and amended these by testing them out on each other. We then made any improvements that were needed, for example adding or taking out questions, and checking to make sure that the questions were not too long or too boring. Once the whole group decided that the questionnaire was to a satisfactory standard, the final draft was printed off and that was our final questionnaire. Finally, we tested out the questionnaires on each other again to make sure that they would be relevant and interesting. As well as the questionnaires, we took with us some notes on standard industrial classification to help us answer queries from the young people.

We conducted the questionnaires with the different groups of young people. We did this sensitively and with a soft approach as we didn't interview anyone who didn't want to participate. Everyone who was interviewed was a willing participant, and we found that this was a subject where young people often had strong views and were willing to express them. The fact that many of our interviewers were young and often knew the young people also helped in carrying out the interviews in an appropriate manner.

The response rate consisted of 79 young people, 12 from New Deal, and the overall outcome represented a good sized sample.

Themes of the research

The following themes came from the research:

When asked what work they would like to do, 16% of the young people, said “anything”. This could be because they were desperate for a job, but it could also be because they didn’t know what they wanted to do.

For example, a couple of the young people out of the eight who gave more specific answers felt they had special interests, for example art and fashion, but they did not know what to do with their interest.

“Anything because I don’t really know what I want to do. I like fashion but I wouldn’t know what to do with that either.”

“I would love to do art but would not know where to start, so I guess I would have to say teaching assistant.”

Other young people made similar statements:

“I like organising dances and other social classes”

“I enjoy helping people”

“I like animals so probably with them”

They also may not know how to take it any further, and to move from an interest to finding a job to do with that interest.

When asked about barriers to work, 29 answers were given. Several young people have problems with language and literacy.

“I find the application form to be very complicated”

“I’m not great at reading and writing and I feel embarrassed about it”

There was also a feeling that because people were young they were not taken seriously enough and they were not paid enough.

“A lot of the recruitment agencies do not have enough roles for junior or trainee staff”

“People at the centre are not helpful and do not take me seriously”

“Employers don’t always trust young people – inexperience”

“If you too young the money is not good, so it puts you off working”

A couple of the young people also felt that they were not encouraged to work by their families.

“I live with my parents and they pay for most things”

“No one is pushing me to work”

When asked what would help them to find work, **more education and more work experience** were seen as important for the 26 young people who responded to this.

“I need education and work experience”

“To find a work placement for experience”

Several of the young people expressed the need for **more intensive support**.

“I need reading and spelling help because of my special needs”

“One-to-one advice”

“More personal support”

A couple of the young people felt that they needed **more financial support**.

“Good pay would make me want to work more”

“The Job Centre to give me some benefits if I come back to college to finish my NVQ”

More advertising was seen as helpful.

“More adverts and awareness of opportunities for students”

“Distribute job adverts to people’s houses”

When asked about support they had received from **Community Links projects**, six out of the eight answers given were positive.

“The course has been helpful as it has improved my English”.

“It has been useful to get to know another language”.

“It gave a lot of help”.

“Community Links New Deal provided support to employment”.

“It’s good for support skills”.

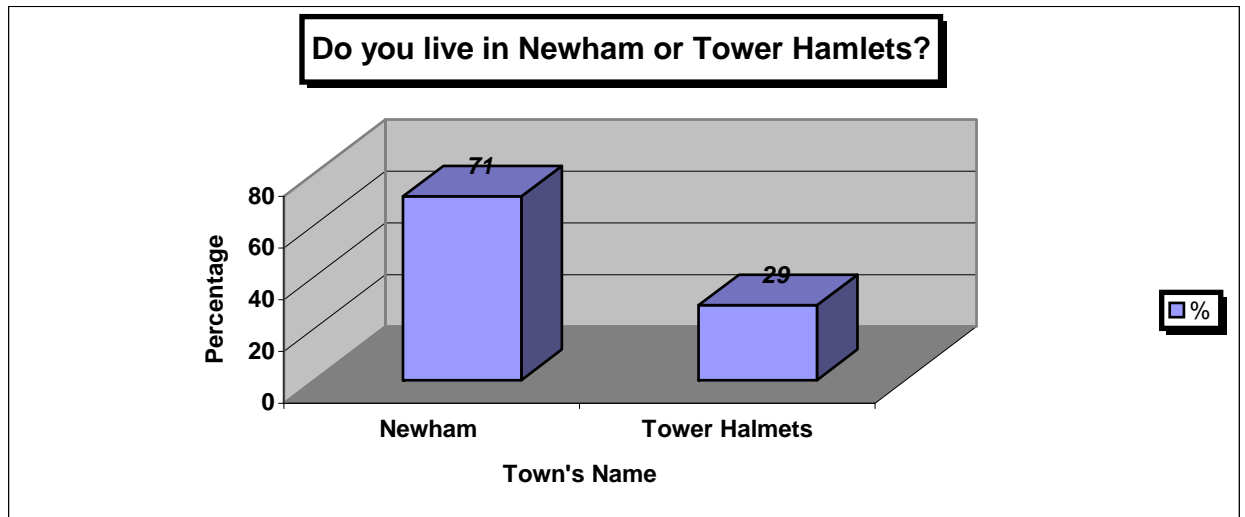
“New Deal tells us about job opportunities and gives us access to job advertisements”.

Findings

N.B. Not all the questions from the questionnaire (see appendix 2) have been presented here.

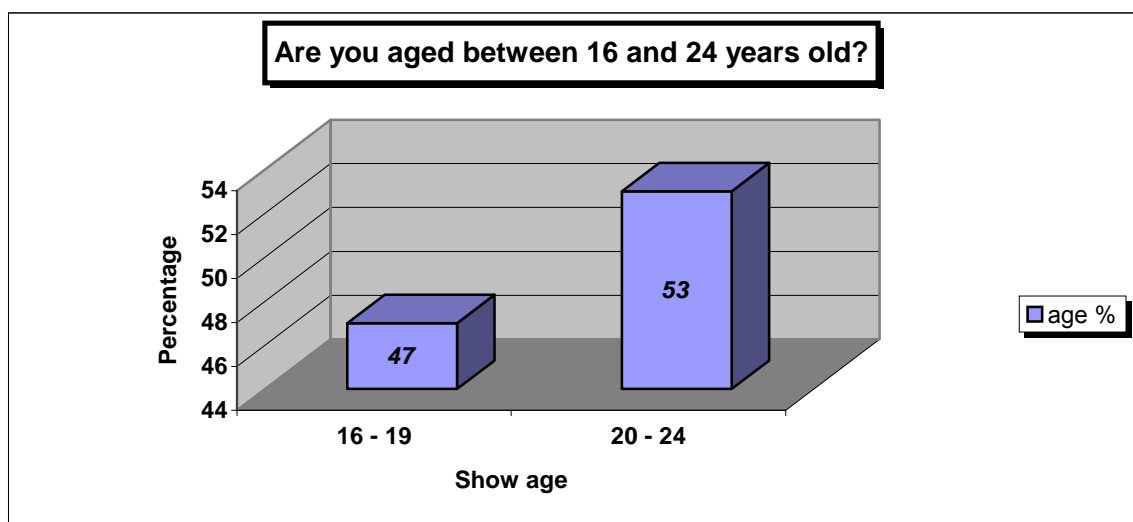
Section 1: Qualifying Question

Question 1 – Do you live in Newham?



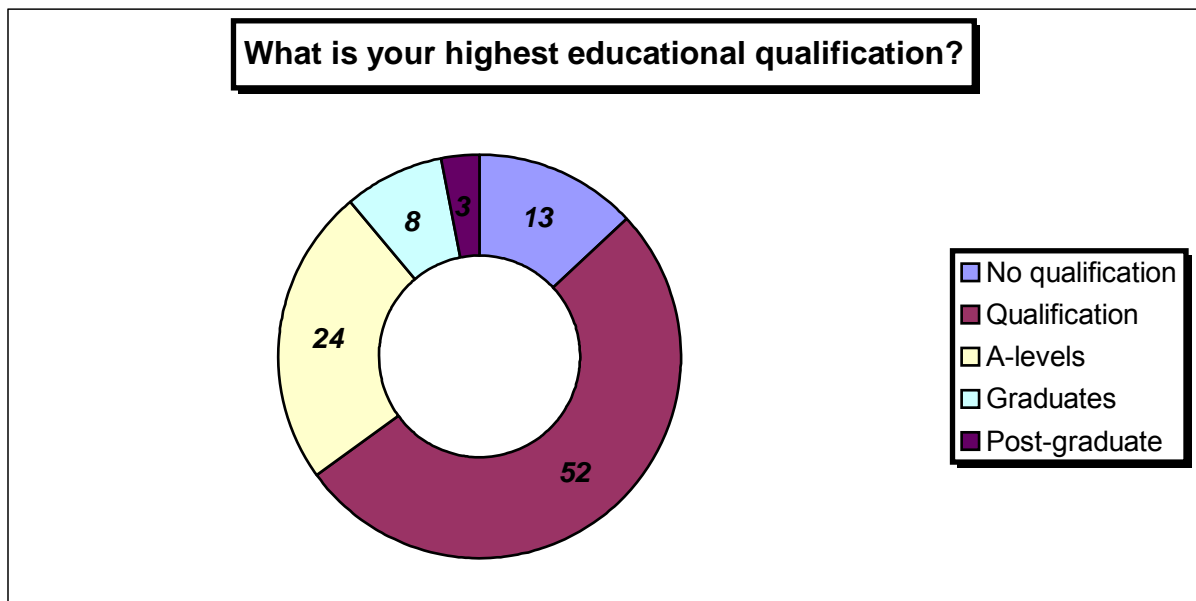
Of the young people we interviewed, 71% live in Newham and 29% in Tower Hamlets. This could reflect where those who were carrying out the research live.

Question 2 – Are you aged between 16-24 years old?



47% were aged between 16 -19
53% were aged between 20 -24

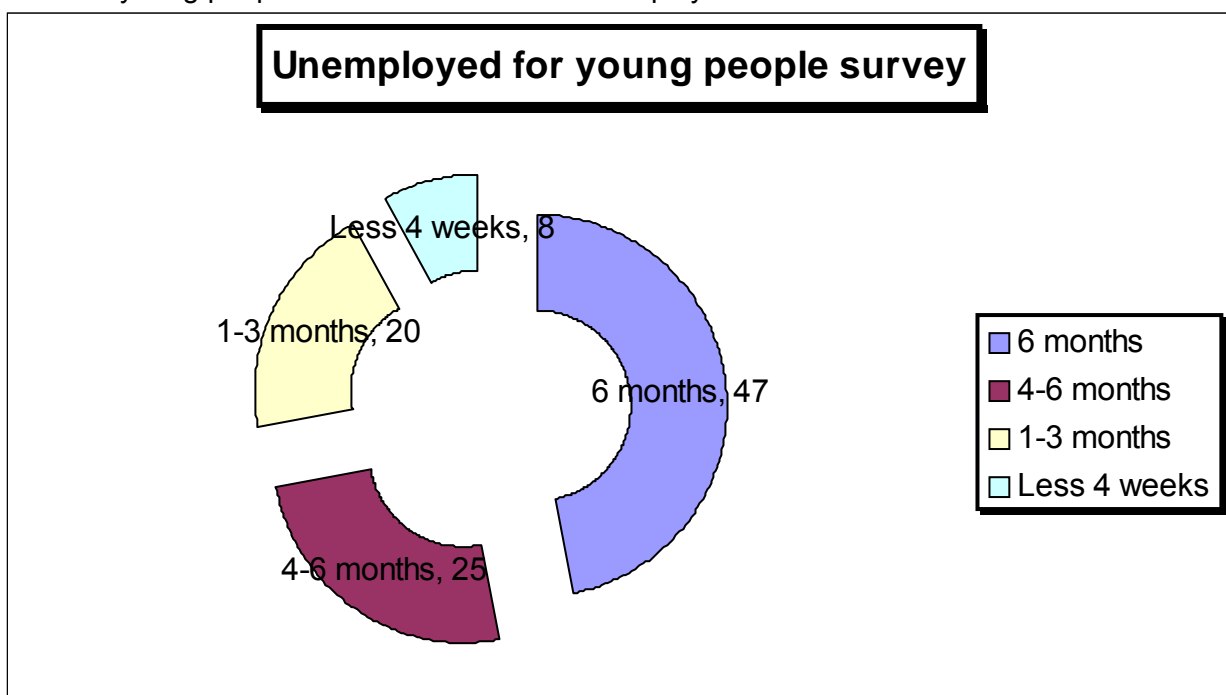
Section 2: Your Current Situation
Question 3 – Educational Qualifications



13% had no qualification
52% had got a school qualification (GCSE/NVQ1/NVQ2)
24% had got A-levels
8% were graduates
The remaining 3% were post-graduate and other.

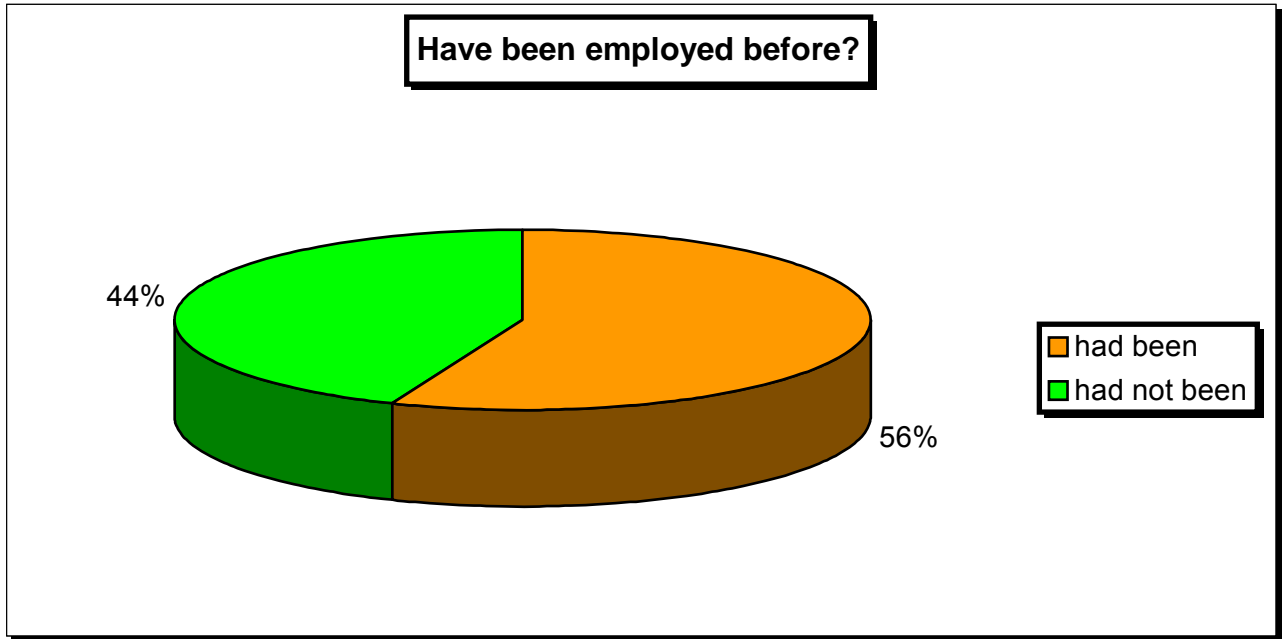
Question 4 & 5 – Employment Status and Length of Unemployment

All of the young people we interviewed were unemployed



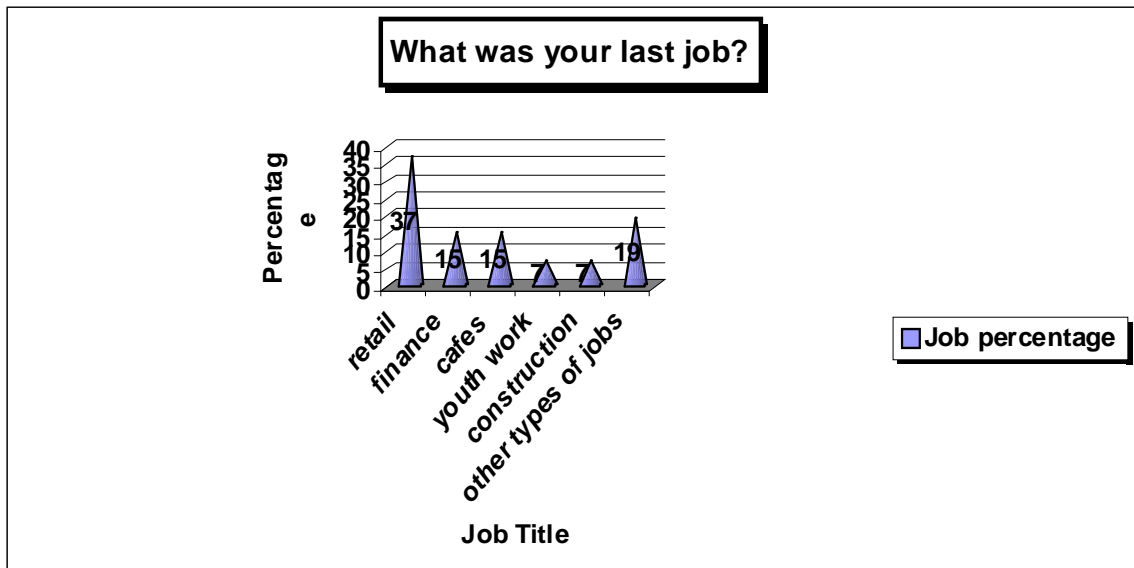
47% of the young people had been unemployed for more than 6 months
 25% has been unemployed for 4 to 6 months
 20% had been unemployed for 1 to 3 months
 8% had been unemployed for less than 4 weeks

Question 6a – Employment History



There are 56% who had been employed before, but 44% had not been employed before.

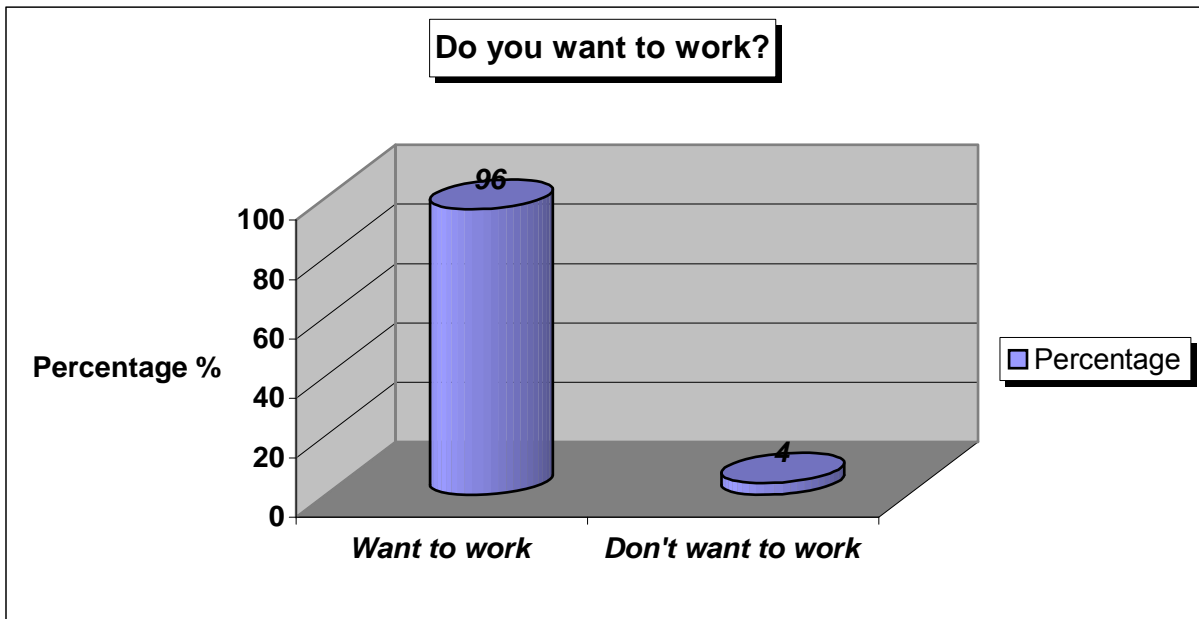
Question 6b - last job



37% had worked in retail
 15% had worked in finance
 15% had worked in cafés
 7% had worked in youth work
 7% had worked in construction
 19% had done other types of jobs, for example factory work, childcare, cleaning.

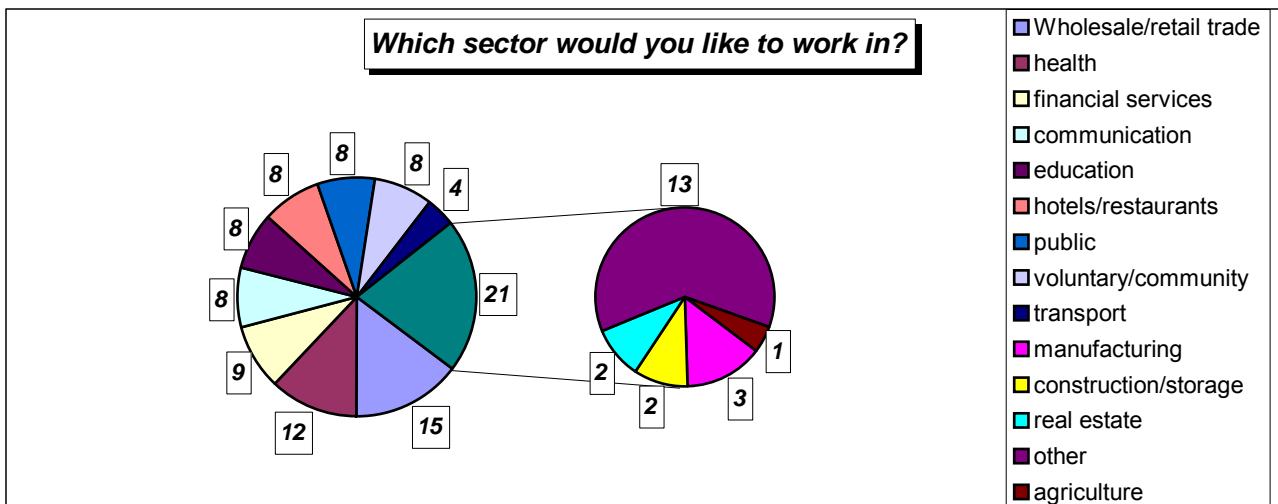
Section 3: Your Employment Hopes

Question 7 – Do you want to work?



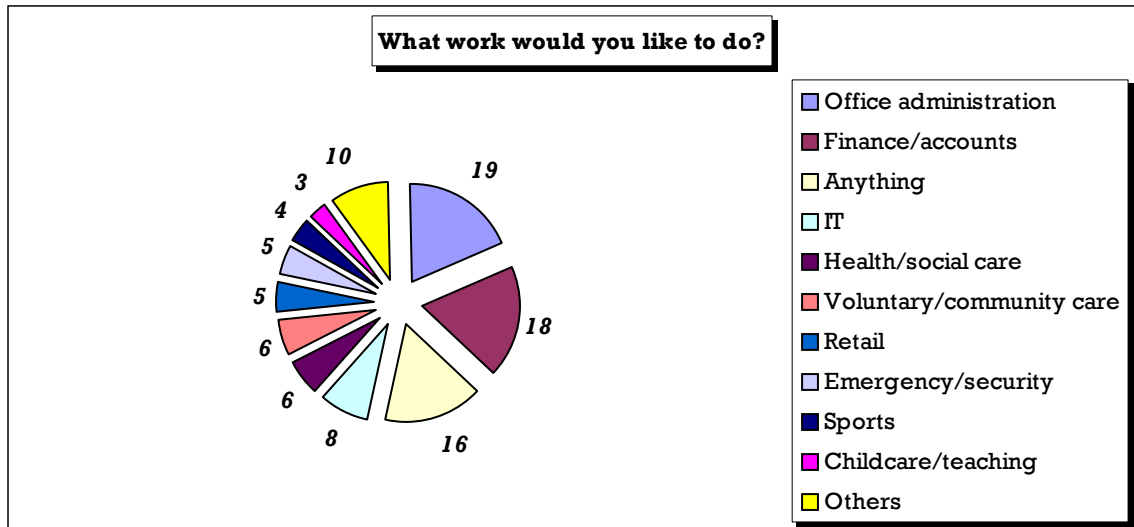
96% said they wanted to work and 4% did not want to work.

Question 8 – Which sector?

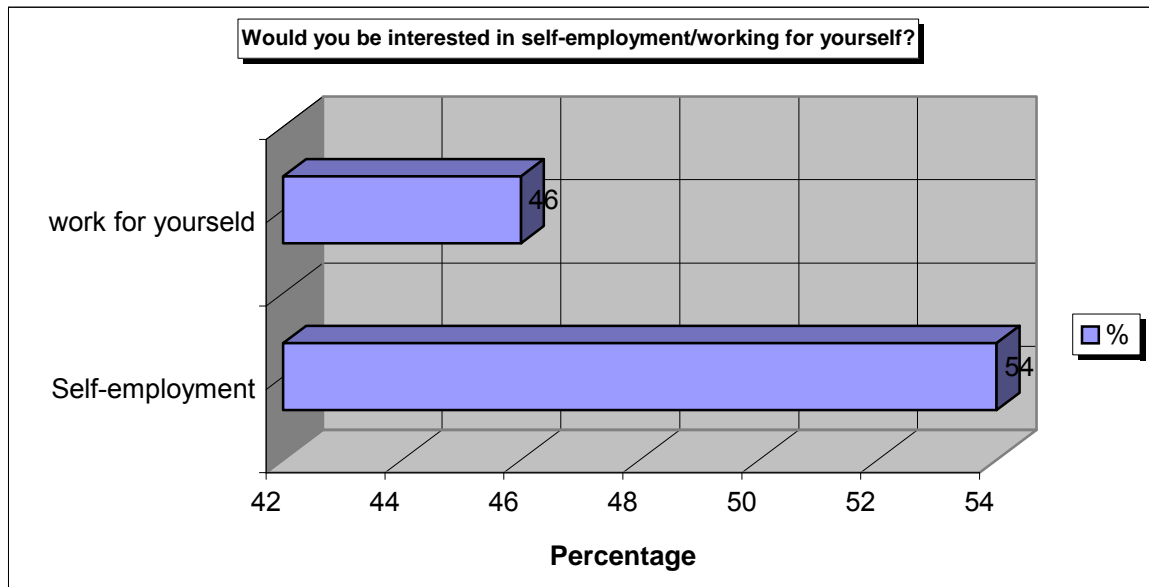


- 15% said the wholesale and retail trade
- 12% said health
- 9% said financial services
- 8% said communication
- 8% said the voluntary and community sector
- 4% said transport
- 3% said manufacturing
- 2% said construction and storage
- 2% said real estate
- 13% said other and less than 1% said agriculture

Question 9 – What work would you like to do?

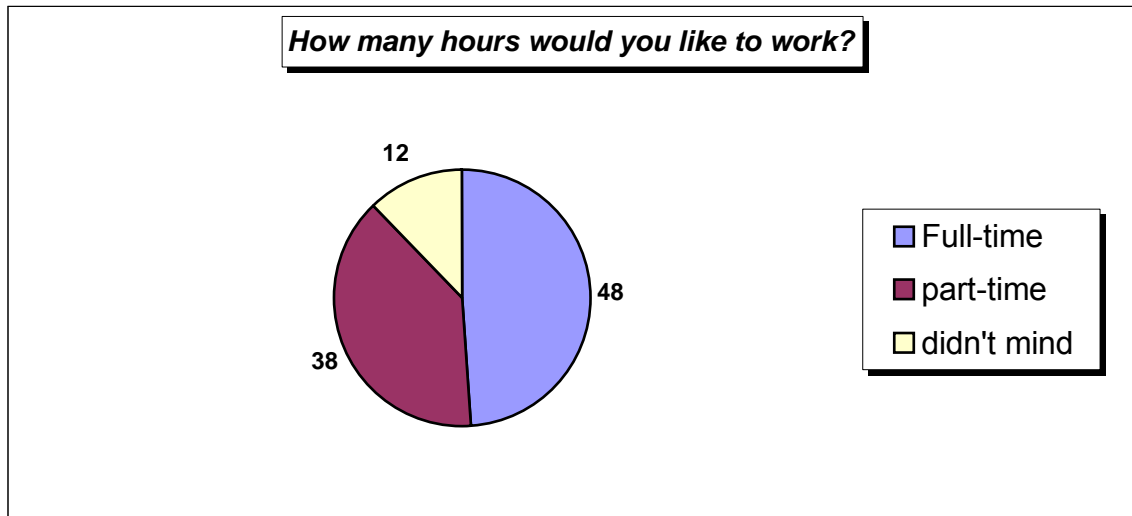


Question 11 – Work for someone else or self-employment?



54% said they would be interested and 46% were not interested.

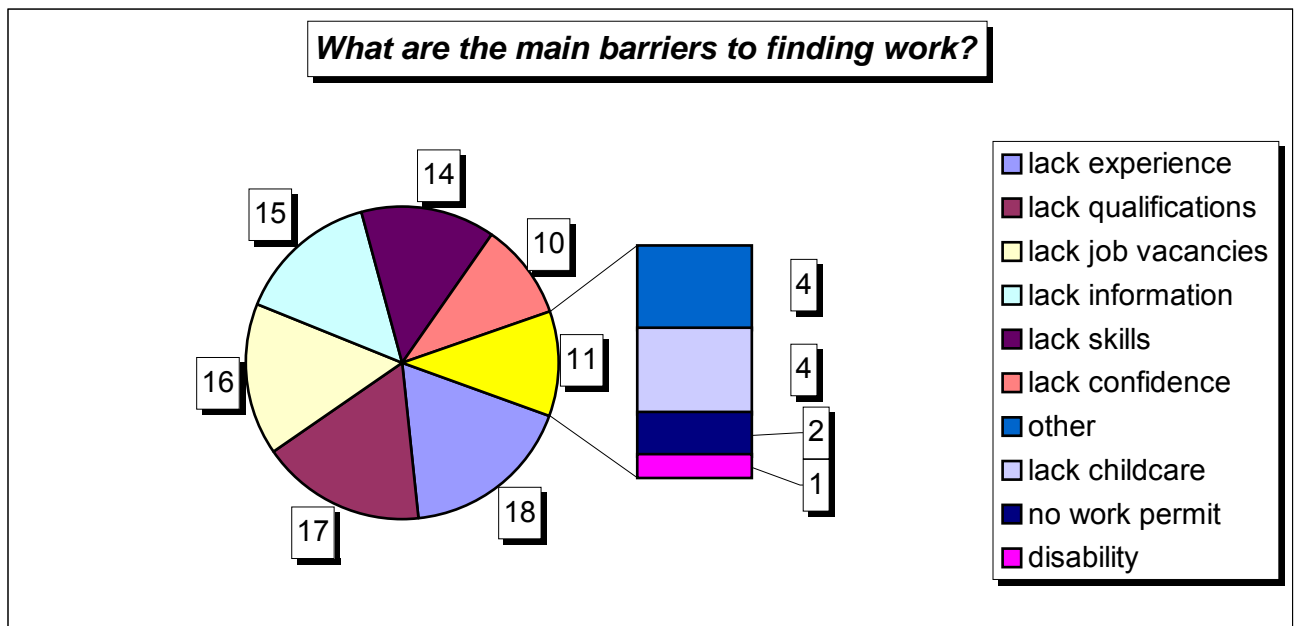
Question 12 – Hours you'd like to work?



48% wanted to work full-time
 38% wanted to work part-time
 12% didn't mind

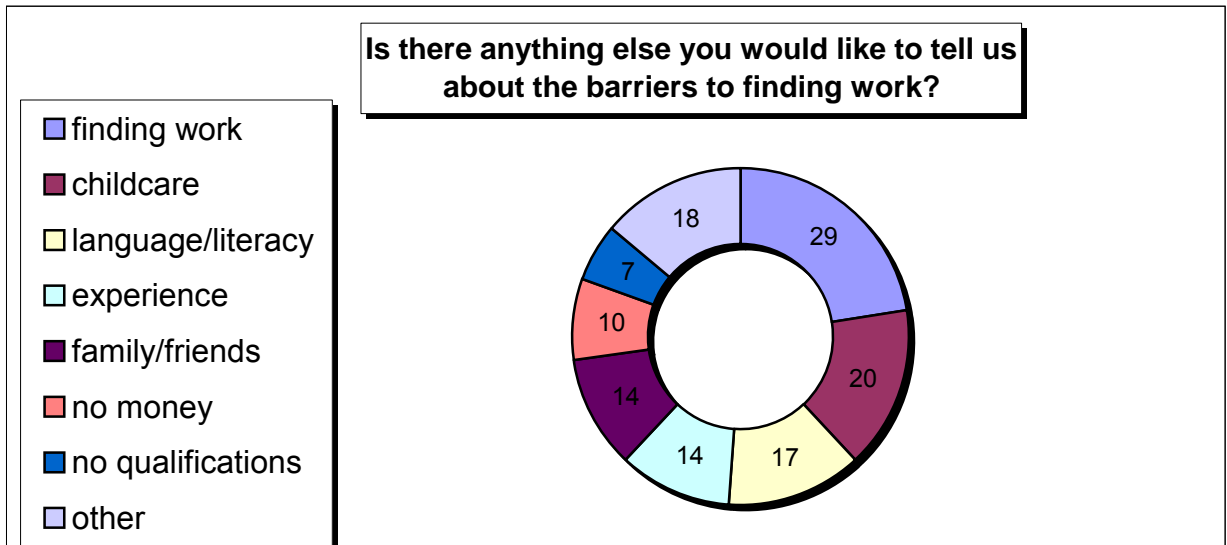
Section 4: Support

Question 15 – Barriers to finding work?



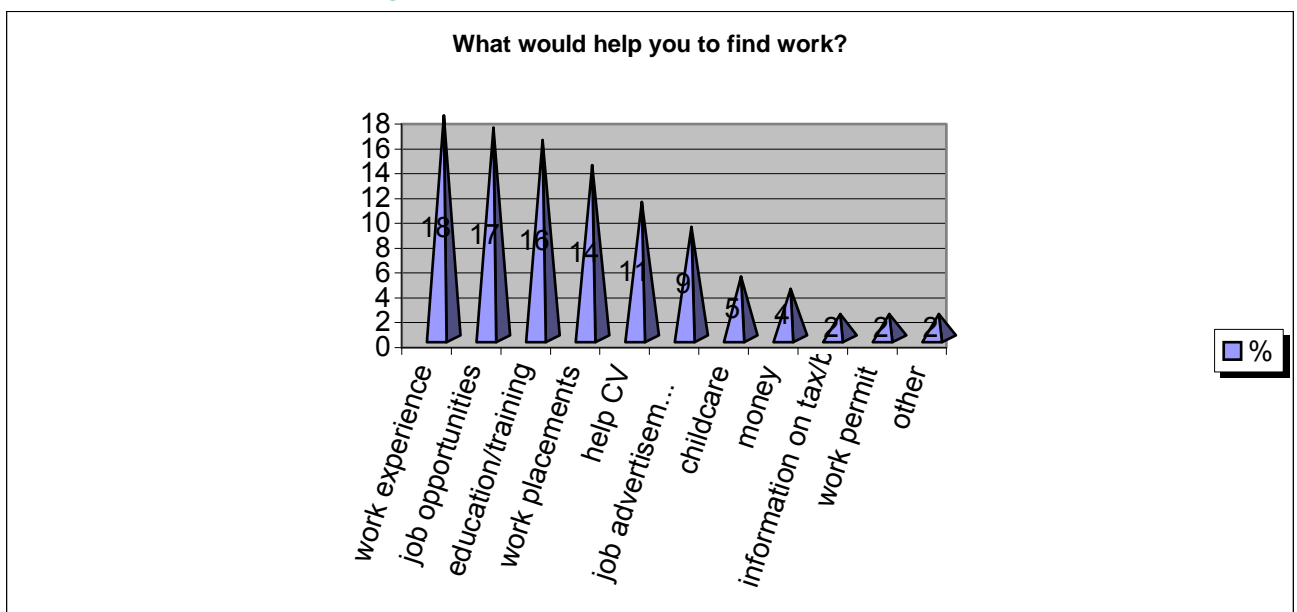
18% said lack of experience
 17% said lack of qualifications
 16% said lack of job vacancies
 15% said lack of information
 14% said lack of skills
 10% said lack of confidence
 4% said other
 4% said lack of childcare
 2% said no work permit/NINO and less than 1% said disability.

Question 16 – anything else about barriers?



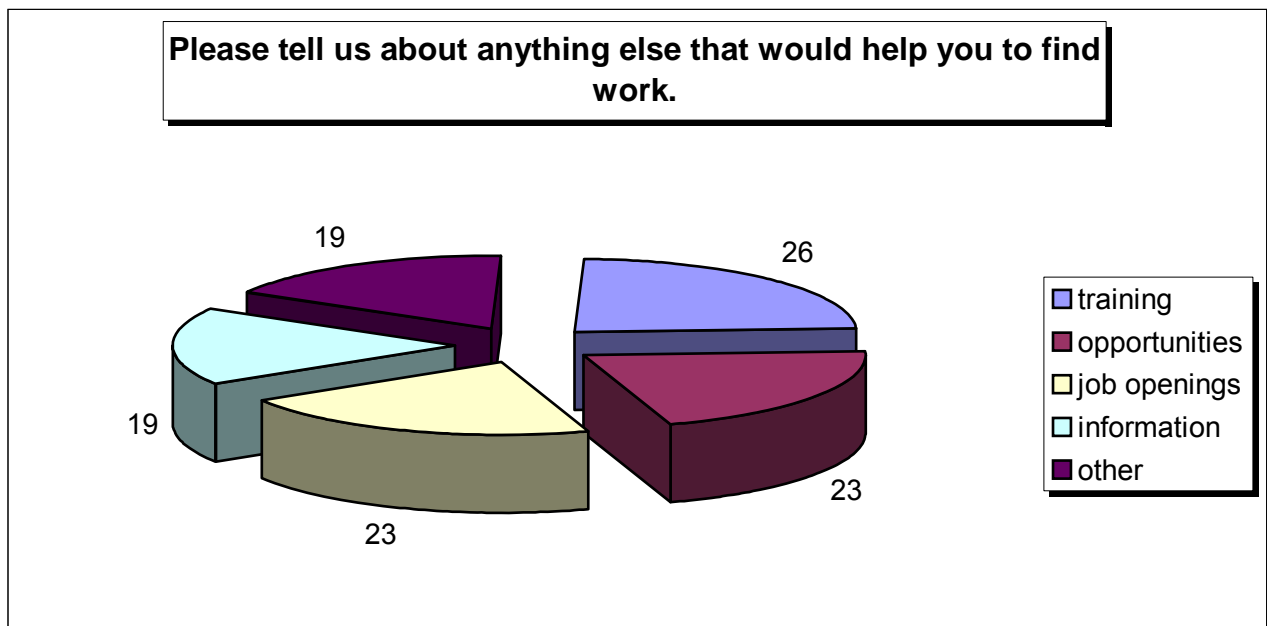
The 18% of other reasons included having a criminal record, location and time.

Question 17 – Help with finding work?



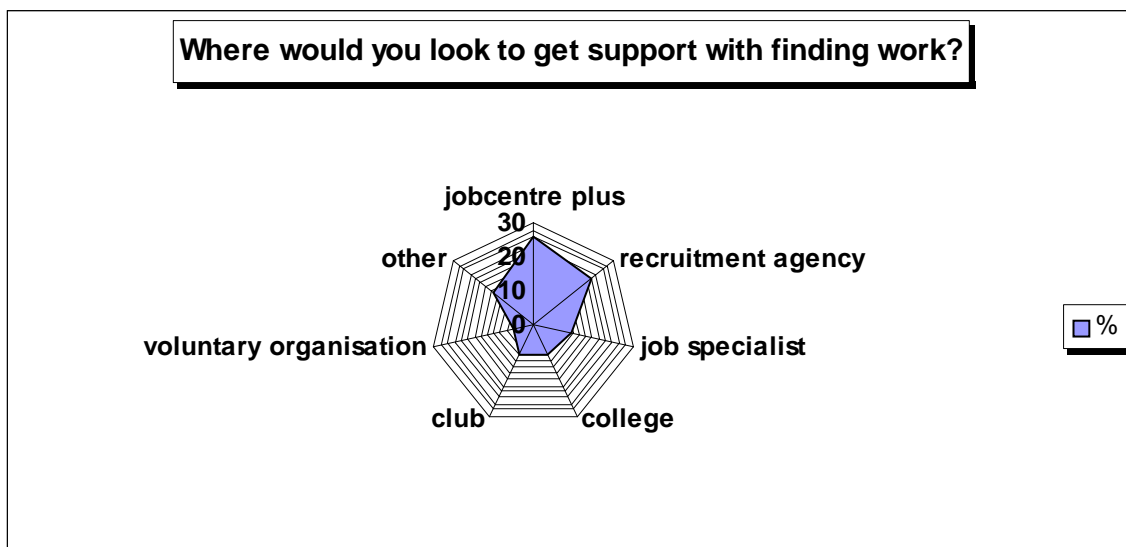
2% was other and included a loan to start a business

Question 18 – anything else about help finding work?



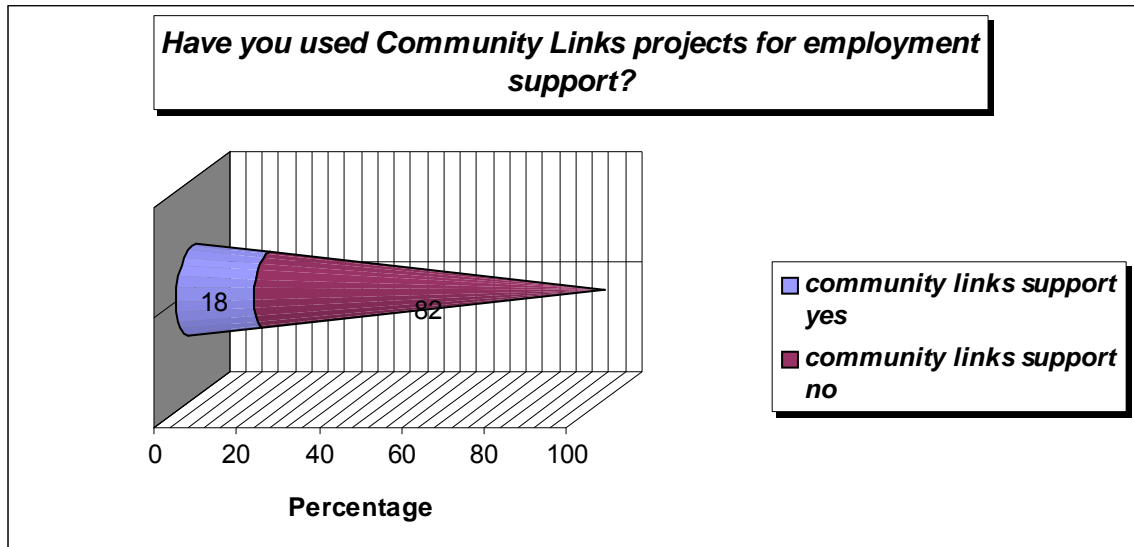
16% was other and included experience and childcare.

Question 19 – where you'd get support?



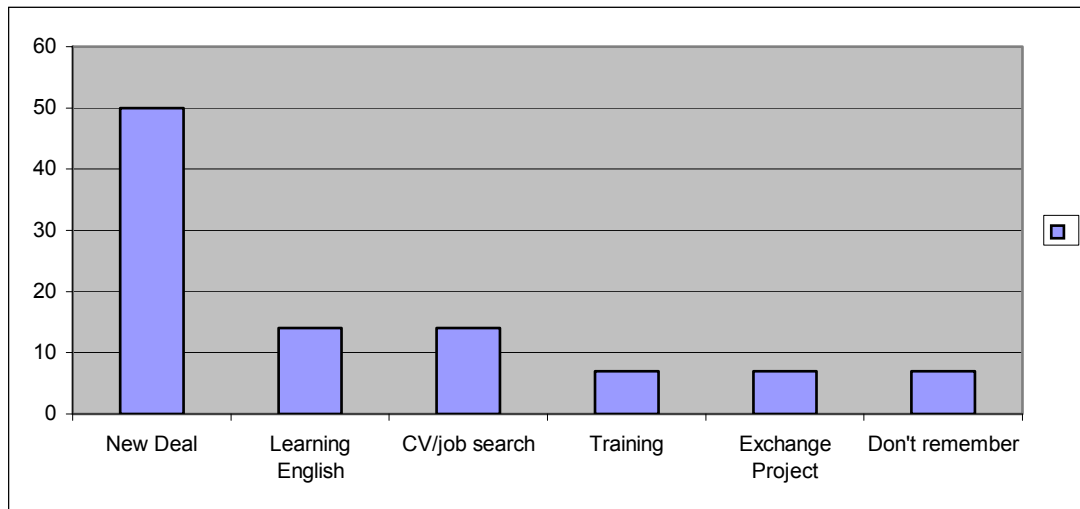
15% was other and included university, school, and religious organisations

Question 20 – have you used Community Links project for employment support?



Most of young people were not receiving employment support from Community Links projects.

Question 21a – if yes, what type of support from Community Links?



There were 14 answers given.

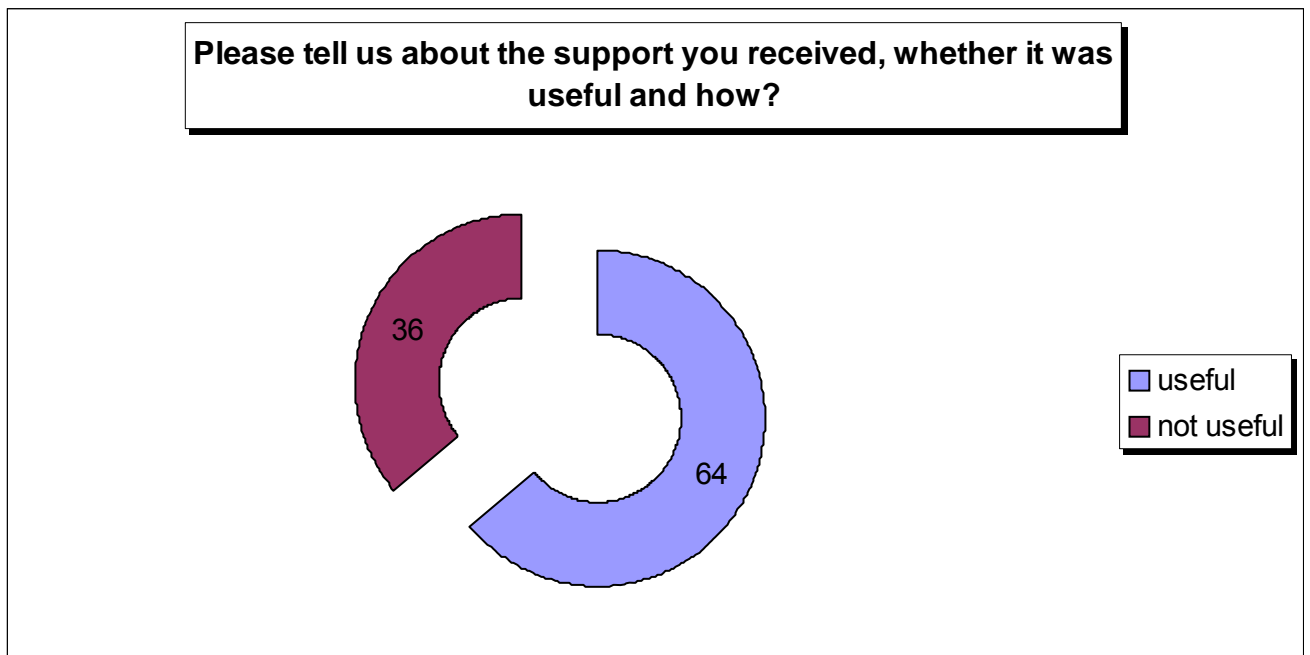
7 people said New Deal

2 said learning English

2 said CV and job search support

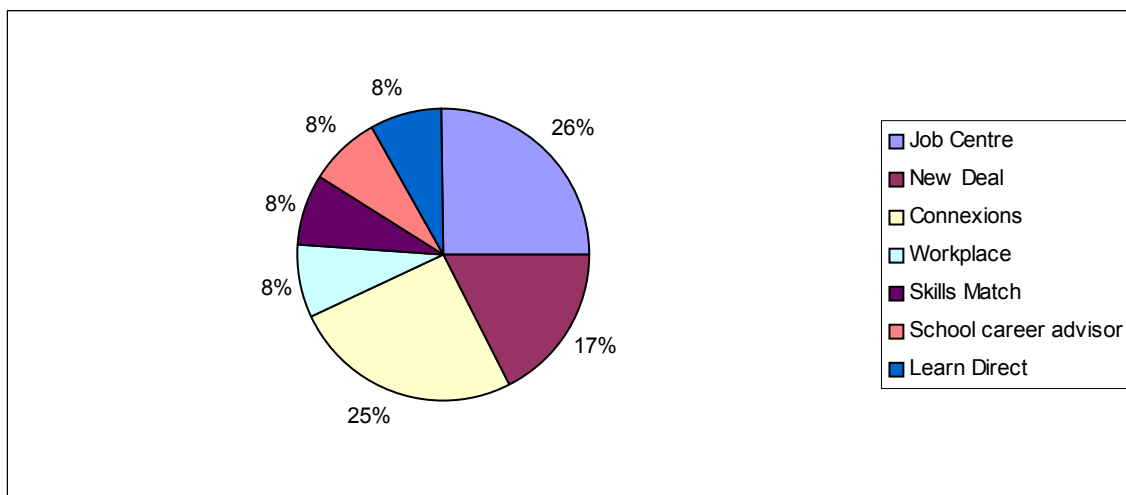
3 gave varying answers including training and the Exchange Project

Question 21b – was it useful?



14 were given the answers, 9 said it was useful, and 5 said it was not useful.

Question 22 – have you sought support from any other agency?



12 people gave an answer to this question

3 said Connexions had been useful

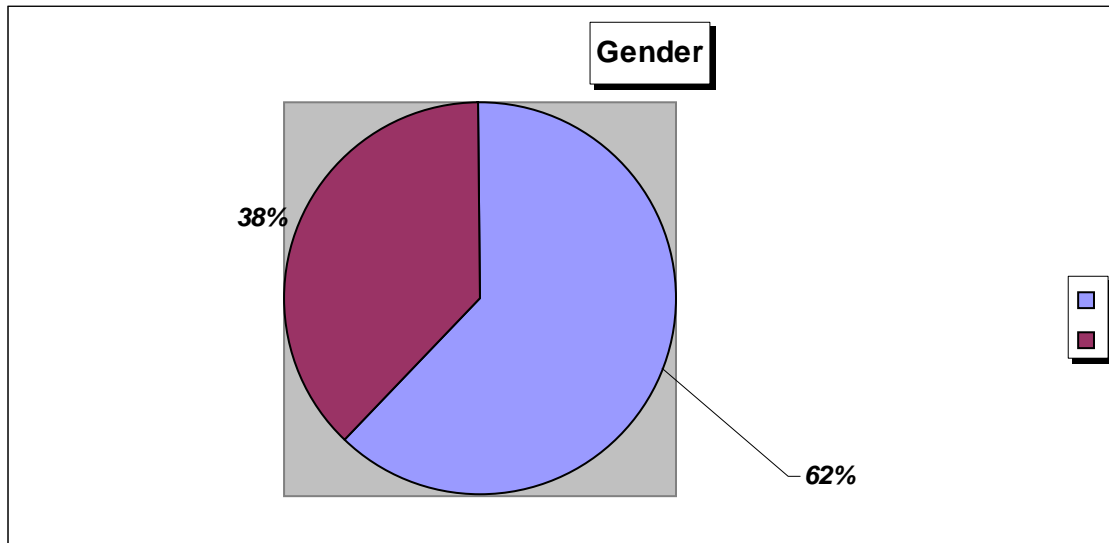
3 said the Job Centre had been useful

2 said that New Deal had been useful

4 mentioned Learn Direct, Skills Match, the workplace and the schools career advisor

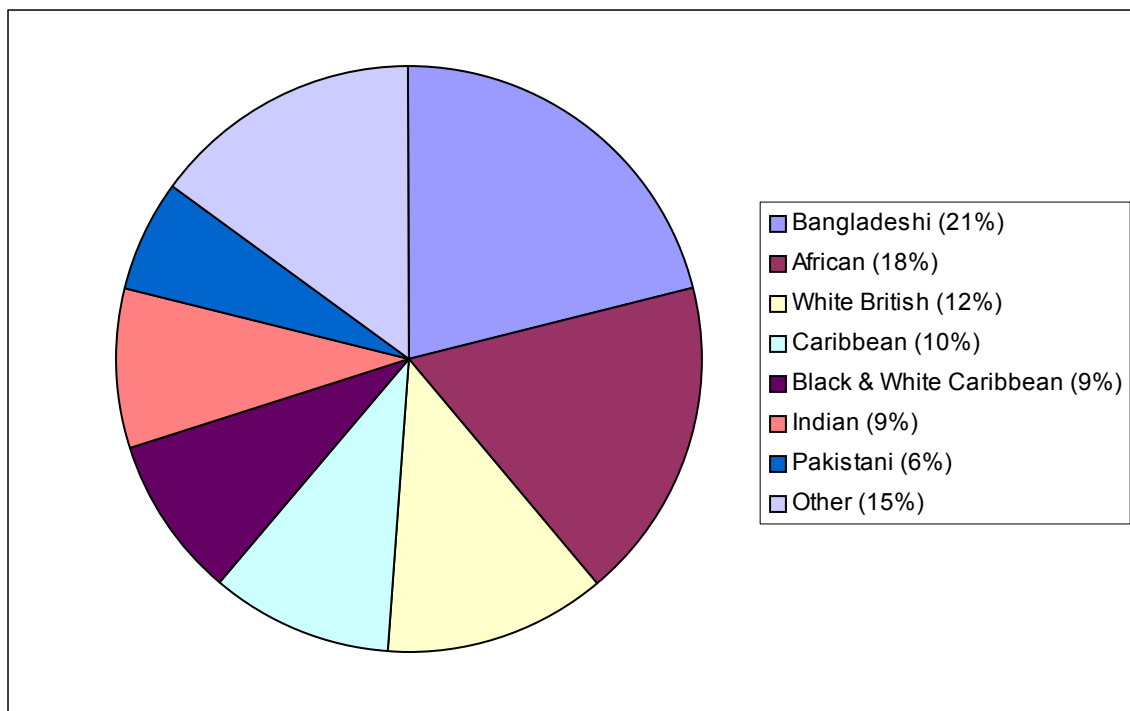
Section 5: About You

Question 23 – Gender



62% of those who answered were male.
38% were female.

Question 27 – Ethnicity



The other 15% was made up of Chinese, White and Black African, Eastern European, White and Asian, Portuguese and European. This was a very diverse group which maybe reflected the diversity of the students who carried out the survey.

Recommendations

The group would like to make the following recommendations from the research based on supporting young people into work.

There should be more opportunities given to help young people to get employed by government agencies, for example Jobcentre and New Deal. They should advertise more and reach out into the community more.

There should be more organised events by the Government for young people to go to, to get information about work for example Job Fairs.

There should be more opportunities for young people to get work experience, not just at school. These opportunities could be offered by agencies such as Community Links, New Deal and Jobcentres, to all school leavers.

All Government agencies should work together and be aware of what each other is doing in order to keep track of young people's involvement in finding work.

All Government education initiatives should be monitored regularly in order to ensure that they are working effectively and meeting the needs of the young people. New and more relevant initiatives should be tried in order to provide more flexible ways of gaining qualifications while at school. Careers guidance should help young people to think about their interests and what kind of job would really interest them.

Workplaces and work agencies should take the skills and contributions of young people seriously.

There should be more frequent questionnaires to collect information on progress being made for both agencies and young people.

There should be more part-time job opportunities as well as full-time job vacancies, and more job share vacancies to provide opportunities and a flexible working pattern to a wider range of young people.

More and wider research could be collected to gather more specific and detailed information regarding employment targeted at young people.

Weaknesses from young people and government agencies should be identified to provide a better service for both groups of people.

Community Links could try different strategies in order to get to a wider youth audience about their services.

Conclusions

From our research we have reached the following conclusions.

Almost half the young people interviewed had been unemployed for more than six months. This seems to be a worrying statistic given the number of Government initiatives designed to get young people into work.

This is particularly interesting given that 96% of the young people interviewed said that they wanted to work. In spite of this, almost half had not been employed before.

Of those who wanted to work, more than a third wanted to work part-time. Slightly more than half said they would be interested in being self-employed. This may reflect changing attitudes to work.

Regarding educational qualifications, more than half of the young people had the minimum of qualifications. Less than a quarter had A-levels. Over a tenth had no qualifications. Again, this seems to be a matter of concern given the number of Government initiatives on education.

The barriers to finding work expressed were lack of qualifications and skills, lack of job vacancies and information, and lack of experience and lack of confidence.

The young people said that what would help them to find work would be work experience and work placements, more job opportunities, and further education and training, also more emphasis on one to one support. Some of the young people felt as though they needed more financial support.

When asked where they would look to get support with finding work, slightly over a quarter said Jobcentre Plus, and just over a fifth said a recruitment agency.

Of those who used Community Links projects, 50% used New Deal, and 64% said the support which was given was useful. However, only a fifth of respondents answered this question.

Of the 12 who answered when asked what other agencies had given them useful employment support, a quarter said Connexions and a quarter said the Job Centre.

It would seem that for some young people will do anything for work. This might reflect desperation for a job, but might also reflect that they don't know how to develop any interests they might have into a job or career.

There was also a feeling amongst some of the young people that they were not taken seriously by agencies and workplaces if they were young.

Appendix 1: About Community Links 'New Deal for Young People'

In 1997, the government launched New Deal for Young People programme, aimed at 18-24 year olds who have been claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) for six months or more, and supporting them to move into work.

For last 11 years Community Links has provided 'New Deal for Young People' in east London. We have a '*DWP New Deal Prime Contract*' which covers Newham and Tower Hamlets. Community Links' New Deal Team provides a variety of first rate, quality driven employment and support programmes to equip long-term unemployed local people with necessary life / vocational skills, helping to progress them to gain and remain in full time, sustainable work.

Community Links has a highly regarded track record of delivery, consistently topping performance league tables.

- ▶ From July 2006 – June 2007 Community Links was the best performing New Deal Prime Contractor in the Jobcentre Plus London and South East Region; and third best performing in the UK.
- ▶ From April 2008 – November 2008 Community Links has been confirmed as the best performing Prime Contractor in London.

Over 3,000 young people start on our New Deal programme every year. Between 150-200 clients are at our Upton Park site in Newham, at any one time during the year; and between 75-100 clients are at our Westferry site in Tower Hamlets, at any one time during the year.

People who do not find work after their time with us return to Jobcentres and are either re-referred back to us or to another provider (this is the majority of people), or they sign off benefits to move into further training and education, paid work at a later date, cash-in-hand work or unknown destinations.

Our activities in providing full time "New Deal Options" include:

- ▶ 3 month interventions combining jobsearch, advice and guidance, work experience placements, employability training, job specific training units, financial support, into work guidance and support
- ▶ 6 month interventions combining all of the above with the addition of literacy and numeracy training and support for those with basic skills and/or ESOL needs
- ▶ Shorter interventions (up to 2 weeks) combining intensive job-search, advice and guidance and employability training sessions

All the above options are delivered to our clients, who are expected to attend full time, Mon-Fri (6 hours per day). The majority of options are mandatory (i.e. clients risk benefits sanctions if they do not attend). The programme receives referrals from the six Jobcentre Plus offices across Newham and Tower Hamlets.

For more information see:

www.community-links.org/local-services/employment-and-training

SECTION 3: YOUR EMPLOYMENT HOPES																
7.	<p>Do you want to work?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If you answered No, please say why?</p>															
8.	<p>How many hours would you like to work?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Full time <input type="checkbox"/> Part time <input type="checkbox"/> Don't mind</p>															
9.	<p>What work would you like to do? <i>(prompt to ask about ambition, preferred occupation, interests, what you would like to be doing in one year etc)</i></p>															
10.	<p>Which sector would you like to work in? <i>(can tick more than one box)</i></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Construction</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Financial services</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Hotels and restaurants</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale & retail trade</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Communication</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Health</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Transport and storage</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Real estate</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Public sector</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary & Community</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Education</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing	<input type="checkbox"/> Construction	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial services	<input type="checkbox"/> Hotels and restaurants	<input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale & retail trade	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Transport and storage	<input type="checkbox"/> Real estate	<input type="checkbox"/> Public sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary & Community	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing	<input type="checkbox"/> Construction														
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial services	<input type="checkbox"/> Hotels and restaurants	<input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale & retail trade														
<input type="checkbox"/> Communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Transport and storage														
<input type="checkbox"/> Real estate	<input type="checkbox"/> Public sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary & Community														
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Other															
11.	<p>Would you be interested in self employment / working for yourself?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>															
SECTION 4: SUPPORT																
12.	<p>What are the main barriers to finding work? <i>(you can tick more than one)</i></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of skills</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of qualifications</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of experience</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of job vacancies</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of confidence</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of information</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> No work permit/NINO</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of childcare</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Disability</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other.....</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of job vacancies	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of confidence	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of information	<input type="checkbox"/> No work permit/NINO	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of childcare	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Other.....					
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of experience														
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of job vacancies	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of confidence	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of information														
<input type="checkbox"/> No work permit/NINO	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of childcare	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability														
<input type="checkbox"/> Other.....																

13.	Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the barriers to finding work?
14.	<p>What would help you find work? <i>(you can tick more than one)</i></p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Further education or training <input type="checkbox"/> Work experience <input type="checkbox"/> Work placements <input type="checkbox"/> Help with CV <input type="checkbox"/> Access to job adverts <input type="checkbox"/> More job opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> Information on tax & benefits <input type="checkbox"/> Loan/support for business <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare / flexible working <input type="checkbox"/> Money to buy a travel card / suit / equipment for a job <input type="checkbox"/> Work permit/NINO <input type="checkbox"/> Other..... </p>
15.	Please tell us about anything else that would help you to find work?
16.	<p>Where would you look to get support with finding work? <i>(can tick more than one)</i></p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> School <input type="checkbox"/> College <input type="checkbox"/> University <input type="checkbox"/> Jobcentre Plus <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment agency <input type="checkbox"/> Job specialist <input type="checkbox"/> Youth club / centre <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Religious organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Other..... </p>
17.	<p>Have you used Community Links projects for employment support?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No </p> <p>If yes, which project?</p>
18.	Please tell us about the support you received, whether it was useful and how?

19. **Please tell us about any employment support you have received from other organisations that has been useful?**
(include name of agency)

SECTION 5 : ABOUT YOU (*Everyone must answer this section*)
This information CANNOT be used to identify you.

20. **Gender**

Male Female

21. **Please tell us your ethnic group**

<p>White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> European</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> East European</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other white</p> <p><i>Black or Black British</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other black</p>	<p>Mixed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> White and Black Caribbean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> White and Black African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other mixed</p> <p>Other Ethnic Group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Please state.....</p>	<p>Asian or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p>
---	--	---

Thank you very much for your time

Office use only

Researchers name

.....

Bibliography

Local Knowledge for Local solutions – A Toolkit for Neighbourhood Research
July 2003, Southwark Alliance