

STILL HIDDEN

Greater Manchester

**TALENT
MATCH**

Shaping journeys towards
employment for young people

**A deeper look at hidden young people
and how best to support them towards
employment.**

**Alice Gaskell - Greater Manchester Combined Authority
October 2018**



The co-operative

Greater Manchester
Skills and Employment
Partnership



GMCVO

About Greater Manchester Talent Match

Greater Manchester Talent Match (GM Talent Match) is a Big Lottery-funded programme bringing together the private, public and voluntary sectors to support young people aged 18-24 who have not been in employment, education or training for twelve months or more and who need extra support to help them along their pathway to work. GM Talent Match supports young people in all ten metropolitan boroughs of Greater Manchester. A five-year test and learn programme, GM Talent Match will end in December 2018.

The Greater Manchester Talent Match partnership is led by Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation (GMCVO) and includes Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Youth Network (GMYN), private sector employers (The Co-operative Group and Addleshaw Goddard), the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Manchester Skills and Employment Partnership.

The GM Talent Match vision is that Greater Manchester will be a place where all young people are valued and supported to realise their employment potential and enjoy fulfilling lives.

The author of this report would like to thank all of the young people and their Talent Coaches who participated in this research. Their contribution to our research has proved invaluable over the past five years. Thanks also to Owen Hewson (GMCVO) for his support in conducting interviews and issuing surveys, and to Ben Reese (GMCVO) for his role in the report's styling, formatting and structuring.

Talent Match is a Big Lottery Fund £108 million investment to tackle youth unemployment in 21 areas of England.

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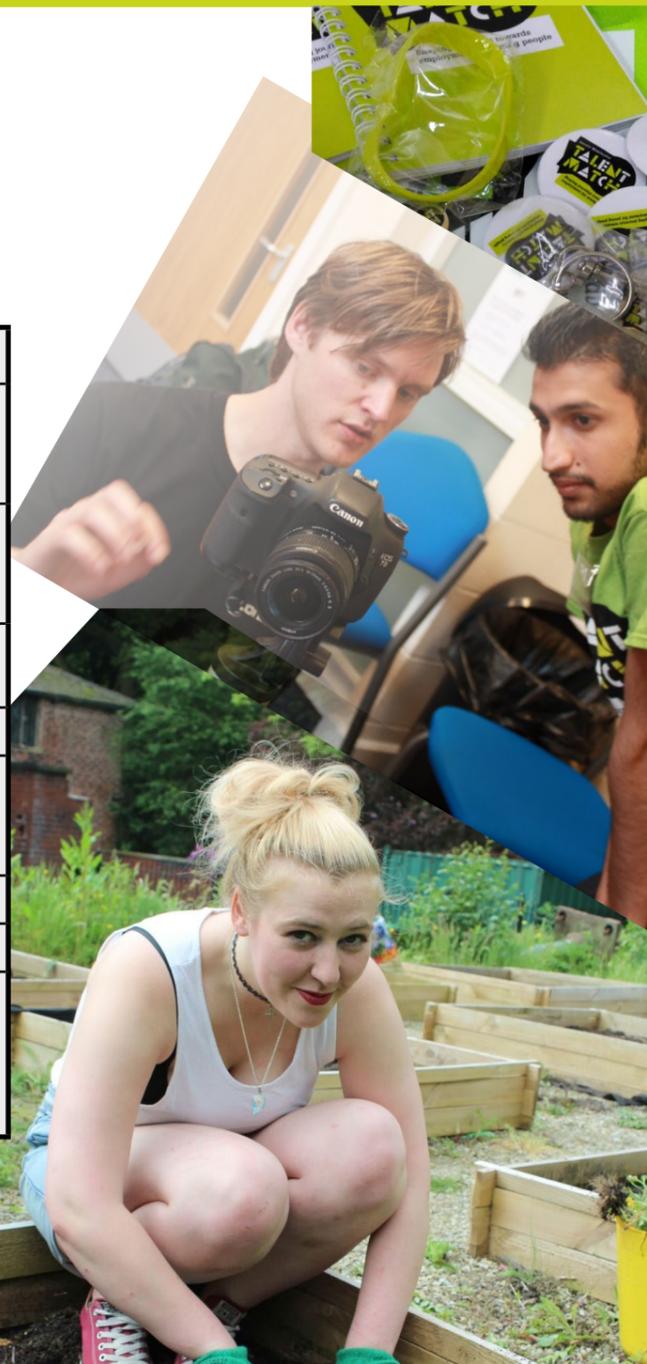
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Key terms and phrases

Barriers	Factors that limit an individual's ability to gain employment
Beneficiary	Young people aged 18-24 who are on the Greater Manchester Talent Match programme. All young people on the programme have been out of employment, education or training for more than 12 months
Hidden young people	People aged 16-24 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and do not claim benefits such as Job Seeker's Allowance or Universal Credit
Host organisations	Organisations who are commissioned to work with young people as part of the Greater Manchester Talent Match programme
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
Talent Coaches/Coaches	Talent Coaches are employed by host organisations and work with young people one-to-one, helping them on their journey to employment
Type 1 hidden young people	Hidden young people who do not have a criminal record
Type 2 hidden young people	Hidden young people who have criminal records
Youth Panel	The Youth Panel represent the views and opinions of young people to inform the Greater Manchester Talent Match programme. They are aged 18-24 and have at some point experienced barriers to employment



Foreword by Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester



Still Hidden is an important piece of work looking at how we can support young people in Greater Manchester who are NEET and not engaging with welfare services. I want to start by thanking Talent Match for putting it together.

Greater Manchester Talent Match has already worked extensively with this hard to reach group and this report will help guide us in what work needs to be done going forward.

We have made a commitment in Greater Manchester to invest in our young people so they have hope for the future, and that means all of our young people, including those with the biggest challenges. Schemes like Talent Match are vital to that so I'm pleased to give them my support.

In January I saw first-hand the difference that GM Talent Match has made to young people when I attended the [Big Conversation event](#). I witnessed the work that was going on to connect employers with young people and the organisations supporting them. It was great to see this going on in a relaxed and unthreatening environment and watch the employers and young people get help to understand each other better.

In Greater Manchester we have a vision for a future where all of our young people are in education, employment or training following compulsory education and we cannot ignore those not accessing statutory support just because they are buried in national statistics. We see every single young person for what they are, an individual with something to contribute, not just a number on a spreadsheet.

All of Greater Manchester's thousands of 'hidden' young people have potential, it is our duty to help them realise that potential and give them the tools to be the best they can be. This report can only aid that.

One of the key parts of the Greater Manchester Strategy is that all young people should leave school with hope for the future, equipped for work and lifelong learning. This includes getting the support they need in school, improving careers advice and increasing the number of quality apprenticeships.

We have committed to intervening early so that young people at risk of not being in education, employment or training are given the skills, confidence and support needed to move into the world of work and further study, ensuring that fewer young people are 'hidden' from the essential support services they need. This report acknowledges that, and offers measures to make this happen and generally support young people during their development.

One vital step the report calls for is better access to mental health support for young people much earlier in life. Appropriate mental health support needs to be readily available from a younger age in schools than it currently is. Our young people need this to allow them to be in the right frame of mind to apply for and sustain work but more importantly help them deal with their mental health more effectively.

The report also highlights the important role our frontline community organisations have to play. I agree that they are often best placed to reach out to and support hidden young people. They have unique expertise and young people feel comfortable with them and are more likely to speak to them about issues in their life.

Careers advice in our schools and colleges has for far too long been sold as an add-on to education and worse than this had been severely cut and is often non-existent. In the summer we received £500,000 to create a Greater Manchester Careers Hub which is helping to improve careers education and help young people identify the best career opportunities. The report calls for better intensive career support for those at risk of being NEET and I hope the Careers Hub can help do this. Talent Match does fantastic work providing careers advice to the young people they engage with but it is time to help schools and colleges give proper help to everyone.

I welcome all the recommendations made in this report and hope that we can work together moving forward to begin implementing them. Our young people are our future and it is our duty to give them opportunities and hope to go into the world of work.

Introduction

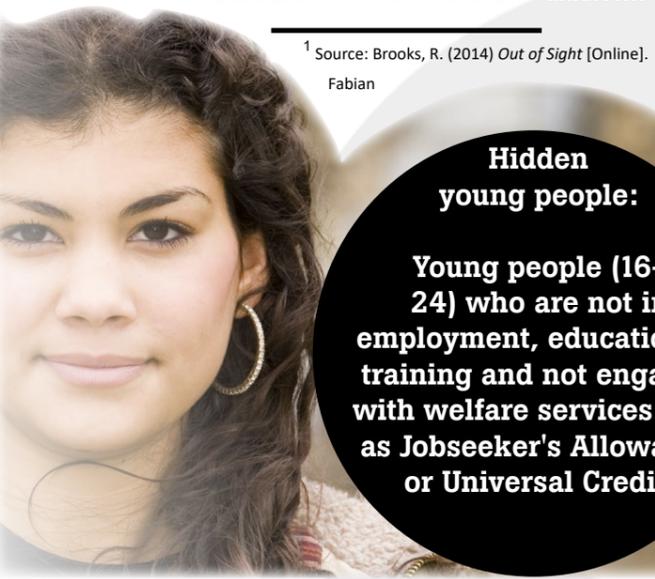
Why focus on hidden young people?

NEET: not in education, employment or training. This reductive label only describes what young people are not. It creates ugly stereotypes, overlooks potential and masks the true complexity of a multifaceted demographic.

The pejorative connotations of the term NEET have given rise to a misconception that these young people are somehow choosing a life of benefits over work.

The stark reality in fact is that tens of thousands of young people across Greater Manchester – and hundreds of thousands UK-wide – are not accessing welfare support, despite being eligible.

In 2014, a Fabian Society report revealed 150,000 young people had become 'unknown' following compulsory education'. The moniker 'unknown'



Hidden young people: Young people (16-24) who are not in employment, education or training and not engaged with welfare services such as Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit.

Society. Available from: https://fabians.org.uk/publications/page/5/

applied because Local Authorities' tracking mechanisms failed to ascertain their current activity. Between a third and half of these young people were estimated as being not in education, employment or training. Startlingly, all of this subset were not claiming welfare support – if they were, they would be tracked and ultimately 'known.'

Across the five years of the Greater Manchester Talent Match programme, we have worked extensively with this hard to reach group.

All of the 2,000 young people aged 18-24 we have supported on pathways to work, had been out of employment, education or training for 12 months or more. We know that 25% of these young people were not claiming benefits when they joined the programme - the Fabian Society's 'unknowns'. We refer to this demographic as 'hidden' young people.

Due to the aforementioned lack of tracking data it is not possible to unequivocally state how many young people are currently hidden. However, our 2017 report Hidden² identified just under 15,000 hidden young people across Greater Manchester in March 2016.

Based on updated analysis of Labour Force statistics we estimate that there are now 21,890 hidden young people in Greater Manchester.³

This is by no means a regional phenomenon. Research by London Youth estimates there to be 480,000

² Source: Edwards, R. (2017) Still Hidden [Online]. GMTM Talent Match. Available from: https://gmtalentmatch.org.uk/reports

³ Methodology explained in appendices.

25% of young people on GM Talent Match beneficiaries were hidden when they joined the programme

An estimated 21,890 hidden young people across Greater Manchester

hidden young people across the UK annually.⁴

This figure is not surprising. The majority of employment support programmes target only 'known' young people - those claiming out-of-work benefits. Those who are hidden are therefore predominantly excluded from and do not receive any kind of economic or back-to-work support.

In Hidden we profiled these young people – their living situation, qualifications, employment history – and critically explored why they do not seek or receive welfare support.

We uncovered various common barriers to claiming support. Negative experiences and perceptions of Jobcentre Plus was a recurring theme. Some hidden young people had access to alternative finances through ad hoc cash-in-hand work or illegal activity.

GM Talent Match's delivery model has been purposely designed to address the gaps in support for hidden young people, taking a 'bottom-up' approach to identification and engagement.

Our Talent Coaches provide holistic and empathetic support in their role as one-to-one key workers.

Essentially, their carefully managed caseloads enable them to be flexible and responsive around hidden young people's needs and responsibilities. Our commissioning model also maximised accessibility: Talent Coaches work for well-established organisations that are trusted by the young people and the communities they serve.

In December 2018 GM Talent Match comes to an end but community based support for hidden young people must continue. Unlocking potential

⁴ Source: (2018) Hidden in Plain Sight [Online]. London Youth. Available from: http://londonyouth.org/our-impact/our-impact-with-members/

is not only beneficial to the individual, but also maximises the prosperity of the city-region.

Priority 2 of the Greater Manchester Strategy⁵ envisions a future in which all of Greater Manchester's young people are in education, employment or training following compulsory education.

The strategy acknowledges the need for early intervention to prevent young people becoming hidden. To enable this, it is important to further identify the characteristics and histories of this group and identify those who are at risk of becoming hidden.

This report will delve deeper into hidden young people's living circumstances, experiences and perceptions, determining which interventions and approaches work best. Through further conversations with previously hidden young people (now known through GM Talent Match) we have been able to better understand the events that led to their becoming disengaged.

Research Aims

This research has been developed with a view to advance the understanding provided by the findings of the Hidden report.

Further exploration of three aims will inform wider policy development and ensure future employment programmes recognise and support the needs of this distinct cohort of young people:

- a) To explore type 1 hidden young people's backgrounds and how these might relate to their disengaging from education, employment or training

⁵ Source: (2017), Our People Our Place [Online], pp.26-27. GMCA. Available from: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/ourpeopleourplace

To date, Greater Manchester Talent Match has engaged with 524 hidden young people, of whom 201 are currently receiving support from the programme. These 201 participants represent 25% of all beneficiaries. Since the programme began, 314 hidden young people have exited the programme. Once a young person engages with Talent Match they are no longer hidden or hard to reach, they are now 'known'.

Hidden revealed the circumstances that lead to young people becoming hidden, leading to the identification of two distinct typologies.

Type 1 young people's journey to becoming hidden typically begins following low performance and disengagement at school. They then either don't move into further education or are likely to withdraw prematurely. The majority remain living at home with parents where there may not be any initial pressure to find employment.

A cycle of social isolation forms, whereby a lack of exposure to career building activities - hobbies, work

Mixed gender 2 in 3 male

18-20 years old

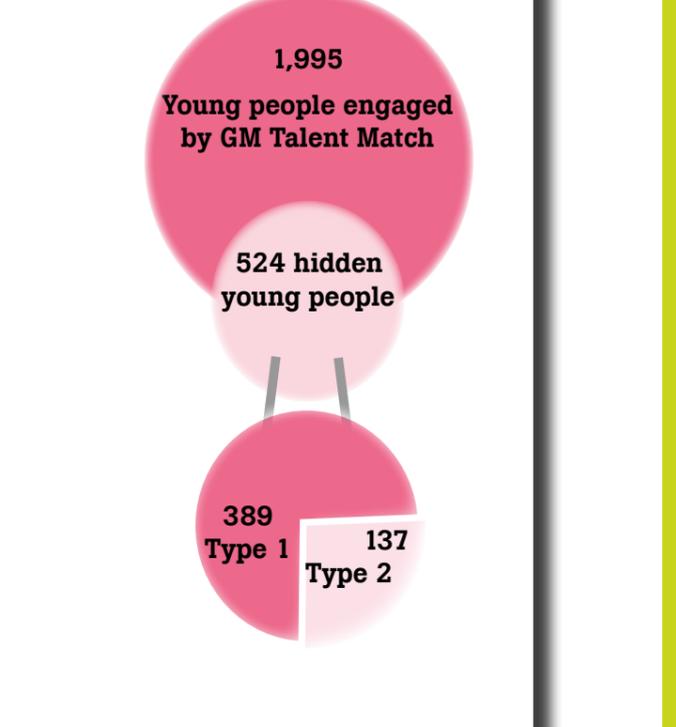
Living at home with parents or with friends/partner

Type 1

Mixed qualifications - predominantly level 2

Supported through cash in hand work or by parent/partner

Barriers: Social isolation, confidence or mental health issues



experience, volunteering - leads to loss of confidence.

As a result of this, these young people are known to develop mental health issues and are reluctant to actively seek help.

As opposed to possessing the mixed qualifications of their type 1 peers, type 2 hidden young people often have no, or low qualifications and look to informal employment to support themselves financially. Motivated by short term goals (as opposed to longer periods of training and education), this would often be through cash-in-hand jobs or illegal activity.

Inevitably, some type 2 young people become part of the criminal justice system and so

more is known about this group than type 1.

This research is interested in those young people who are hidden and don't have a criminal record; fitting the type 1 typology.

Gaining a deeper insight into the characteristics and histories of this group (who they are, their background, and why they are not working or receiving welfare support), will inform what interventions or services best reach and support these young people.

a) Why hidden young people do not claim out-of-work benefits with the aim of exploring any changes that have been seen with the onset of Universal credit.

Hidden exposed some of the barriers deterring young people from claiming welfare support. Recurring themes were young people's experiences and perceptions of Jobcentre Plus, the stigma of claiming and access to alternative finance.

Since we published *Hidden* there have been some changes to the benefits system and welfare conditions. Universal Credit is being rolled out across the United Kingdom and is replacing six existing working age benefits benefit. Universal Credit comes with a new set of criteria for eligibility.

Child benefit is capped at a maximum of two children, recipients of income support may be compelled to do job searches and emergency grants have been replaced by loans (which are to be repaid once the claimant receives benefits). Furthermore, Youth Obligation is an intensive support programme for 18-21 year olds who claim Universal Credit. Youth Obligation claimants who are still unemployed after receiving support for six months will be offered work-related training or a three-month work experience opportunity.

The number of 18-24 year olds in Greater Manchester claiming out-of-work benefits has declined. In March 2016 11,340 claimed Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit. In the 12 months to March 2017 this figure dropped to 10,110 before decreasing again to 9,600

in October 2017. Figures for August 2018 show a rise to 10,440. This increase cannot be categorically attributed to a broader range of claimants under Universal Credit as rollout was delayed in pilot areas of GM at start of 2018.

Whilst claimant figures provide an estimate of the number of unemployed young people in Greater Manchester, **hidden young people are not included in the claimant numbers.**

Findings from Impetus-PEF warn that falls in claimant numbers can deflect from the worrying trend of more young people becoming long term NEET, with the national number of young people spending 12 months or more NEET increasing from 714,000 in 2016 to 811,000 last year.

c) How to best reach and support hidden young people

To enable the Greater Manchester Strategy to meet its stated aim of equipping all young people for life, preventative interventions are vital, as are accessible support services for those who have already become hidden.

Our *Hidden* report highlighted a number of preventative recommendations: improved careers education, information and guidance (CEIAG) at pre-16 levels; additional support to those at risk of leaving education without Level 2 numeracy and literacy and the inclusion of Jobcentre Plus in education. *Hidden* also acknowledged that a community-based approach *appeared* to be successful in supporting hidden young people. The particular techniques and support methods that do work will be brought to light in this paper.

Data Analysis

Who we spoke to

To collect qualitative and quantitative information about hidden young people's backgrounds, current living situation and perceptions, we issued an **online questionnaire** to hidden young people on the GM Talent Match database (which included young people who have exited the programme).⁶

The questionnaire was substantiated by **in-depth research interviews** of current or former hidden beneficiaries, and one hidden non-beneficiary.

Young people were selected using the following criteria:

- a) The young person does not have a criminal record**
- b) The young person wasn't claiming benefits when they signed onto the Talent Match programme**
- c) The young person hasn't exited the programme through losing contact with their talent coach**

The very nature of the hidden group makes it very difficult to find young people, let alone engage with them. Under the above criteria, 211 young people were invited (through Talent Coaches) to complete the online questionnaire.

Twenty young people did so - a response rate of 9%. Interviews were held with seven young people who are current or former beneficiaries, and one non-beneficiary. Members of the GM Talent Match [Youth Panel](#) led the interviews with hidden young people (with the support of

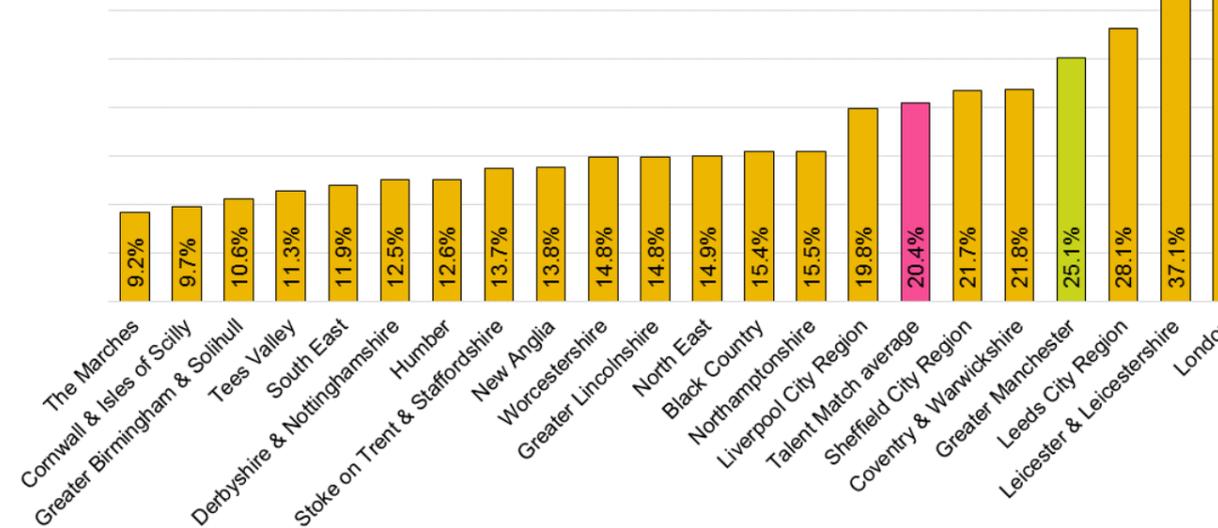
members of the GM Talent Match Project Team).

⁶ See Appendix for more on research methodologies

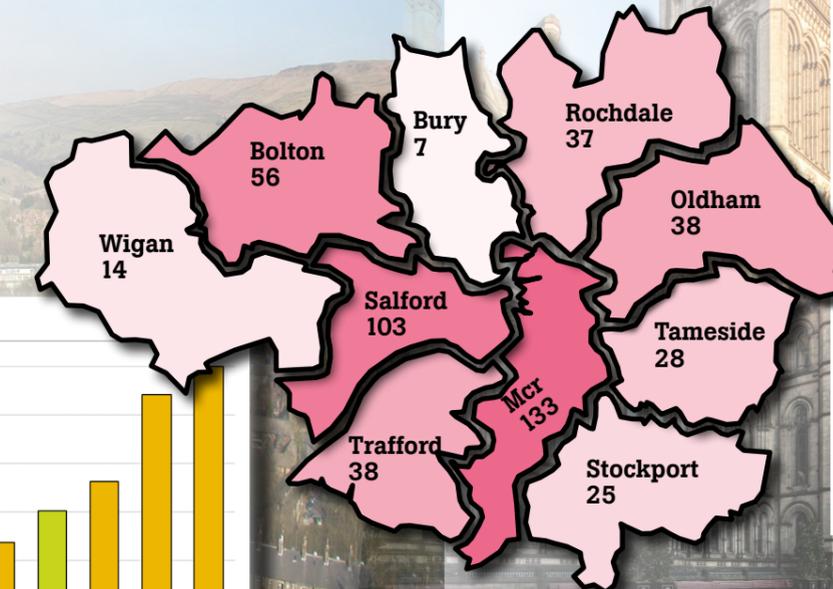
Hidden in Greater Manchester

At 25%, Greater Manchester has the fourth highest percentage of hidden young people out of all 21 Talent Match programmes. Leeds City Region's cohort is 28.1% hidden, Leicester and Leicestershire has 37.1% hidden and London has the highest at 40%. The Marches have the lowest percentage of hidden young people engaging on their programme, at 9.2%. On average across the national programme, 20% of all beneficiaries are hidden.

Percentage of hidden beneficiaries on each Talent Match programme



Percentage of hidden beneficiaries on each Talent Match programme



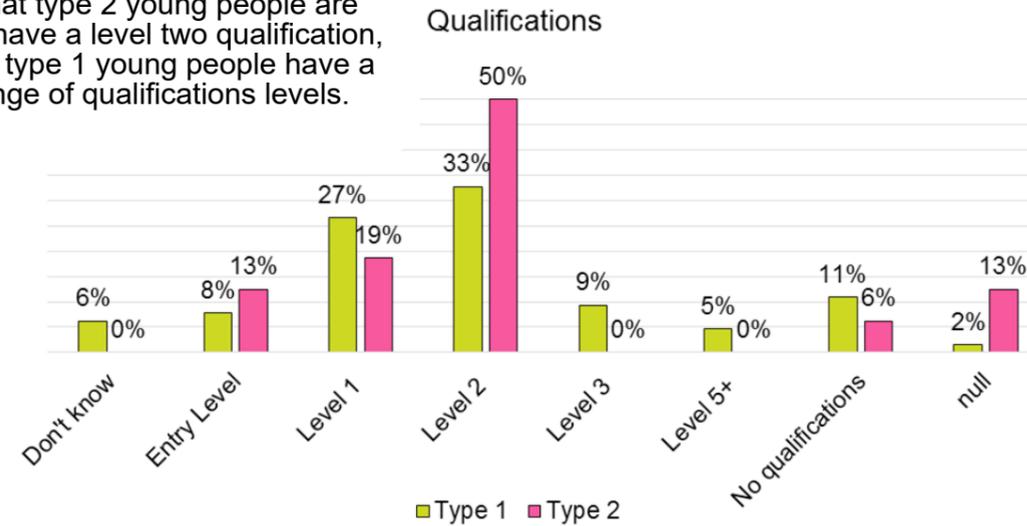
When looking at Local Authorities, Salford has the highest proportion of beneficiaries who are hidden, at 37%. Wigan and Bury have a smaller proportion of young people who are hidden, at 16% and 10% respectively.

*Data set used for the above map was extracted at a different time to the information seen in the graphic on p.7 of this report - hence the lower numbers.

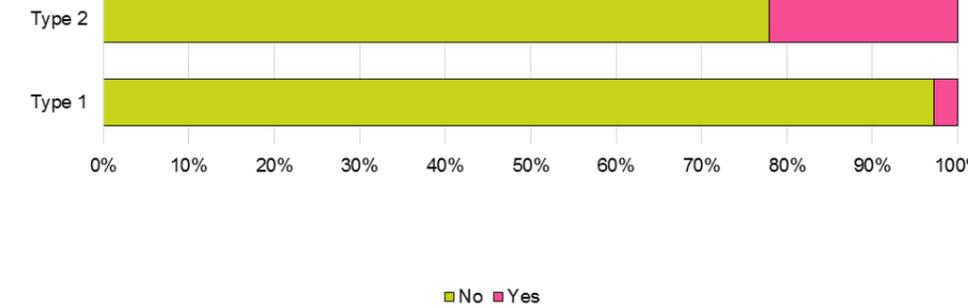
Differences between type 1 and type 2 hidden young people

To find out more about type 1 hidden young people and how they differ from type 2, data analysis was carried out on existing information recorded as part of the Common Data Framework (CDF) - the standard data monitoring mechanism for all Talent Match Partnerships (more information about the CDF available [here](#))

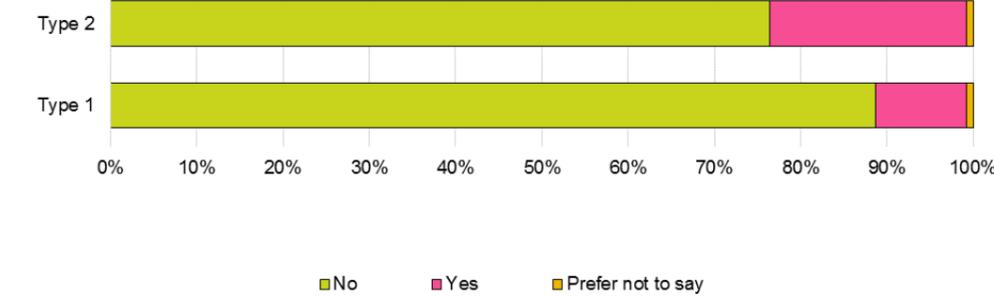
Qualification data was infrequently recorded (available for 80 hidden young people), however, this data shows that type 2 young people are likely to have a level two qualification, whereas type 1 young people have a wider range of qualifications levels.



Experienced LA Care

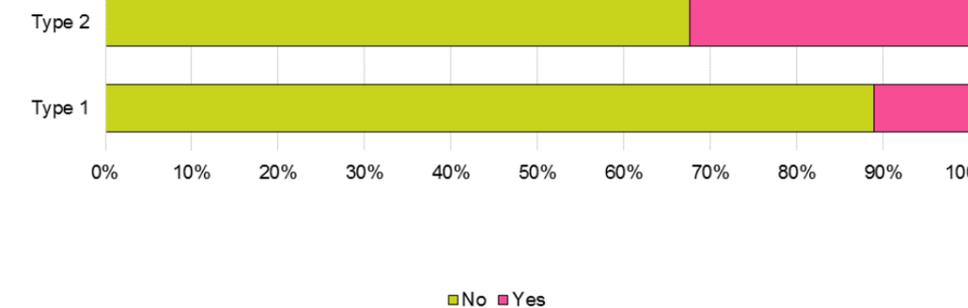


Children

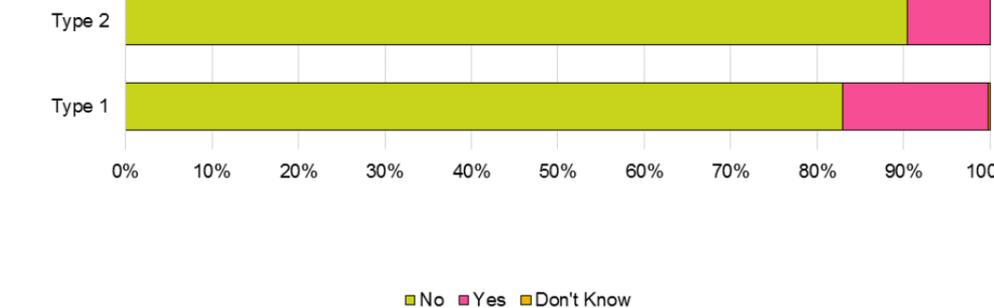


When looking at experiences, type 1 young people are less likely to have had children, experienced homelessness, or been in Local Authority care than type 2 young people. However, type 1 young people are more likely to have ill health or a disability.

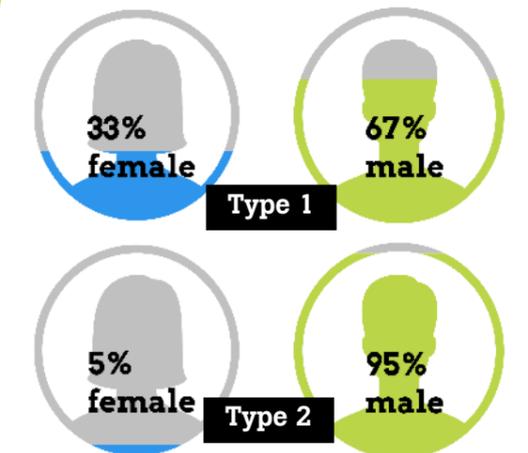
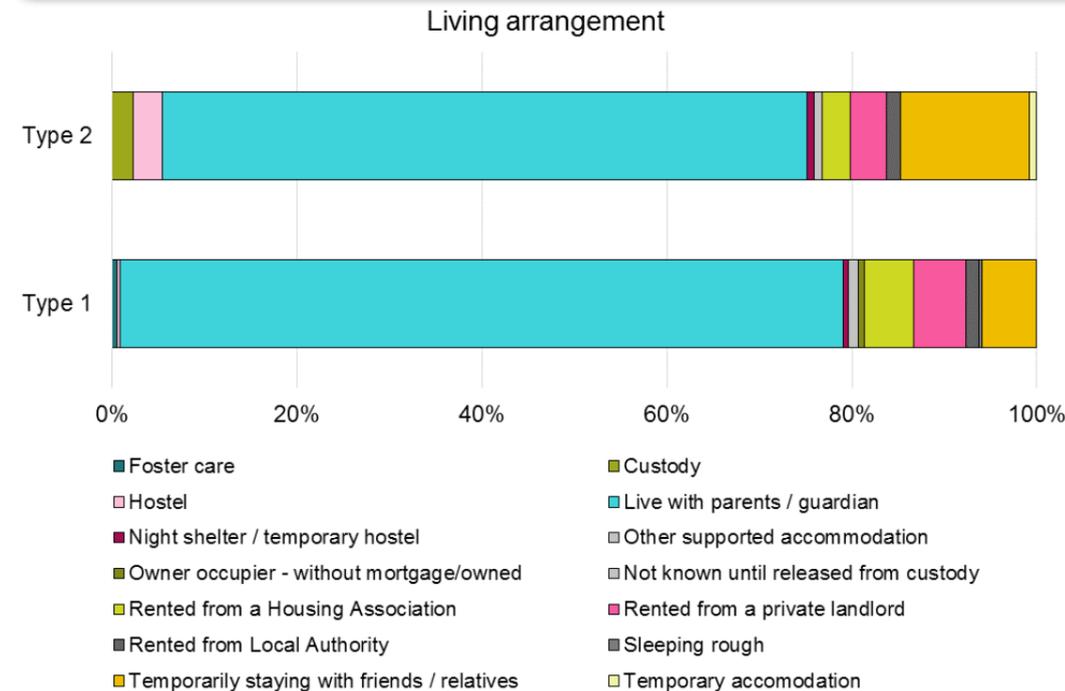
Experienced Homelessness



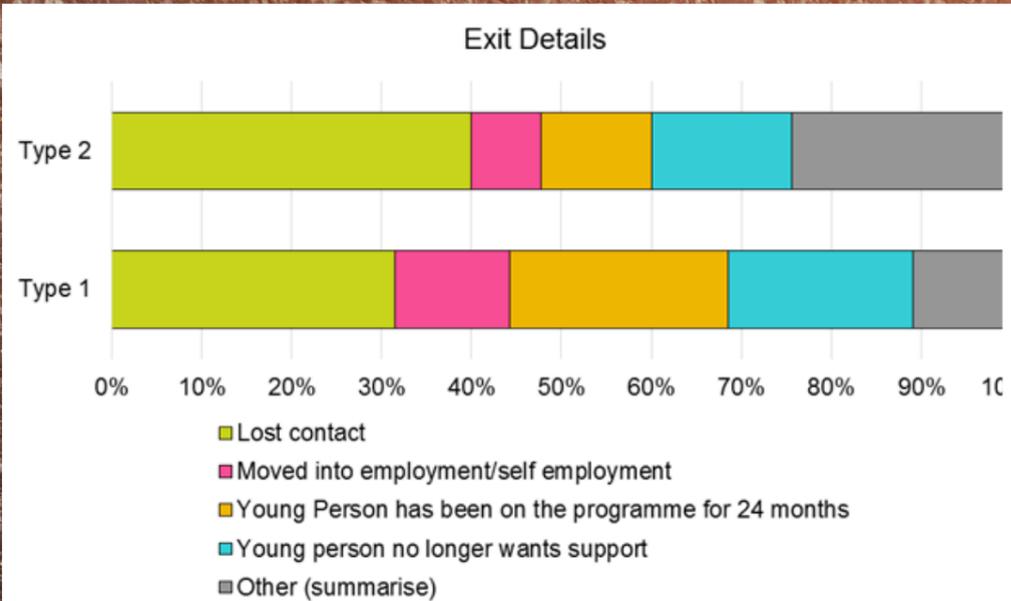
Ill health and/or a Disability



There are also some differences in living arrangements between typologies. Around 8% percent of type 2 young people are in custody, hostel or temporary accommodation, whereas only one type 1 young person was living in a hostel. Type 1 young people are more likely live with parents or a guardian with 78% in this situation, compared to 69% of type 2 young people.



When looking at gender profiles, there is a significant difference. Of type 1 young people, 33% are female and 67% are male. When looking at type 2 hidden young people, only 5% are female.



When comparing type 1 and 2 individuals who left the GM Talent Match programme, it becomes clear that there are some variations. Type 2 young people are more likely to have been exited due to losing contact with their Talent Coach, or for another reason - such as going into education, or moving out of the area. Type 1 are more likely to move into employment, stay on the programme for the full 24 months or decide they no longer want support.

“He’s really equipped, he’s ready to work, just like a lot of people are out there. He just needs that helping hand, that guidance and support. He’s got the get up and go, he’s got the education behind him, he’s got all that. He just felt like he didn’t know where to start - that’s quite common - Talent Coach

Research findings: Living situation and background

This section investigates the findings from this research in an attempt to provide a better understanding of type 1 young people’s living situation and background, as well as why they may not be engaging in education or employment.

Time Spent NEET

Four of the 20 survey respondents told us that they are now currently in education, employment or training. Despite this, many of the young people have been out of employment, education and training for a considerable amount of time. Five respondents were NEET for between 19 and 24 months, and two were NEET for 24 months or more.

Education

The majority of young people stated that they had very little, if any careers advice in school. One young person said that at school they were often asked what job they wanted to do, but that when they said they didn’t know, they had no help in forming decisions around career paths. This kind of patchy approach can leave students with little information about a complex labour market.

Those who said that they did get careers advice tended to get this from parents - whose expertise did not reflect the current jobs market.

One young person had gone through to degree level education without any formal careers advice, instead relying upon the limited and negative advice of family or peers. This led them to making the wrong decision and studying something that they didn’t enjoy. Subsequently the young person dropped out of university.

Similar pathways are common amongst young people who have found it hard to identify the right courses and careers for them. Because of this, young people end up trialling a range of jobs and educational routes to see which ones they enjoy. This practice delays young people’s careers and stunts earnings.

The majority (61%) of survey respondents noted that school was a negative experience for them. YMCA research shows that negative school experiences cause lasting damage to an individual’s well-being in later life⁷. Furthermore, 28% of respondents mentioned bullying as one of the main reasons why school was not a good experience for them:

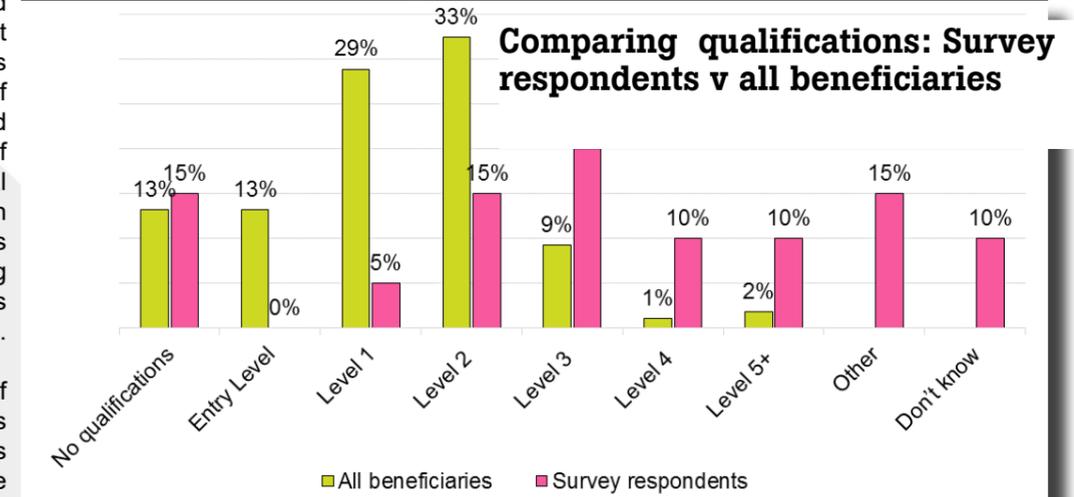
“My experience from school and college was one of the worst I know. Despite achieving high grades I was bullied and ridiculed for the whole seven years, all amounting in mental health problems.”

Survey respondents had mixed levels of qualifications and there were a far higher proportion of young people with Level 3 (A/AS levels, Level 3 NVQ), 4 (Level 4 NVQ or Diploma)

⁷ YMCA. 2016. Negative educational experiences cause lasting damage to well-being. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://bit.ly/2nvwZhQ>. [ACCESSED 13 AUGUST 2018].

and 5 (foundation degree, Level 5 NVQ) qualifications than the overall GM Talent Match cohort. However, 15% of survey participants also said that they had ‘other’ qualifications, and 10% said that they didn’t know what qualifications they had.

During in-depth interviews, many young people described educational journeys which were not smooth. Some had been removed from school prior to doing their GCSE’s



and therefore didn’t have any qualifications. Other young people progressed much further through the education system, starting but not completing college or university courses. Reasons for leaving courses included: not enjoying them; having caring responsibilities, or being moved to a different town/city by parents or the care system. Some young people had gone back into education at a later date, while others decided to find employment.

Many of the young people interviewed had done well academically, and had good qualifications, but lacked direction after finishing their courses, having been given little careers advice at an earlier stage.

Health

As a result of social isolation, type 1 hidden young people experienced mental health problems.

60% of respondents said that they suffer from mental health issues

Some 74% of survey respondents said that they suffer from health issues, with the majority of those saying that these issues affected them either daily, or several times a week

Tellingly, 60% recalled how their mental health issues affected them negatively:

"My anxiety probably affects every decision and action of my day."

"My mental health makes me struggle to get out of bed each day, and bad thoughts slow my day down all the time."

"On bad days I feel as though I want to leave the country and shut the world out."

During interviews young people rarely discussed the finer details of mental health issues. However one young person mentioned that prior to support from GM Talent Match they had suffered suicidal thoughts and substance addiction, but since being on the programme they had been referred to the appropriate support.

Out of those who were currently unemployed, 50% of survey respondents reported that mental health issues were a barrier to employment. This affected young people in various ways:

"I struggle with my mental health, it affects my motivation. I really struggle getting out of bed sometimes. This is a really bad barrier as it's something I can't control."

"Anxiety and depression, a lot of it due to having lots of my job applications rejected (or worse: not hearing anything back at all). I did consider a few different career paths, but I always gave my applications everything I had. I believe that I was perfectly qualified for the jobs, but it may have been a lack of experience and/or awkward and anxiety-stricken interviews that tripped me up."

Others mentioned how disabilities and physical health conditions became a barrier to employment, this was thought to be due to employers lacking awareness:

"I found issues around lack of employer understanding around medical conditions... like making assumptions when they hear the word ADHD..."

"I have epilepsy and think this is why I can't get a job because some employers are frightened of it."

Spare time

Respondents were asked to describe their typical day. Those in employment told us their typical day revolved around their work routines. For those not in employment, several themes emerged:

- Job searching - this was mentioned regularly as a main part of a daily routine
- Helping their family by looking after siblings or other young family members (informal care)
- Parental responsibilities for those who had a child

- Seeing friends and socialising or volunteering
- Informal caring responsibilities were common amongst both survey and interview participants. Several young people said that they looked after younger family members in their spare time to help their family out. Some young people had parents they helped care for or wanted to support.

"[I] look after my young brother in the holidays and before and after school as my mum works."

"I recently started volunteering at the British Heart Foundation. I am mostly job hunting and trying to find opportunities."

"I help my sister with the children and look for jobs"

We do not know if these responsibilities were theirs to bear because they were not working, or if they had definitely prevented them from working. What is likely, is that these commitments influence the work-related activities individuals can undertake - as they need to prioritise short term needs. One young person decided not to pursue a degree, and instead started to look for work in order to help the household financially.

Work

63% of survey respondents said that they had been in employment previously or were currently employed. When asked why they no longer worked (if applicable), there were varied reasons ranging from dislike for the manager, lack of progression and being put on short term contracts. Some of the responses however were more concerning, implying that these young people had been working in a non-supportive environment, or operating under poor terms and conditions:

"My contract was terminated, I'm currently considering pursuing a disability discrimination case."

I found issues around lack of employer understanding around medical conditions...like making assumptions when they hear the word ADHD...

Case Study: Jordanna, 19

Jordanna had a fractured educational journey as a result of illness: "Towards the end of school I was really poorly. I did my GCSEs in hospital. I was in and out for seven years – so the whole of high school basically."

Before Talent Match I had a bad experience of school and college due to my health. I was in and out of school and hospital for seven years.

Jordanna's health difficulties continued into college where she had started a public services course: "Even when I caught up on coursework, I still felt behind everyone else because I had not been in the talk sessions."

After completing her first year Jordanna left college. Living at home with her grandparents, she worked in retail for a short time but knew this was not playing to her strengths. She went back to college for careers advice: "I went back to my tutors to see if there was an apprenticeship I could do – they just said 'go on this website'. It was like they were turning a blind eye."

It would be 12 months before Jordanna met with Anthony, a Greater Manchester Talent Match Talent Coach through The Manchester College. Jordanna recalls those times: "I was getting depressed and felt lost – like I was in a dark hole. I was stuck. Everything had come to a standstill. I knew I was getting older and needed to find out where I wanted to be with my life." At this time Jordanna did not claim benefits feeling her pride was at stake.

After being given Anthony's details Jordanna initially lacked the confidence to contact him. When the pair did meet they started taking a look at Jordanna's CV.

"I'd not had help with CV building before, college didn't help," said Jordanna.

"Anthony broke the it down. He explained to me what a good CV is, what details need to go in and how to present it.

Together they focused on Jordanna's strengths and interests and found an opportunity online: a four-week course for Health and Social Care. A ward placement was promoted as part of the course. Jordanna succesfully applied for this placement after two interviews.

My Talent Coach is able to step into my shoes - instead of judging. No matter the situation he never gives up on young people. We built my confidence and developed a motto: 'All progress takes place outside the comfort zone...'

"I was so nervous around interviews. But I did role play interviews with another Talent Coach at the Manchester College. This was like the real thing as I didn't know her – that built my confidence."

"When it came to my final day of placement I got offered a nursing assistant job from the ward manager. I was shocked, I did not expect it all. I've been in this role for a year and a half. I now want to start my training towards becoming a paramedic."

"I don't know where I'd be without Anthony. Probably in the same position or bouncing from job to job. Not jobs I want, just ones to pass the time. Anthony made me realise that I'm just as good as anyone else and I was capable of doing or being what I wanted, and I can follow my dreams. Not only did he make me find my inner-self, Anthony has made me find courage, strength, stability and independence. Whenever I need someone he's always there."

I'd not had help with CV building before...



"I was being messed about by recruiting agents and employers, didn't appreciate being treated badly."

During in-depth interviews all young people expressed a desire to work, but needed a job that offered stability, with space to learn and progress. Some young people had tried a lot of different jobs, but felt that some roles aren't that suited to young people due to a slow paced environment, a lack of progression and minimal or non-existent training. Those young people who were not trained up felt their range of responsibilities were limited - something they found frustrating.

Young people also discussed the lengths they went to gain employment. One well-qualified young person put time and effort into doing a specific job-related course. Once qualified however, they were offered a zero hour contract, which usually saw them work two or three hours per week. The young person found that remaining in this job was not viable as they didn't have enough money to live off.

Young people commonly described the process of consistently applying for jobs, putting a lot of time and effort into applications for jobs which they were qualified to do, but that they would rarely receive a reply, let alone feedback on their application. This process became frustrating and demotivating, an experience echoed by findings from YMCA.

The need for experience for entry level jobs was also regularly mentioned as something which frustrated young people, as this was difficult to acquire/secure. Young Enterprise Wales refers to the need for experience as 'the employability skill catch 22'.⁸

Access to a computer and travel costs were also mentioned as barriers to finding work.

Ambitions

All young people we spoke to had career ambitions, and during the in-depth interviews young people discussed the roles they were working towards. Some had identified these goals at an early age and just needed the support to put practical steps in place, whereas for others, being on the GM Talent Match programme had helped them identify their skills and interests. Careers mentioned were wide ranging, including jobs in healthcare, the arts and construction.

Young people appreciated that Talent Coaches worked with them to realise their ambitions and talents, as opposed to pushing them into any job that they were eligible for:

"I was in a bit of a daydream and my coach stated talking to me about writing. I must have mentioned something about writing in the past. It clicked then, I was like 'Ooh, I like writing. Without even knowing it, my coach made me realise what I wanted to do - not what she thought I'd love to do."

Research findings: Welfare support

This section investigates why type 1 young people do not claim welfare support, and the effect of transitioning from Job Seeker's Allowance to Universal Credit.

Financial support

Survey participants were asked how they now supported themselves financially. Many young people tended to have a mix of support. Some now claimed benefits (meaning that they are no longer hidden) and others were supported by parents or friends. Some young people were working *and* being supported by parents or carers, which could indicate that they were not earning enough money to

live off, possibly due to part-time or temporary work.

One of the young people who supported themselves through formal employment, specified that they were currently on a contract which gave them varying, but low hours of work each week.

30% of respondents were currently still hidden, not claiming any benefits or working. Of those who were hidden, five were supported by parents or carers, while one young person did not state how or if they were being supported.

Welfare Support

Despite the focus of this section of research being about the impact of Universal Credit, many young people wanted to tell us about their general experiences of claiming benefits. This additional information provided a better understanding of what influences young people to become, and remain hidden.

The majority of survey respondents (60%) have received welfare support at some point in their lives, however, 40% of the young people surveyed have never claimed benefits.

Universal Credit and Job Seeker's Allowance made up 63% of all claims. Some of this can be attributed to young people being moved from Job Seeker's Allowance to Universal Credit, therefore having claimed both forms of support.

Many young people who have become 'known' started to claim benefits only when encouraged to by social workers, parents or Talent Coaches. London Youth's [Hidden in Plain Sight](#) (2018) highlights significant barriers for young people accessing support from Jobcentres, such as not having correct documentation, or feeling too proud to access the services - these themes are echoed in this piece research. Beneficiaries gave multiple reasons as to why they didn't claim welfare support, including; difficulty applying, the nature of careers advice and support, the stigma around claiming, as well as the perception that the Jobcentre cannot help them.

During interviews some young people mentioned the stigma and discourse around claiming benefits which discouraged them from applying ('It's kind of degrading'). One young person who worked as an escort to get money for food mentioned that they thought claiming benefits would be frowned upon, but further elaborated upon this, saying that at that point in time they weren't sure what they were entitled to, and how to claim, and that they would have struggled to fill out the required forms.

Claiming process

Many young people found the process of claiming benefits difficult. Often they weren't sure what they were entitled to and had issues in both filling out the forms, and finding the right documentation:

"It was just constant back and forth, back and forth. They wanted this detail, when I brought that detail it wasn't good enough - they wanted more. It just wasn't straightforward... it was just very, very complicated and luckily I had help from my family and things like that, but it was just so difficult, it was just like, constantly like I weren't good enough for it, but you know, I needed it."

One young person who was currently applying for benefits said the process was quite complicated, and seemed unsure about what was going to happen. They had to go to their GP to arrange an assessment determining if they had a learning disability or not. This would decide whether they could claim Job Seeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance.

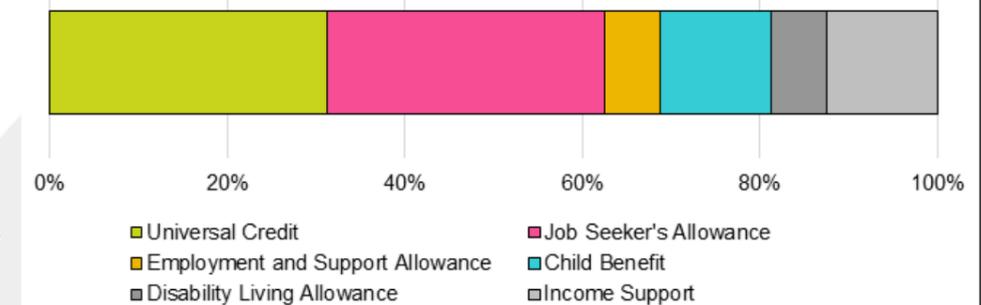
Negative personal experience was the reason that many young people didn't currently claim benefits. It was felt that the obligation to prove they had applied for a number

of jobs per week (as part of their claimant agreement), meant not being able to spend time focusing on doing a good application for a job they were skilled or interested in.

Claimant Support

Young people said that when they had claimed benefits, they weren't given the specific support they needed, and were given generic advice. Therefore young people deemed the Jobcentre services a waste of their time. In addition, it was felt that they'd be expected to do a lot to stay on welfare support, but would get minimal careers advice and employability support in return. One young person said that they knew people who had been claiming Job Seeker's Allowance for a long time, but hadn't gained employment, so the job search activity seemed futile:

Claim types amongst survey respondents and interviewees



"... the thing is with Job Seekers, I know people who have been on that for like 10 years and never ever had a job out of it, and they've got to job search to stay on it, 'cos if you don't do so many job searches they kick you off it. So they're doing a job search, but they're getting nothing out of it anyway...like pointless"

One beneficiary discussed not being able to access housing support - because they were under 21. This

young person - who had been homeless -needed an address in order to claim Jobseeker's Allowance. Consequently they moved in with a family member who encouraged them to undertake illegal activity - in order to earn money to contribute towards the household

Some young people were aware Jobcentre services were stretched. They acknowledged that Work Coaches are expected to do so much, yet only allocated a small amount of time with each claimant (making it difficult for them to give tailored advice). Young people can ask for extended appointments, although it seems that this isn't common knowledge to young people. These findings echo research carried out by [Blake & Sutton-Hamilton for Young Live Leeds](#).⁹ Young people surveyed for this report recognised that Work Coaches didn't have sufficient time getting to know claimants and give them tailored advice. Some appointment formats were not conducive to effective support. One young person said that they only got to see their Work Coach in a group environment where they didn't feel comfortable talking about their personal situation. This meant that the young person 'got nothing' out of the sessions.

Universal Credit

Amongst the few young people who participated in this research and have claimed Universal Credit, claiming experiences have been mixed. Whilst it is too early to tell what the implications of this reformed service mean for young people, our interview evidence shows that the transition to Universal Credit hasn't always been well communicated to young people.

Of those who had been moved over to Universal Credit, there were mixed experiences of the service. One young person said that the process was unproblematic, while another stated that:

⁸ National Assembly for Wales. 2015. Assisting Young People into Work. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://bit.ly/1B9U5IG>. [Accessed 13 August 2018].

⁹ Voluntary Action Leeds. 2015. Young Lives Leeds NEET Research 2015 [ONLINE] Available at: <https://bit.ly/2Eb6Y2L>. [ACCESSSED 28 SEPTEMBER 2018].

"It was the worst. The Jobcentre people didn't care about health issues, experience or education. They forced me to go to job fairs in industries I would be terrible at (like construction) and threatened to cut Universal Credit when I told them it was not suitable."

One young person stated that they were due to be moved over to Universal Credit, but were unsure what this meant.

During interviews, one young person stated that they had given up on trying to claim Universal Credit because of the amount of evidential documentation required, and applications being lost by Jobcentre Plus.

Knowledge of Welfare Support

During surveys, when asked about the support that can be received when claiming Job Seeker's Allowance or Universal Credit, many respondents simply stated they knew nothing about the additional support such as loans, hardship payments or travel passes to get to interviews.

Conversely, one young person said that the Jobcentre can help with job searching, while three people mentioned the monetary element of the service (they referenced loan provision and public transport expenses for interviews). One person commented that they did not feel like the Jobcentre want people to be aware of the service they offer.

This confusion shows that Jobcentre services need to be advertised and communicated in a way which more effectively reaches young people.

Research Findings: Support that works

The young people we surveyed had very little support or help in finding employment, training or careers advice prior to joining Greater Manchester Talent Match. Only six young people had some alternative support, the majority of which came from non-profit organisations such as The Prince's Trust, or YMCA. One young person said that they had received career support from Connexions.

Holistic support from Greater Manchester Talent Match

In-depth interviews revealed the breadth of support Talent Coaches offered their young people. This included: taking young people to open days; speaking to employers; helping with Job Seeker's Allowance claims; job preparation; shopping for interview outfits; picking young people up for appointments and organising counselling sessions. Young people felt that they could talk to their Talent Coaches if they needed something, and that support was flexible around their needs and responsibilities. This enabled young people who were vulnerable, or led chaotic lives, to gain a sense of stability and therefore were better prepared to cope with employment.

Access to job-related training through Talent Coaches was often discussed by young people. Some cited the example of a host organisation (the Talent Coaches' employers, these organisations are commissioned by Greater Manchester Talent Match), providing space to learn and revise CSCS Card certification material. The Greater Manchester Talent Match Project Team, as well as some host organisations also arranged visits to workplaces or open days in an industry the young people were interested in.

This holistic approach is allowed to flourish because Talent Coaches operate a smaller caseload (in

contrast to other youth employment programmes).

One young person said they were drawn in by the way the host organisation worked, as it wasn't too formal or strict. This put the young person at ease as they felt like they didn't come from a 'normal environment'.

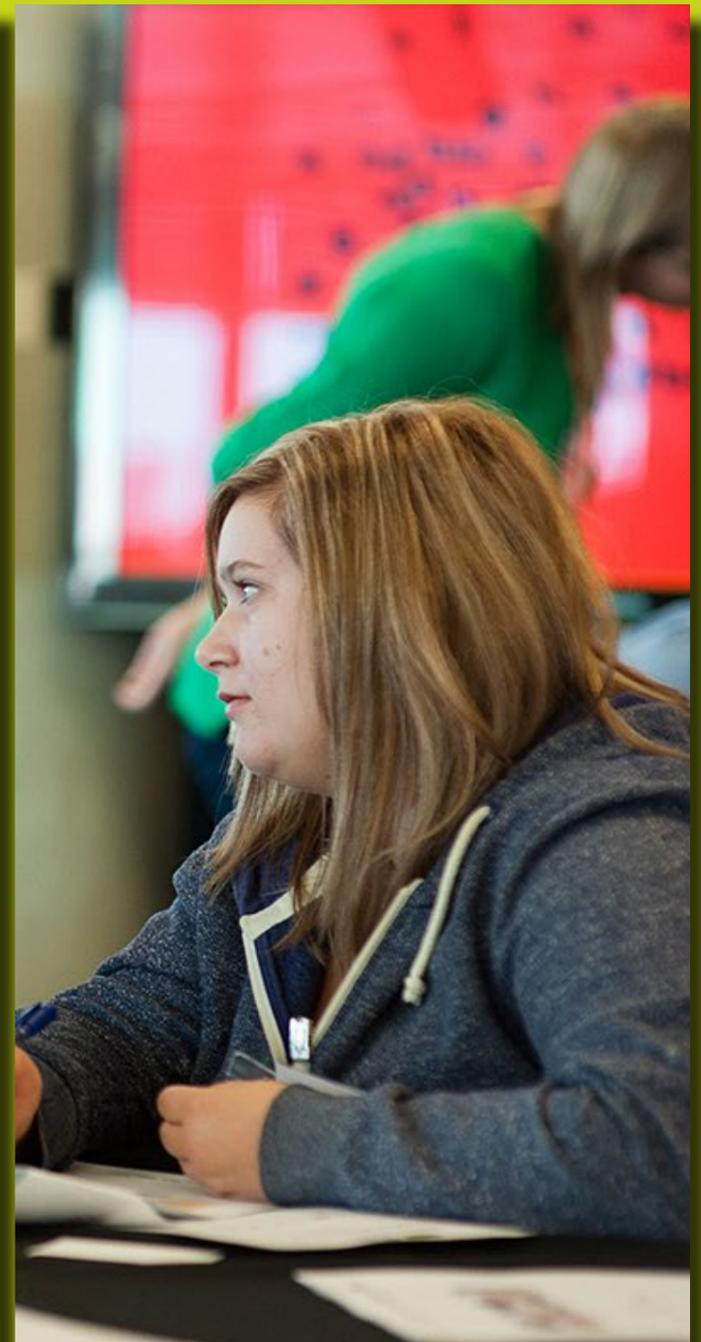
Several young people valued the way their Talent Coaches encouraged them to apply for roles that they wouldn't otherwise consider.

"...if anything comes up, any jobs come up, he'll phone you up just to find out whether you're interested in going in for it. Even if you need to be at a certain level, he tells me it's still worth going to interview, just in case there's no one there who is (at that level). Talent Coaches are a massive help."

Overwhelmingly, young people spoke of how they appreciated their Talent Coach's willingness to help, and the fact they could call them if they needed something - even if it wasn't job related.

In consultations earlier this year, Talent Coaches themselves discussed how a holistic approach had enabled them to help young people discover themselves. Afforded the time to truly get to know young people, they said they could have broader conversations about a young person's beliefs, values and mindset.

In addition to possessing these soft skills, Talent Coaches also acknowledged the importance of having a comprehensive knowledge of careers advice; the benefits system; the self-employment landscape and volunteering opportunities. Being plugged into networks with other agencies and services in an area (police, doctors, support groups), also helps young people progress beyond the end of Talent Match support, as they know what other local support is available.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Prevention Recommendations

Prevention Recommendations

Careers advice

We recommend that young people who are identified as being at risk of becoming NEET/hidden should be targeted to receive intensive careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) before leaving education.

Professionals and keyworkers supporting those who are already hidden must have access to high quality training so they can effectively support young people to make informed career decisions.

Echoing the findings of our [Hidden](#) report, this research has highlighted that many young people did not receive good quality CEIAG prior to joining the Talent Match programme. This has resulted in fractured journeys through education, difficult entry into the labour market and a fight to remain in employment. Hidden young people told us that they have made poor decisions due to lack of information and knowledge about the jobs market.

Increased employer awareness around ill health and disability

Several hidden young people we spoke to felt that their ill health and/or disabilities had prevented them from gaining or retaining employment due to prejudice from employers. **We recommended that employers should be offered information, training and support so they are aware of:**

- The wealth of talent they are often missing out on due to poor policy and practice around the recruitment and support of young people who have disabilities and /or ill health.
- How they can improve recruitment and retention through appropriate support and procedures.
- Their legal obligations regarding Disability Discrimination and Health and Safety at work.

Mental health support



We recommend that young people should be able to access appropriately targeted mental health support from an earlier age. Early intervention could help young people deal with mental health more effectively, before reaching crisis point.

Mental ill health was regularly mentioned as a barrier to employment. For many, being out of employment, education and training also exacerbated mental health issues, leading to a perpetuating cycle of illness. Hidden young people said that by the time they were on the Talent Match programme, the severity of their mental health concerns meant that they were not in the right frame of mind to apply for or sustain work.

The hidden young people we spoke to in interviews were now receiving access to mental health support thanks to their Talent Coaches, but many needed earlier support.

Tracking

We recommend that Local Authorities should track young people past the mandatory age of 18 and where possible should share the activity and destination of young people with partners, including Jobcentre Plus and further education institutions.

As mandatory destination tracking ends at the age of 18, it is difficult to say how many young people are hidden. Extended tracking would provide more accurate figures for both unemployment and those who are NEET and not claiming benefits. This would enable policy makers to make informed decisions about how to reach and support 'hidden' young people.

Jobcentre Plus

We recommend that Jobcentres should work with young people to make their services more accessible and supportive, creating a service that works better for young people.

It is clear from this research that hidden young people do not think the services provided by Jobcentre Plus (JCP) would help them find work. Those who accessed JCP services spoke of a lack of careers advice and tailored support. In particular, consideration should be given to ensuring registration forms are easy to complete (or that help is available to fill these in) and that the range of JCP services are better advertised outside of job centres.

Holistic style of work

We recommend that support for hidden young people should be holistic, addressing all areas of a young person's life.

An overwhelming success of the GM Talent Match programme has been the power of trust underpinning the Talent Coach-young person relationship.

Young people have repeatedly praised their Talent Coaches for not only helping them with their search for employment, but supporting them with difficulties associated with accommodation; relationships; counselling; welfare support and budgeting. This has enabled the GM Talent Match programme to work with hidden young people who have complex needs, ensuring that they are best prepared for work through nurturing stability and resilience.



Informal carers

We recommend that all employment support programmes be aware of and take into account the needs of young people who are informal carers.

We have found that many hidden young people have caring responsibilities (for younger family members or parents) that act as a barrier in them finding employment. When working with these young people, gaining the support of families can be crucial to success.

Mental health support

We recommend that all employment support programmes targeting hidden young people include mental health support and access to services.

Sixty per cent of the hidden young people surveyed in this report said they suffer from mental health issues which has created a barrier to employment.

Community organisations

We recommend that organisations with close community links should be commissioned to identify and support hidden young people.

This type of organisation have been central to working with hidden young people on the GM Talent Match Programme. They were commissioned in part because they are skilled at working in their specific localities. Some hidden young people are naturally reluctant at engaging with support, but, beneficiaries have told us that their prior recognition of a Talent Coach's face or reputation, and trust in the organisation they work for, overcame their reluctance to ask for help. In addition, Talent Coaches have consistently displayed an expert knowledge and understanding of local employers and services.

Early intervention

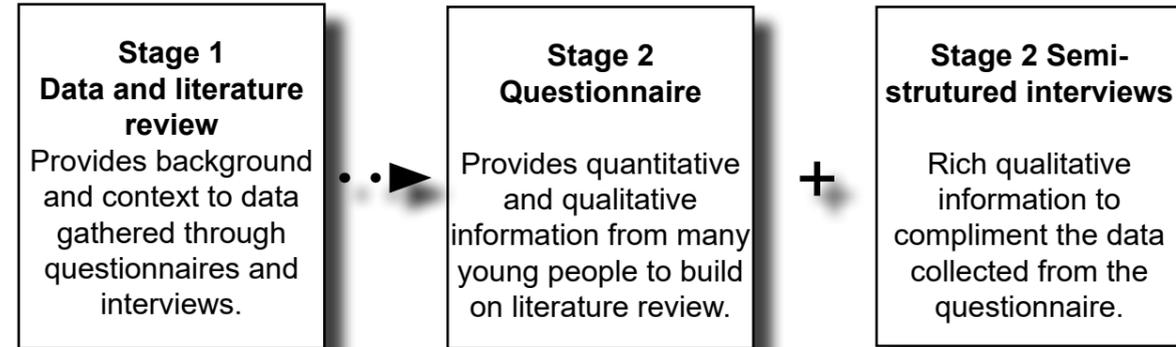
We recommend that support is given to young people at an early stage and that future employment programmes should enable access as soon as difficulties are identified.

Several of the young people we spoke to had required support long before they accessed the Talent Match programme, this meant that they were further away from the jobs market and that more intense support was needed to help them. Early intervention would mean that young people can be given light touch support early on to save more intensive support being needed at a later date.

Appendices

Methodology

This report incorporated two stages::



a) Stage 1

This initial stage will involve identifying sources of secondary research which provide a clearer picture of hidden young people, their profiles and their histories.

Research method	Aim
Literature review: desk based analysis	To identify sources of secondary research which provide evidence in response to the research aims. Searches will be based on literature from the UK, which has been published in the last 5 years, and key search terms include 'NEET', 'hidden young people' and 'youth unemployment'.
Data review: desk based analysis	Greater Manchester Talent Match beneficiary data will be used to provide context and background about the cohort.

b) Stage 2

The second stage sought further information about hidden young people to best identify how to best engage with and support them:

Research method	Aim
Questionnaire to hidden young people on the GM Talent Match database (including those that have exited the programme).	<p>To collect qualitative and quantitative information about hidden young people's backgrounds; current living situation; perceptions; and how best to reach and support them. CDF data on criminal offences and engagement with the Jobcentre Plus will be used to select type 1 hidden young people.</p> <p>Survey Monkey was used to create and distribute questionnaires. This cloud-based software is accessed online, supports the use of accessibility software such as screen readers and text-to-speech systems, and can be translated into 50 different languages</p> <p>A 7% response rate was the target return from this questionnaire. A small financial incentive was used to encourage young people to participate.</p>
Semi-structured interviews	<p>To explore young people's background and gather rich information on the subject matter. Interviews will be used to compliment and build upon responses from the survey, as well as the literature review.</p> <p>Interviews were initially carried out with members of the Youth Panel, however a snowball sampling technique as used to engage with more participants.</p> <p>A snowball sampling approach was adopted because, as the Hidden Young People report demonstrated, it is difficult engaging hidden young people.</p> <p>Carrying out five semi-structured interviews was the target.</p>

Survey recipients

To complete this research, a survey was designed for beneficiaries. Young people were selected using the following criteria:

- a. The young person does not have a criminal record
- b. The young person wasn't claiming benefits when they signed onto the Talent Match programme
- c. The young person hasn't exited the programme through losing contact with their Talent Coach

This search returned 211 young people who were contacted via their Talent Coaches, and asked to fill in the survey. Data analysis of survey recipients and survey respondents can be found in the Appendix I – Survey Recipients

Research interview recruitment

In-depth research interviews were held with seven young people who are current or former beneficiaries, and one non-beneficiary.

Members of the [Youth Panel](#) who fitted the type 1 typology were invited to take part in the Hidden young people interviews. One Youth Panel member attended an interview.

Talent Coaches were asked to identify other young people who fit the type 1 criteria and would be interested in attending a research interview. This led to interviews with six more young people.

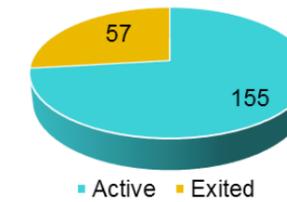
Participation

To encourage and thank young people for taking part in this analysis, gift vouchers were offered as an incentive to participate. £20 worth of gift vouchers as an incentive to complete the questionnaire, and a £20 voucher for each young person who participated in an interview, as well as reimbursing travel expenses.

Survey recipients makeup

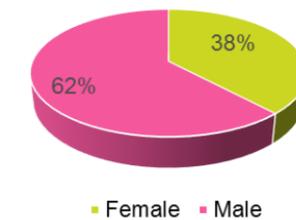
When applying our research criteria we had a group 211 young people. These young people were invited to take part in the survey.

Figure 1 shows that the majority of the young people invited to complete the questionnaire had not yet exited the programme, with 155 still currently on the programme, and 57 who have already exited.

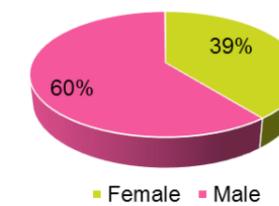


The gender of those invited to participate in the survey, unlike the gender breakdown of all hidden young people, closely matches the distribution seen across all of the Greater Manchester Talent Match beneficiaries.

Gender of Survey Recipients

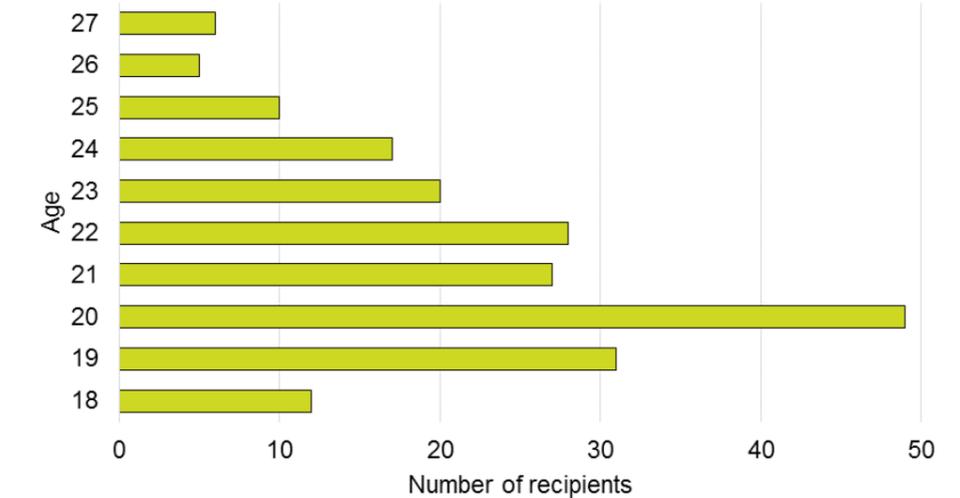


Gender of all GMTM Beneficiaries



The chart below shows the current age range of young people who

were invited to take part in the hidden young people survey, which is between 18 and 27.



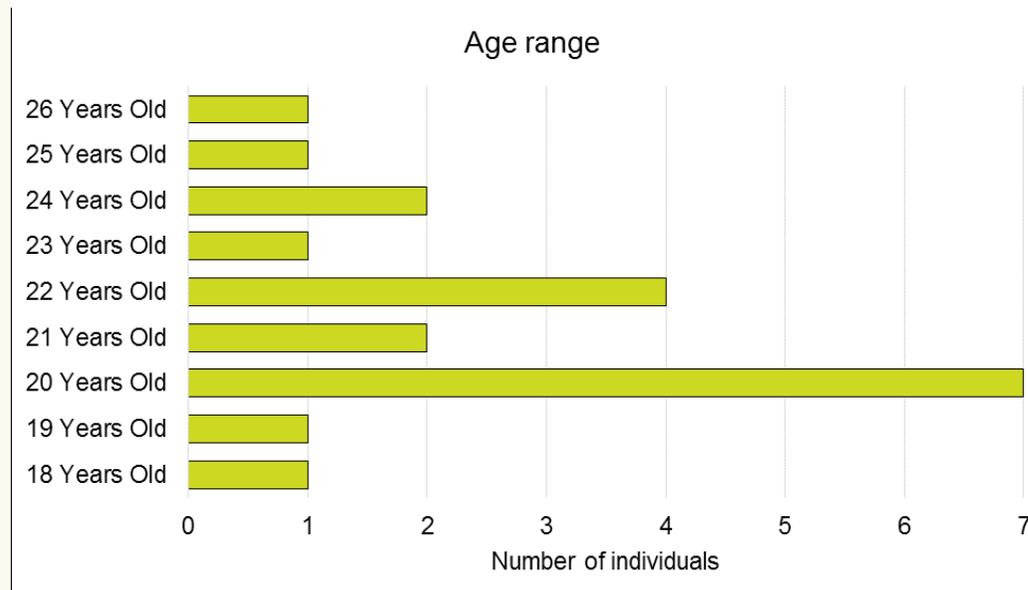
Survey respondents

Talent Coaches were asked to pass the surveys on to their young people, who were invited to complete the survey online. 20 young people responded to the survey, which is a response rate of 9%.

In terms of gender, this was evenly split, with 10 males and 10 females participating in the survey.

90% of the young people who completed the survey were currently active on the Talent Match programme. This was expected as coaches will still be in contact with these young people regularly, however, two young people who had exited the programme also completed the survey.

Survey respondents were varying ages, although there were seven young people aged 20, and four young people aged 22.



Individuals are asked whether they are 'employed', 'unemployed' or 'inactive'. Respondents who aren't employed are asked whether they would like work, the choices are 'yes' and 'no'. Individuals are later asked what their methods of looking for work is, and they choose from a list which includes 'visit a Jobcentre' as one of the variables. So those who fit into the age bracket (16-17, 18-19 or 20-24), are unemployed or inactive, would like to work, and hadn't visited the Jobcentre would be counted here. This data is collected quarterly.

The Labour Force Survey surveys around 80,000 people per cohort. This unfortunately means that not enough people in GM are surveyed (3,000-4,000) to get a significant figure hence why having to extrapolate from a UK figure.

Deriving GM hidden young person numbers from Labour Force Surveys

Our figure was based on the London Youth estimate calculated from Labour Force Survey (LFS) analysis. They concluded there are 480,000 hidden 16-24 year olds in the UK annually. This is 6.7% of the total 16-24 population for the UK.

Using 16-24 population estimates for Greater Manchester we arrived at a figure of 21,890 hidden young people in Greater Manchester (based on ONS figures of 326,724 16-24 year olds in the region).

In the LFS those who are unemployed or inactive are included in the hidden count - providing the person states that they want to work.