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Teenagers are lacking close encounters of the work kind

THE number of young people not in education, employment or training – so-called NEETs – has increased for a second consecutive quarter to more than 12 per cent of the country's 16 to 24-year-olds.

Although down on the peak during the economic downturn, with hundreds of thousands of teenagers about to finish school and college, the jobs market will become flooded with young people.

What makes one of the biggest difference to their prospects is having opportunities or "encounters" with employers. Those having four or more encounters are five times less likely to be NEETs.

In addition, they benefit from an average 16 per cent wage premium compared with those who do not have opportunities to gain workplace experience. The other barrier to finding a good job is that many young people simply do not know what they want to do "when they grow up", because careers advice is often not helpful – if it is available.

A total of 44 per cent of young people said they had received "little or no advice or information on jobs, apprenticeships and school-leaver programmes while at school", according to research into the views of 8,000 11 to 18-year-olds in England by GTI/Trendence. Of those that did receive advice, 38 per cent said they had a "reasonable amount" but could have done with more.

The Careers & Enterprise Company, which was launched 18 months ago, aims to address this by inspiring young people through encounters, information and support in developing a career plan.

It is creating an Enterprise Adviser Network connect-

Support: Claudia Harris of the Careers & Enterprise Company



The wrong career choices start when we are at school, with a lack of opportunities to experience work and poor advice – but that is all set to change, writes Niki Chesworth

ing senior business volunteers with schools and colleges.

Claudia Harris, CEO of the Careers & Enterprise Company, says: "We know that what makes the difference is having opportunities to experience work. That is why we are recruiting one full-time, well-paid co-ordinator for every 20 schools – so that is 175 in total to cover the 3,500 secondary schools in the country.

"We already have 60 in place from a range of backgrounds – including business, education, government and charity – and the aim is to have a co-ordinator covering half of all schools by the end of next year and full coverage by the end of the Parliament.

"We are partnering with Local Enterprise Partnerships, who are co-funding these positions, and also funding projects across the country that are most relevant to young people. The first 33, that are proven to work, have already been allocated £9.5 million.

"While the evidence about what works is increasingly clear, it is not being implemented consistently – well over a third (36 per cent) of secondary school pupils have never been off-site to visit an employer."

Emmanuel Saliu, a year 12 student at



Right move: Sam Leatherby is a sous chef at Hilton London on Park Lane

Hospitality sector forced to train staff to plug gaps

HOSPITALITY firms are being forced to set up their own in-house training schemes in a bid to plug skills gaps – with half introducing schemes over the past year to better equip staff with the skills they need.

With six in 10 firms saying a shortage of skilled candidates is having a major impact on business, according to a recruitment survey by BigHospitality, they are also having to adapt roles to candidates' strengths. This is creating opportunities for the flood of school and college leavers now entering the jobs market.

Ben Bengougam, vice president of HR for Europe, Middle East and Africa at Hilton Worldwide, says: "Travel and tourism is the world's single largest employer, supporting one in every 11 jobs worldwide. The hospitality sector has plenty of varied career opportunities to offer and roles in the food and beverage sector can offer a fast-paced, creative, and challenging career."

Fans of the plethora of TV cooking shows can find plenty of inspiration to follow a career in the sector.

Sam Leatherby, a sous chef at Hilton London on Park Lane, who recently competed in the BBC's Bake Off: Crème de la Crème programme, shows just how far an in-house training scheme can take you.

"When I came out of school, I had two choices – go to university and study sports science or go into an apprenticeship," he says. "I was never sure what I was going to specialise in, but I knew I wanted to cook, so I went with the apprenticeship at Hilton."

Leatherby says that working in a hotel means "you are able to learn more than one area of cooking".

Pimlico Academy, sums up the difference it can make, saying: "My three-week work experience interning at Shell UK changed my whole view on my future. Before that, I had thought I would like to be a doctor, but I now want to put my passion for science into engineering.

"I would love to build my own company and put money back into the community, helping to inspire more young people."

He is not alone. Three in 10 of the

8,000 young people surveyed said they would like to run their own business in the future.

Many young people do not know what they want to do until they have some experience of different working environments.

"Imagining a career is like imagining a colour you have never seen," adds Harris. "While lots of schools have someone who is a career coordinator, it can be very hard for them to navigate all the projects that are out there. Our

coordinators will help them make sense of all these offers."

The Careers & Enterprise Company is looking for businesses to help work with coordinators. Go to careersandenterprise.co.uk to find how your company can get involved. In addition, it is looking to recruit more than 100 coordinators and is also looking for a business/ employer volunteer for each of the 3,500 secondary schools in the country.

So why do so many young people now want to work in the City?

YOU might think that the answer is obvious. The City pays more than other sectors, so that is why top graduates want to work in finance and consultancy.

However, the culture of the company tops the pull factors, with a quarter of young management

consultants surveyed for the Management Consultancies Association saying this was the biggest draw to their particular firm.

Fewer than one in 10 said it was the "benefits and salary package" – although in audit, pay mattered most. The way City firms have

changed since the financial crisis is making them more appealing. Work-life balance has improved, and among new recruits into areas such as management consultancy, only one in 10 now describe this as very poor or poor. Career progression is good, with seven in 10 satisfied or

very satisfied with the career path at their firm. However, the most surprising finding is that you do not need to secure a highly sought-after paid internship in a consulting firm to get a job in one – only one in 10 had – and you do not need to study business and finance either. Even so,

going to a Russell Group university (nearly seven in 10 went to one) still gets you in the door – although the proportion going to top universities including Oxbridge has fallen in the past few years. In 2011, 86 per cent of young management consultants were from elite universities.