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Witnesses: Mr James Magowan, Mr Sam Monaghan and Ms Maggie Walker

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Members present

Baroness Corston (Chairman)
 Baroness Berridge
 Baroness Blood
 Lord Farmer
 Lord Holmes of Richmond
 Baroness Howells of St Davids
 Earl of Kinnoull
 Baroness Morris of Yardley
 Lord Patel
 Baroness Sharp of Guildford
 Baroness Tyler of Enfield

Examination of Witnesses

Mr James Magowan, Business Director (East of England), Tomorrow's People, **Mr Sam Monaghan**, Executive Director, Children's Services, Barnardo's, and **Ms Maggie Walker**, CEO, ASDAN

Q76 The Chairman: Welcome to this ninth evidence session on employability and life skills. As I am sure you realise, this session is open to the public and a webcast of it goes out live and is subsequently accessible via the parliamentary website. A verbatim transcript will be taken of your evidence and put on to the parliamentary website. A few days after this session, you will receive a copy of the transcript. We ask you to check it for accuracy and get any amendments to us as quickly as possible. If, after the session, you want to clarify or amplify any points you have made, you are very welcome to submit some further written evidence to us. Could you introduce yourselves for the record and then we will begin.

Mr James Magowan: My name is James Magowan. I am the business director for Tomorrow's People in the east of England.

Mr Sam Monaghan: I am Sam Monaghan, the corporate director for children's services for Barnardo's.

Ms Maggie Walker: I am Maggie Walker, chief executive of ASDAN.

Q77 The Chairman: I ought to say at the beginning that I wish to declare an interest. It might be an ancient interest. Nevertheless, for 11 years until 2008 I was a trustee, and proud to be, of ASDAN. If I may, I will start by pointing out that we are obviously interested in a group of young people who do not follow an academic route and may have a difficult

path into employment. What difficulties have you identified that are faced by them while you are helping them to navigate that transition from school to work?

Mr Sam Monaghan: There is a range of issues working with this cohort of young people. One is in the context of schools. Many of the young people we work with we work are in an environment in schools where the focus is very much on qualifications. Many of those children and young people have limited opportunity and limited aspiration, and because of that there is inertia in the school context in progressing them forward. Another challenge is that since the responsibilities of the Connexions service was taken back into schools, and schools' targets and focus are around educational attainment, we have found that the careers service is now far patchier in relation to the support and the opportunity that those young people have to explore diverse opportunities.

Our experience is also that for children and young people who are not academically motivated, driven or supported outside school, there are some genuine challenges with the conversation beginning early enough on what career opportunities and paths they might want to explore in the future. There are not the opportunities for work experience and failing and trying again and refocusing. You can risk going through a number of negative experiences or it just coming too late in their academic lives.

Finally, at the moment, the level of support to young people as they migrate or transit into work experience, whether that is traineeships or apprenticeships, is limited and patchy. We know those young people thrive best if they have people alongside them, as they are journeying into work and transiting into that experience, to help them to negotiate that, to help when it goes wrong and to work on how they can improve their ability when they are in the work placement.

Ms Maggie Walker: From ASDAN's side, we see a huge lack of personal and social development education within school nowadays. There used to be a lot, it used to be very good and it used to be valued. It is no longer valued or measured. Therefore, there is no qualification in it, it is not tested and it is put on the back burner. It is often given to teachers who really do their best, but they might be a geography teacher perhaps with two free periods on their timetable. It fills in gaps. This sort of education needs specialists. It needs people who really know what they are doing. I trained in careers education. It was quite a long course. It is not simple and straightforward; it is not easy because it is not tested. It is really important that young people get correct advice. PSHE allows young people to have a

safe space to fail, to learn how to fail, to be picked up and to go out and try again and to know that is not the end of the world. The lack of that within the curriculum at the minute is a real problem.

Young people are also getting mixed messages. They hear from the Government that the academic route is the valued route, that that is the way forward and that higher education is the way to go. Then they hear from the media and employers that skills are valued. They do not really know where to go, which is the important message, and that is really confusing. We need a really clear message.

Mr James Magowan: I support fully those views from both my colleagues here. I would add that, equally, we see parents who feel ill-equipped to advise young people at home alongside the schooling system. There is a gap in provision for support for young people between the ages of 16 and 18. Some young people will leave school at 16 and may not re-engage with statutory services until the age of 18, when they may encounter discussions with Jobcentre Plus. In between that period, the evidence and research we have seen suggests that young people are allowed to stay at home. Their parents would not necessarily put as much pressure on them to move out of the home until 18. Whilst there is certainly a group of young people who need extra support and have more severe needs, there is also a large group of young people out there who perhaps do not face as many social barriers but do not have the pressure to move on in life. Of course, that can have an impact on their aspirations and how they build their career going forward. There is that factor in the pressure that comes from home, but I would simply echo the point around good advice. We see and hear that parents feel ill-equipped to give that advice. The economy has moved on very quickly, jobs are not what they used to be, and the skillset that is required in the workplace has changed drastically—and will change if we are to believe research from people like UKCES, which suggests that there will be much more focus on the skills that we have just talked about: those non-cognitive skills, personal skills and interpersonal skills.

The Chairman: I think I am right in saying that the ASDAN programme had A-level or GCSE equivalents.

Ms Maggie Walker: It did.

The Chairman: That was withdrawn during the last Parliament.

Ms Maggie Walker: It was.

The Chairman: Is that what you meant when you said that that was a backward step?

Ms Maggie Walker: That was a really backward step, because young people saw that developing these skills really counted and they were valued and measured alongside their other qualifications. Suddenly they are not, so they do not see them as important. The messages are mixed.

Q78 Baroness Tyler of Enfield: I would like to declare two interests. I have just remembered that about 15 years ago I was deputy chief executive of the Connexions service and I am currently co-chair of the All-Party Group on Social Mobility.

The Committee has heard a lot of evidence so far that some of the critical skills that young people need for employment are these character and resilience traits: things such as a positive attitude and all that. While for some young people these skills will come fairly naturally, for others they will not. In your experience, what are the most effective ways for teaching these and indeed other employability and life skills that you have already alluded to?

Ms Maggie Walker: We would say through a programme of activity-based learning where skills are needed to complete the activities. They are real-life activities or role-play type activities and the skills are recognised and rewarded, as we said, ideally through qualifications or assessed programmes if we do not want to do it through qualifications, because that gives it a standard. It is easy to say that we can develop skills through activities, but it is done very haphazardly in a lot of situations. If you are working to a standard, whether that is a qualification standard or another type of assessment standard, you know what the young people are learning and you really know that they are hitting a certain level and they can go out and say that they are doing that. What is really interesting is that a lot of people presume that you can just embed skills into other courses. We would really like to stress that you cannot. It does not work. It was tried in Curriculum 2000. I was teaching then and key skills were added to A-levels. I understood skills. I was working with ASDAN then whilst I was in school. I was a real fan of skill-based education. I still taught the subject knowledge and focused on that, because that is what the young people were going to be tested on. It is really difficult to say that we will embed it into other work that is going on in the curriculum, because it really does not work.

The qualification that has just been referred to is the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness. The assessment of that qualification is on the soft skills, the key skills: working with others, problem solving, research, presentation, et cetera, which all the employers are telling us we

need. The University of the West of England did some research into it involving a whole cohort of young people, not just a small number. It discovered that if young people worked on a Certificate of Personal Effectiveness at level 2, they were 11% more likely to gain English at A to C because of developing the transferable skills that helped them in their other studies, so they also developed the skills for going out to work. They did some further research on English and maths because it was so powerful, and they were 19% more likely to get A to C in English and maths. This qualification has been taken away from performance tables, which feels a little bizarre.

It also really helps to close the attainment gap, because the impact is greater with young people on free school meals and in other minorities. We would say that skills must be taught, they must be focused on and they should be assessed.

Mr James Magowan: To echo that, I saw some research from behavioural scientists recently that talks about what has just been described as skills banking, in that the development of softer skills, interpersonal skills and skills for motivation and attentiveness clearly can help with learning. Quite often at Tomorrow's People we work with vulnerable people who are not ready to learn and take some of the steps that are required to move their lives forward, be it through an apprenticeship or traineeship. Often there is a lot of pre-apprenticeship and pre-traineeship training that needs to take place in order to do precisely what has just been described: to help people to build that personal resilience. For us it comes with two key facets that need to be provided in order for these things to be learnt, and that is to have a trusted and responsible adult who has aspirations for that young person and who can go with them on a journey. I would totally support the idea of intervening as early as possible to have that person there who can give good advice along the way.

The other thing that comes through—this is perhaps more relevant for post-16 young people when they leave school, but certainly it is true in school environments too—is to create a trusting environment for people to interact in, an environment where they feel comfortable having those conversations. Too often young people are in environments where they do not feel comfortable. Recent feedback from the YMCA talks about how young people feel about the job centres they go into. They do not feel comfortable in those environments and they feel to some extent that it is having an impact on the conversations they can have with people and the decisions they make.

Mr Sam Monaghan: I agree with both my colleagues but I would bring out the issue of stability and support. In Barnardo's we really welcomed the Staying Put agenda from the Government to ensure that people who are looked after can stay in placement until the age of 21. It removes the brinkmanship that they used to get into as they approached 18 of, "I'll blow the placement before the placement blows me out". You have the potential for increased stability, which is really important. You need that whether you are in care or not. Care leavers are a particular priority for us. We know that many of them do not have the skills. We know that many of them have blown school and other opportunities because they do not have the resilience to cope with things when they go wrong. This picks up on a point from James about that support in work, because you need to give them not only the skills but sometimes the back-up in the form of people who can intervene when things do not work out. A really good example from one of our services in Lincolnshire was where workers were working alongside care leavers on employment training skills. When a young person for the seventh time waltzed out of a workshop in the mechanics environment that he was in, the worker was there to go back in to renegotiate and to help that young person reflect on and learn from the experience and to try and build that resilience and learn the negotiation skills which they need when they are dealing with work colleagues or their bosses. It is about walking that journey. Some young people need it more intensively to help them negotiate the first months during which they are realising that the placement is not going to give up on them in the way they may feel that school or other opportunities have given up on them in the past.

The Chairman: We have had some evidence that nobody works with low achievers. From what the witnesses are saying today I guess that some of you do work with what are called low achievers. Is that right?

Mr Sam Monaghan: Yes, extensively.

Ms Maggie Walker: Yes.

Mr James Magowan: Yes, we do.

Baroness Berridge: We have been receiving evidence from employers, the education sector, the voluntary sector and civil society. Do you have any evidence you can give us on the decline in civil society? There used to be clubs and societies where maybe some of these young people picked up these skills. I am thinking particularly of the role of the faith

institutions here. When I think of the Jewish community, a lot of capital is built in outside of families. Have any of you had that with young people, particularly the low achieving?

Ms Maggie Walker: No.

Mr James Magowan: Not specifically. Clearly with less funding in the pot for public services, I suspect there will have been a decline in what is on offer and what has been able to be facilitated for young people. We do not hear young people talking about it specifically in the community context. The point was made earlier that the Connexions service was removed. That left a gap. I do not think that is precisely what you are talking about, but offers like that gave at least a focal point for young people. They knew that they could go to it and get the advice and support they wanted. Whether they got what they wanted out of it when they got there is another thing, but at least there was a brand, a name, that they could go to.

We are working at the moment on a programme called MyGo with Suffolk County Council in Ipswich in the east of England. It is a partnership arrangement whereby we work alongside Jobcentre Plus, PeoplePlus, a welfare to work organisation, and hand in glove with Suffolk County Council in partnership to make it work. It gives young people focal point. It is all branded MyGo, so there is no Jobcentre Plus, Tomorrow's People or PeoplePlus. I know that does not precisely answer your question, but if there are more places such as that where young people know they can go to get advice, that has to be a good thing. I cannot comment on a specific decline in faith services, I am afraid.

Mr Sam Monaghan: There are certainly some strong communities where faith, family involvement and young people finding significant others is really valued, but it is not a consistent network that provides that support. You also have things such as the uniformed organisations—scouts, the Boys Brigade and organisations like that—which can clearly provide some of that grounding. Again there are significant others where you can explore adult themes and your emerging adulthood outside of your family.

The other thing I am struck by from working in the sector is the decline of youth-based services due to the impact of the constriction on public spending. Some of the associations and organisations that were around previously that were reliant on some funding from the public sector to keep them going no longer have that, and some of them have gone to the wall. We have seen some of the infrastructure taken out that provided support, particularly in the more deprived communities.

Ms Maggie Walker: I would agree with that. I have no specific evidence on faith-based organisations, but certainly in Bristol and the south-west we see these services struggling much more. Charities are often trying to pick things up and they are not getting the funding; there are some holes appearing.

Q79 Baroness Blood: Before I ask a question I must declare an interest. I was chair of Barnardo's in Northern Ireland for many years and a trustee here in Great Britain. I have not been connected with them these last three or four years but was really privileged to be there.

I want to ask the question I asked of the previous witnesses. How important is a recognised qualification in numeracy and literacy as a requirement for employment? I ask because I work among young people in Northern Ireland who leave school at 16 and cannot read or write, and for them it is lost already.

Ms Maggie Walker: I would say that a recognised qualification is really important, but it should not necessarily be GCSE. I would suggest that GCSE maths and English are a really good indicator of somebody's ability to go further with A-level or higher education. It is written to do that. Functional skills in literacy and numeracy are shown to be excellent and effective indicators for the workplace, too. The trouble is that employers do not appear to be able to get past the fact that they must have GCSE in English and maths, so they are losing some really good and effective potential employees. Young people are losing the chance to get into the workplace through that door because of the perception that functional skills are not quite as good. They are just as good and perhaps even better if a young person is going directly into work.

Mr Sam Monaghan: I would add only one thing. We have been conjecturing on apprenticeships and the gateway into those, which is often around the A to C banding, let alone just passing. If we were able to look to the future and build in exit rather than entry qualifications as part of things such as traineeships and apprenticeships, that might be a way forward. By doing so you would be recognising that some people start further away in their literacy and numeracy, so you build into the whole process the fact that by the end of the apprenticeship that will have been worked with alongside it. As part of the package, you seek their exiting with qualifications for the next stage of the journey rather than it just being seen as a bar and inhibitor and nobody is doing anything about it.

Baroness Blood: Are the current Government reforms successful in mitigating this inequality, or do you find that this is a growing inequality?

Ms Maggie Walker: We have found that it is a growing inequality. It is interesting that the young people who we are talking about here are the largest group of young people.

Baroness Blood: Absolutely.

Ms Maggie Walker: They are seen as not being NEET and not going into HE, yet they are the largest group of young people and they are the young people we should be worrying about.

Mr James Magowan: The other thing to note alongside what my colleagues have said is that nearly all the employer surveys that have been done in recent times—one as recent as the CBI survey of employers survey this year—picked up the fact that alongside qualifications in numeracy and literacy, it is as important that the aptitudes and attitudes of young people are in the right place, as previously discussed. Those are seen to be complementary to those skills. At Tomorrow's People we feel it is absolutely essential for young people to be equipped with those skills in order for them to learn and continue learning. We have seen certain employers who have taken a really good and progressive view to this in the apprenticeships they provide. The Barclays Foundation Apprenticeship states, "Your background and educational experience really do not matter. If you have a can-do attitude, energy, initiative and potential to do brilliantly we would love to meet you". That is a really good approach to take. Evidently Barclays is going to want a basic understanding in literacy and numeracy in the young people they employ, but they are accepting of the fact that not everybody has attained that certain standard, and they can help and support those young people if the attitude and aptitude is in the right place.

The Chairman: Mr Monaghan, in relation to the evidence you submitted to us, you said that one thing you would particularly like to see is better support for young people who need it in order to undertake further education or training. Would you see that working a bit like the old education maintenance allowance?

Mr Sam Monaghan: Something along those lines. We need to look at the financial support to those young people to equip them and to enable them to engage but also to sustain that placement and that work. So something very much along those lines would be helpful.

The Chairman: To cover bus fares, for example?

Mr Sam Monaghan: Yes, it is about recognising that for some of those young people, particularly when you are talking about those who have been in care or close to going into

care, there are sometimes real problems with them learning budgeting skills. In the first place you need to cut them some slack and then move to gradually tightening their ability to manage their finances. When you have none, it becomes another deterrent to engaging or becomes another reason for saying, “Why bother?”.

Q80 Baroness Howells of St Davids: I am specifically interested in black young men. Women seem to be doing better. Have you come across any of those in the work that you do? Any special difficulties?

Mr James Magowan: We run a programme in south London called In-2-Work, and that was the only encounter where there has been a specific focus on ethnicity in the group we worked with. Originally it was started up in partnership with the Metropolitan Police to encourage young people living on estates in and around the Brixton and Kennington area to engage with us. We found that a lot of the young men coming in were black young men, many of whom had been involved in gang activity and wanted to get out of that and were seeing that work as the way forward to do that. Clearly having a conversation with an adviser in a sympathetic and understanding way, where we could build on some of the character traits that we have been talking about, to exemplify through experiences that there was a way forward and something they could offer to employers. That is the only experience where I have come across it, I am afraid.

Ms Maggie Walker: Our programmes are used with a lot of charities in the youth sector in Bristol that work with the Somalian community, and in particular young men trying to develop their work skills. That is the main area that we have worked in.

Mr Sam Monaghan: From Barnardo’s point of view, we do not work with specific projects or programmes for young people from BME communities, but we work with them in an integrated and supportive way. I suppose it comes back to the point that we were making earlier about people making the journey. If you find young people who because of their background have not had a positive experience in education, or who have struggled in the management of behaviour or struggled with expectation, those challenges run the risk of being replicated as they transit into the workplace. It is about having staff who are mindful of the uniqueness of each young person they work with and then having the flexibility within the programmes they deliver to provide the right level of support to help those people to overcome the challenges and to have choices about how they shape their future and reflect on past experiences.

Baroness Howells of St Davids: Some large employers have certainly begun to change their recruitment practices. I worked in that field for a long time, and lots of employers told me that they had not realised they were being racist. The negative attitudes of young black people are there because of how they have been treated in schools especially, and sometimes for good reason. A teacher would say to me, "I don't correct his work because it might be racist". It is the old thing about not being able to ask for black coffee. That was until I asked them what was wrong with black. The kids are victims of racism, and that is keeping a lot of them back.

Mr Sam Monaghan: If you have workers working alongside them, with employers as well, you have the opportunity in a work placement to unpick some of the issues that start to arise in the attitudes and approaches of managers and colleagues towards that young person.

Baroness Howells of St Davids: They have to get there first. I get employers telling me now that they ask for students to come in to get some experience and they say, "I have never had a black child sent to me". I want you to know that that is an inhibitor. We get a lot of community groups to work with them as mentors. I just wonder if it has ever concerned you that that was not happening in the way that I am trying to portray to you.

Ms Maggie Walker: It has concerned ASDAN as an employer. We really thought that we ought to put our money where our mouth was and look at our apprenticeship programme. We fund it out of our grants money because we are a charity, but we take young people who probably would not get through the door anywhere else. That is a significant investment for a small organisation, because we look at the young person on paper, we realise that they probably would not get past that stage, we invite them in and then we look for the skills and possibilities. We can see something in them. Interestingly, our three most recent have been from smaller ethnic communities.

Baroness Howells of St Davids: I am talking about black communities.

Ms Maggie Walker: Not just black communities but a variety. It is interesting, because I really do feel that nobody would have taken them on as an apprentice because on paper they did not look able. We have had one young man from whom the success has been magical. He came to us, went on a level 2 apprenticeship and then to a level 3 apprenticeship, and we have now employed him. He is a really valuable member of our IT

team now, which is fantastic. He had two GCSEs at very low grades and probably would not have got that opportunity.

Baroness Howells of St Davids: That is where the racism I am talking about works, because nobody takes that interest. A young man whose first job as a quantity surveyor was on the tallest building we now have in Britain, said, “I expect I will have to be a window cleaner”. We got him into a group where they discovered that he was scared of heights and we asked how that would work. Is any real effort made trying to get other black people working on the teams you work with who will get into the community, because there is a lot of work going on in the community that can help in the work you are doing? I should not be telling you what to do.

The other thing is that I hear of the support that you are giving when people are navigating the job market and applying for jobs, and I would like to commend that, because that is quite a difficult thing for people who are not taught that at school. I just wonder whether there is anything you can suggest that we can put in our report that would help it to happen, because I know it is necessary and you have pointed it out.

Mr Sam Monaghan: Can you repeat the question?

Baroness Howells of St Davids: What do you see the report suggesting about supporting young people to get into those jobs if they have not had that support at school, and about helping firms that are trying to change their policies and get people into work, because they need a lot of help too?

Mr Sam Monaghan: I will start off with where we would like to see some of the change. That change, as I said before, would be having an earlier dialogue with the children and young people for whom the academic route is not the direction they necessarily want to go in or have an ability in. People in schools who are looking at the whole careers agenda are starting to work with them about what opportunities there might be to explore, and they look not just at work experience as the thing that you do two years before you leave school but rather as part of a process. Maybe for those young people who are going to be going into the workplace sooner, there are enhanced opportunities to explore those work environments and to be thinking more constructively and realistically about what those opportunities might be. It is then about working, as we are and I know the colleagues are, with organisations to pre-bed them into taking young people who may have some additional needs and enabling them to feel supported, so that when those young people start with

them we are not going to push them through the door and then run away, so they feel there is going to be an ongoing relationship here and consistency. James mentioned the point about there being one person earlier. Employers need one person to do that as much as the young person needs one person, so that they feel the whole thing is joined together and that there is somebody walking that route. If we can get far more of a joined-up process through education into work, that will really help a lot of these young people who are furthest away from it.

Q81 Earl of Kinnoull: To a large extent we have been hearing that employability and life skills are things that come out of exposure to the work place. Could you summarise briefly how you work with employers and how the businesses get involved in your training programmes, and in particular what works well and what difficulties there are in working with employers and getting their engagement?

Mr James Magowan: I will give two examples of a larger and a smaller employer, because clearly SMEs are often overlooked when we are talking about how to support young people into work. A larger employer we have worked with is Three mobile, which recognised the work I highlighted earlier of pre-apprenticeship training and getting young people ready for that step into the workplace. Also, they were very conscious of the fact that some of the young people we are working with are less equipped for that adjustment to working life and some of the behaviours that are expected in work environments. We developed with them a programme of support shorter than our normal programmes, a bridging programme of a few weeks, which allows those young people to start to understand the business better and to get some active work experience in Three mobile stores, and at the end of it they were guaranteed an interview with Three mobile if they completed the weeks they were on the programmes. There was an opportunity then to work within the organisation. There was a meshing of what they did by bringing people in through their normal recruitment practices and what we do as an organisation in a much better way than quite often when we are working with young people and we are trying to secure for them opportunities afterwards. Quite often we will bring employers into the programmes that we run and give young people real experiences of how those employers operate. That was a much more integrated approach. It still runs now and it has proved very successful in helping young people to transition into work, particularly young people from quite vulnerable backgrounds. Similar is the experience of introducing young people to businesses. I cite the example of a small and

medium-sized enterprise that we work with in East Sussex, a landscape firm that only had two or three employees. We run a particular programme, which is a project working with rural communities. This particular one worked in Heathfield in East Sussex. There was a young man who needed a fair bit of support from us, it is fair to say, but we were able to convince the employer that taking this young person on could be a benefit to them and enhance their business. For a small business it is quite a risk to see somebody coming in from outside, potentially somebody who has no experience of the work they are doing. We helped to get that young person's attitude and motivation in the right place. We explained to them the behaviours that would be expected. The employer had come in and started to understand how we operated as an organisation. That young person then got some experience in the business. The business quickly realised that having that extra person working with them was a benefit to them, as they could take on more business. Talking the language of employers is the message to come out of that. As much as it is helping the young people, it is helping the businesses to see what the benefits are to them and trying to create a common dialogue that allows them to see the financial benefits.

Ms Maggie Walker: I agree with that totally. We have just set up a new working partners programme, and we have over 4,000 centres and over 3,000 schools registered with us. We are trying to link our schools with employers to help the real-life side of the careers education programmes that obviously our schools are offering. We are finding it quite difficult to explain to the employers that they will get something out of it, that we are trying to match need with provision and that they can "try before you buy". This is a really good way to do it. It is starting to build and they are starting to see the advantage. They are also starting to understand that they really need to know a bit more about the education which the young people have. They are realising that things have changed so much. A lot of employers do not realise that. I got a phone call a year ago from a young person who had gone for an interview with an ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness, and he had proudly taken his portfolio of all his achievements. Obviously he had been encouraged to do it by a very good teacher. The employer rang me up and said, "I don't know what this is. Can I trust it, and is it an O-level?". That really worried me, because when did O-levels end? We need to help employers understand what a young person's life is at school and what they are doing, and then how they can recognise good future employees.

Mr Sam Monaghan: The only thing I would add is in relation to getting to the ownership or the senior managers—we work a lot with small and medium-sized businesses—and engaging with the owner or the CEO, because if they have their heart in what they are doing that will enable them to support the workforce in accommodating and supporting the young person as they go on their journey into work. That has been really valuable learning for us.

Q82 Baroness Morris of Yardley: You answered the question I was going to ask you in following up on Baroness Blood's questions. I will ask it anyway, but I invite you to add anything if there is anything else you want to add to it. It is about the recruitment process. We have heard that quite a lot of employers are changing what they say they are looking for now, especially for those without academic qualifications. You responded to that, but is there anything else you want to say about the recruitment process and crossing that bridge from school to work for the group of people we are talking about? Thinking of applications, what could employers do and what might change to make it easier for that group to get the jobs they want, which they are probably well able to do?

Ms Maggie Walker: They could have a positive approach, as we have had with our apprentice programme. If you have a positive approach and look beyond the bit of paper you get at the first stage and invite young people in and take a chance to get to know them, that might help to open doors for young people. Also, if employers get to know individual schools—they cannot do everything, I understand that—and if they went in more, the schools would be delighted to have them, I am sure. They could go through the door and get a feeling for the young people in their local communities. That applies especially to smaller employers. There are a lot of very large employers, especially in London, which do an awful lot of good work in this area. If you look nationally it can be much more difficult, because there is a cost to this. There are also perhaps not as many staff and it can be quite burdensome.

There are good examples. There is a garage in the north-east that takes in young people from about three local schools for work experience from primary age. They deliver our programmes and qualifications in the garage. The mechanics all take part in this and they all tutor, and it is really quite inspirational work. They are never short, therefore, of getting people into work. Young people are not saying, "I don't want to go and work in a garage". They are quite excited about going there.

Mr Sam Monaghan: We need to get a positive message out as well. We reviewed our figures at the end of last year. Seventy-four per cent of the young people who went through Barnardo's apprenticeships were successful last year. That is the cohort you are talking about today. They are not the ones who are university or A-level ready; they are young people who are not, and three-quarters of them made a success of those apprenticeships.

The other thing we would say is that there is a bit of a carrot and stick as well. With the number of new apprenticeships that the Government are proposing, we believe that a cohort of those should be put within a ring-fence for the groups of young people who are going to find it that bit harder and will need the additional support.

Baroness Morris of Yardley: Would you say that the problem was pre-sift? If you think of it as two stages, does my application form get me the interview? We talked about changes for what you ask at the application stage. If the young people you are working with get to interview—they get through that first barrier, because some changes have been made—do you find that it is almost a level playing field and that they perform very well and are as likely to get the job as anyone else? Where is the barrier?

Ms Maggie Walker: It depends on the young person, because often those who have the help at home and who have the advantages that perhaps these other young people do not have also have somebody to talk them through mock interviews and help them to prepare. They perhaps get something nice to wear at the interview, et cetera. We all make judgments and I make them. It is very difficult to remind yourself not to make them. It is about a positive approach from the employer, that it does not matter what that young person is wearing and that they are not as smart as the other one. It does not matter that they are not quite able to have the same sort of conversation or answer the questions in the same way but that there may be something else, and to help them with that. It is about a change of behaviour from the employer.

Mr James Magowan: There is also something in our national dialogue about this subject, which we are as guilty of as anybody if you look at the labels that we apply to people. We do not apply a specific label to people over the age of 40 who are not in work, but we do apply "NEET" to young people. A step change has to come, along with some of the technical changes that we have been discussing in that positivity—the word that we started out with here—in really understanding the benefits of bringing young talent and energy into organisations. I had lot more energy at 16 than I have now, I can tell you, and probably a lot

more ideas as well. It is guiding that energy and those ideas that can be a massive benefit for businesses. If we can get that message across in the right way and change the national dialogues about young people coming through as something positive for our economy and our society, we will have gone a long way to starting to solve this problem.

Q83 Lord Farmer: Going on from recruitment to employment, there has been written evidence to us that structured post entry induction and training for young people once they are in role was important for progression, or simply for keeping the job. We have also heard evidence that employers are nervous—we have touched on this already—about employing young people and those with less recognised qualifications, and that improved guidance for the employers could help. What support and guidance would you recommend be available to employers when they recruit young people and to young people when they move into work?

Mr James Magowan: I would recommend having some resource within organisations that seeks specifically to understand where those young people are coming from. That sounds a bit strange, but it requires a resource within a business that is more sympathetic to the needs of that group. We talked about a trusted adult who can guide and advise somebody from early years in school through to the point of entry into work. That trusted adult was often still in the background. Indeed, on programmes that we run and I am sure some of the programmes my colleagues here run, our work does not stop when that person goes into a job. We are there in the background for them to go to. That needs to mirror, not precisely in the same way but to some degree, the way the employer and HR teams operate. It is about having somebody there whose specific role is to look out for new young entrants who have come into the business and to help other parts of the business sometimes to say diplomatically, “I appreciate that so-and-so has spoken out of turn at a meeting and perhaps does not understand all the protocols and the way these meetings work, but give them some guidance and support”, and about somebody being able to help to translate that for people in business. I have worked in the private sector as well as the charity sector and, trust me, you go to a meeting sometimes and you want it to work and be a good meeting and you do not want to take any risks. I think it is important that you have somebody in the business who understands better the environment that some of these young people are coming from. I do not just mean the social environment but their age group and therefore how they are going to act and behave and how they need to be supported.

Ms Maggie Walker: That is very true. If you can take it a bit further—I know it is expensive for employers—and that person can go into schools and provide the link, be the bridge between the two transition stages of that young person’s life, then they understand and feel more comfortable when they get there. We should not underestimate the fact that you could have in school a structured programme developing the skills needed for employment that also continues, in progression, into work. That is quite straightforward to do but very few employers pick that up at the moment. They could do that and that would really support a young person, rather than them just suddenly getting to work and realising they are an adult and all the support has gone.

Mr Sam Monaghan: It can also be a talent-spotting environment for potential employers. I suppose because of who we are, Barnardo’s sometimes gets companies approaching us. One very interesting investment company came to us and said they would like take our top 20 young people from across our employment programmes, bring them together in London and let them sit alongside the HR people, the finance people, the administrators and the other people in the organisation, to open up the world of work to them—not with anything tied in as a definite, but to give them an opportunity to think about young people who might at some point want to go into that career, and who they might be excited and interested to work with. It gave those young people a huge opportunity to see a different sort of world that they would not have encountered in any other way. We need to use industry and commerce to open up those potentials and to see the wins they might have, as well as getting people from the top universities to come in in groups and meet them to look at some of those young people.

Q84 Baroness Sharp of Guildford: Can I pick up this notion of some sort structured programme? It has become clear from all the evidence we have had that this issue of transition is extremely important, and it has to be collaborative with schools and businesses—and for that matter government themselves playing a part. Nevertheless, somebody has to co-ordinate that. Who do you think within the system might be best placed to provide this element of push or co-ordination between the different partners?

Ms Maggie Walker: That is a difficult one. You have got to the nub of the problem as to whose responsibility all of this is. It is very difficult. You see people running backwards as soon as it becomes their responsibility. It has to be a partnership between schools and employers; it cannot be anything else. ASDAN is a charity but also an awarding body and we

provide those programmes. We are able to do things such as that. We pull partners together to work on the same sorts of programmes, to look at the progression, assessment needs and development needs of young people, so organisations such as ours—and we are not alone, I am sure— could do things like that. So perhaps it is the third sector, but has to be a partnership approach. People have to want to work together to achieve this.

Baroness Sharp of Guildford: You probably need to have somewhere behind it a push from Government—in other words, PHSE taken seriously.

Ms Maggie Walker: It is not even just a push; I think it is a recognition that it is valuable, because there is a real feeling outside that it is just not important. It is one of those other things that you can do if you have got a bit of time. I have actually heard it said, “You can do it with those kids”, as if it is not important that all young people develop these skills. It is really very frightening. It would be fantastic to have some money put into it and a push—but just a recognition that it is valuable, as valuable as the other work people do with young people.

Mr James Magowan: For me, the notion that there has to be a central government department that takes responsibility for this is key. We have talked about where the responsibility lies. Much of what the DWP does starts at 18, although I know they work with younger people, so that covers the 18 to 24 group if you are looking at the traditional 16 to 24 group we might be talking about. The DfE clearly works with young people while they are in education but what happens if they leave education at 16? Then you have the raising of the participation age legislation, which falls into the hands of local authorities, and that is DCLG. How many government departments have I mentioned already? It needs one co-ordinating group that can follow that journey the young person takes through their transition from school and out into work.

Mr Sam Monaghan: Connexions was in that space. It was not perfect but it was operating within a space that met some of that need and maybe provided a more focused, targeted approach in relation to this, because what we have now is very patchy across the country.

Q85 Baroness Blood: I am going to ask you a really easy question. We have received evidence from more than 45 different organisations who work directly with young people. Is there any co-ordination or coherence across these different providers? In others words, do you work together?

Ms Maggie Walker: We were just talking about this outside, because Barnardo's and ASDAN do work together quite a lot. We work with different organisations but in the current climate it is interesting. People are tendering for work; they are tendering for their income to put programmes together and that causes competition and not necessarily co-operation. We are lucky in the fact that we work very differently from most of these organisations. We do not work directly with young people; we provide the programmes, so we tend to be able to partner with a lot of different organisations in that way. I have watched people who should possibly work together and do not because of the tendering process.

Mr Sam Monaghan: I would echo that. We work closely with Action for Children, the Prince's Trust and the learning provider network in Northern Ireland and we seek to collaborate and work alongside them, but I suppose what we are all very conscious of is that programmes chop and change. We are waiting for the local enterprise partnerships to start up, and there is a degree of inertia within that whole context that is not helpful and then does not support full collaboration and co-operation. We recognise particularly in the third sector you need to work together and understand what is going on out there and then mutually support one another wherever possible.

Mr James Magowan: Funding often allows it as well, as well as providing competitive environments, so I would stand up for the funders a little bit. The Big Lottery actively encourages you to work with other organisations to acquire funding. For example, in the Building Better Opportunities funding that is currently being tendered, partnership is written large all over the documentation for that. There is an emphasis on it from funders. I totally agree with the point that the competitive market place out there sometimes makes that hard to achieve.

Q86 Lord Patel: My question is pretty straightforward. We need a recommendation that will be punchy enough to change the scene and improve social mobility, employment outcomes and opportunities for young people. What would that recommendation be, one from each?

Mr James Magowan: We have touched upon the Connexions service already. I think many people would accept that it was a good service but there was room for improvement. The key thing that comes out from both what was being provided through Connexions and what we see many of our organisations do now is having a trusted, responsible adult with aspirations for every young person who is coming out of school and making that transition into adult life. Somebody who is qualified to give good advice and can support those young

people through into education, training, employment, whatever the right step for them is when they leave school, is absolutely essential. We simply do not have enough of that at the moment in the national curriculum.

Mr Sam Monaghan: I would go with something similar but slightly more focused: a support fund around apprenticeships and the targeting of a proportion—say, 20,000—of the 3 million apprenticeships that the Government are promising to be designated for care leavers, because they are some of the most vulnerable young people in our society, the furthest away from work and those with the poorest outcomes across the whole spectrum.

Ms Maggie Walker: I would talk about skills and I would like to quote one of our schools, which sent me something too late to be put in as evidence. George Stephenson High School in the north-east of England referred to, “...recognising there is a genuine need for young people to develop a range of skills, abilities and attitudes that whilst not readily quantifiable themselves are the ones which facilitate both vocational and academic achievement and, most importantly, coincide with the identified needs of the potential employers”.

The Chairman: Thank you very much for travelling to London and giving us your time today. It has been a very useful session. Thank you very much.