

5 Employment Obstacles for Young People (And how to overcome them)

By Murray Cresswell, Young Persons Employment Advisor, Skills Connect

Finding sustainable employment is difficult, especially given the current circumstances we are facing. It can often feel like a hurdle too high to jump. At Voluntary Norfolk, we are happy to assist in giving you support to minimise the jump into the career you want!

It is important to understand the obstacles that directly affect you, in order to create action plans to combat them. Here is a list of common barriers below which may be affecting you and some ways of overcoming them.

1. Not having the required experience

We have all seen the job adverts that say experience is essential. They can be hugely frustrating because they leave you wondering 'well.... how do I then get experience for this job'. However, there are a number of ways of overcoming this problem.

1. Find apprenticeships and internships that will give you the relevant skills needed.
2. Consider emailing companies to give you unpaid work experience.
3. Develop your transferable skills by volunteering with local charities.
4. Reflect on what makes you a great candidate rather than what you're lacking in i.e. experience.
5. Network with sector experts using LinkedIn.

2. Lack of jobs available

It can be helpful for your wellbeing to remind yourself that we are currently facing unprecedented times. Certain industries which young people usually found employment in, including hospitality and retail, have taken a significant hit in the past year. Opportunities remain scarce but there is a lot you can do in the meantime to get you ready for when work reopens.

1. Work on updating your CV with a Young Person's Employment Advisor in order to maximise the skills you have.
2. Find volunteering opportunities at Voluntary Norfolk to boost your CV.
3. Use the time to organise a road map for your future.

3. Not having enough qualifications

You're more than the piece of paper that details your grades, but having GCSE's or NVQ's can help boost your chances of finding employment as they are sometimes an essential requirement on a person specification. Going back into full time education may not be a viable option so we have produced a list of possible options.

1. Find part time courses at City College Norwich or Norfolk County Council.
2. Find online accredited CPD courses to develop your skills.

3. Develop your skills at ACE, ST-EDS and Clarion Futures gaining recognised qualifications.
4. Consider undertaking a diploma or degree at the Open University.

4. Lacking in confidence or self esteem

Many young people looking for their first job in particular struggle with a lack of confidence about entering the working world. It can be overwhelming as it feels like completely new territory but it is important to remember that all of your life experiences including your education, family life and hobbies give you great transferable skills that ensure you are more than equipped for this new challenge.

1. Consider applying for traineeships. These are great courses to get you ready for work or an apprenticeship.
2. Mind-map all of your educational, work and personal experiences, detailing the skills you have developed throughout these. Consider how these skills might transfer into a working environment (this can be a good start of a CV!)
3. Ask family and friends what they think are your best qualities and write them down.
4. If you feel like a lack of confidence is negatively affecting you outside of work, consider reaching out to your GP, a counselling service or mental health charity to get some support for your mental health.

5. Having the motivation to apply for work

Applying for work can be a difficult process, particularly when you are unsuccessful in your pursuit. This can have an adverse effect on your motivation to find employment and continue the search for a career. The current pandemic has taken a large toll on our mental health meaning many people are feeling more demotivated than usual – you're not alone!!!

1. Focus on taking care of your emotional, mental and physical health, seeking external help through your GP or other services if necessary.
2. Develop a small action plan with achievable goals to accomplish each week. Reward yourself when these are completed.
3. Explore career goals and write them down. The I Can Be A website is a great tool to find a career in an area you care about.
4. Use feedback constructively from your biggest supporters.
5. Take time for yourself and recuperate doing the things you love.

It is important to remember you are not alone in overcoming employment challenges. There is a variety of support available to you which Voluntary Norfolk is happy to assist you in finding.

Get in touch with Murray at murray.cresswell@voluntarynorfolk.org.uk or call him on 07917 908 664.