

THE PRINCE'S TRUST **RESULTS FOR LIFE** REPORT



Prince's Trust

FOREWORD

Qualifications will always be the key measure of young peoples' success in school. But as our Results for Life report shows, they are not the only thing young people need in order to make a successful transition from education into the workplace.

Throughout their time in education, students and their teachers understandably focus their efforts on the pursuit of good grades, to ensure young people stand in good stead as they prepare to enter the job market. However, it is vital that we also support young people to develop non-academic skills, such as communication, team working and time management, which of course are also highly prized by employers.

Our research shows that many young people don't feel ready to enter the workforce, with this disconnect largely attributed to a lack of self-confidence and apprehension that their soft skills are simply not up to scratch.

If we fail to address these concerns, which are also echoed by teachers and workers across the UK, the potential consequences could deal a significant blow to our future workforce and in turn threaten the nation's productivity. It is vital that we ensure the next generation of workers can rise to the challenges of these uncertain times.

At The Prince's Trust, we are committed to working in partnership with schools and alternative education providers to give students who are at risk of falling behind the opportunity to develop life

and character skills beyond the core curriculum, and to realise their full potential during their time in education.

Our Achieve programme helps students to develop the confidence and soft skills they need to get the most out of their education and prepare for life beyond the school gates. I am always extremely proud to hear from young people who have become more focused and ambitious as a result of taking part in this programme, but equally inspiring are those who credit the experience with finding the courage to believe in themselves again.

At The Prince's Trust, we believe it is crucial that schools, colleges and workplaces across the UK unite to equip the next generation with the skills they need to thrive in the workplace. With your support, we will reach thousands more young people in education and empower them to be the best that they can be.



Dame Martina Milburn DCVO CBE
Chief Executive
The Prince's Trust





INTRODUCTION

I am delighted that HSBC is supporting this study of the nation's attitudes towards soft skills. This is an issue which must be considered carefully if we are to improve the productivity of the UK's workforce.

The report shows the extent to which soft skills are valued by young people, teachers and workers alike, but also highlights an alarming gap between how proficient young people are in these skills and how much more they have to learn to be truly effective in the workplace.

While the pressure to do well academically is ever-present, young people in schools and colleges across the UK are worried that they don't have what it takes to cut it in the workplace – where soft skills, including communication, team work and the ability to build relationships, underpin almost everything they will be required to do.

Having supported The Prince's Trust for over five years, and most recently the Achieve programme, which runs in schools and colleges across the UK, we know the difference the right support can make to students who are at risk of leaving the education system without the self-belief and skills they need to succeed in life.

We also know how beneficial life skills like confidence and resilience can be in the workplace, and are committed to investing in initiatives like the Achieve programme that help to bring out these qualities in young people.

With our support, The Prince's Trust is helping thousands of young people across the UK to reach their full potential at school and to develop the soft skills they need to thrive in the workplace. With your support, we can work together to change the trajectory of even more young lives for the better.



Antonio Simoes
Chief Executive Officer
HSBC Bank plc



IT'S LIKELY THAT THE FOCUS ON OUTCOMES FROM TERMINAL EXAMINATIONS HAS PUSHED THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOFT SKILLS TO THE MARGINS OF MANY PUPILS' EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE. THE REPORT CALLS FOR SCHOOLS TO DO MORE TO DEVELOP YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS; THE FINDINGS SUGGEST THE VAST MAJORITY OF TEACHERS WOULD SUPPORT SUCH MOVES.

**– DR SIMON GIBBONS,
DIRECTOR OF TEACHER EDUCATION
AT KING'S COLLEGE LONDON**

BACKGROUND

This is The Prince's Trust Results for Life report. It is a national survey which gauges how much value is placed on soft skills and whether respondents feel they have enough support to learn these skills, both at school and in the workplace.

We asked thousands of young people, teachers and workers from across the country to tell us about their experiences of developing soft skills – such as team work, communication and resilience – and to share their thoughts on the impact these skills could make to a young person's self-confidence and future prospects.

A sample of 2,224 11-19 year olds, 2,675 workers and 1,000 teachers took part in an online survey, conducted by Censuswide on behalf of The Prince's Trust between 13 and 29 of July 2017. The figures are representative of each respective respondent group in the UK.

Of the young person sample:

- 100 per cent of respondents are within formal secondary, senior or further education, with 524 aged 11-12
- 13 per cent achieved, or are predicted to attain, fewer than five A*-C GCSEs or Scottish equivalents
- 16 per cent are from disadvantaged backgrounds, as determined according to the National Statistics socio-economic classification

Of the teacher sample:

- 100 per cent teach students aged between 11-19 within formal secondary, senior or further education

Of the worker sample:

- 1,308 are aged between 16-25
- 27 per cent attained fewer than five A*-C GCSEs or Scottish equivalents
- 18 per cent are from disadvantaged backgrounds, as determined according to the National Statistics socio-economic classification

In addition to exploring attitudes to soft skills, the study examines whether factors such as family background and academic attainment have an impact on a young person's ability to develop the skills and confidence they need to reach their full potential.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Prince's Trust Results for Life report reveals that soft skills such as teamwork, communication and confidence are considered by young people, teachers and workers to be as important to achieving success in life as good grades.

The research gauges how much value is placed on soft skills and whether respondents feel they have enough support to learn these skills both at school and in the workplace. Despite the widely acknowledged value of soft skills, the report demonstrates that there are concerns across the board about whether young people get enough support to develop them.

There is also a consensus that unless young people are supported to develop the life and character skills considered key to success in working life, there is a risk that they will struggle to reach their full potential and make a smooth transition to the workforce.

STEPPING UP SOFT SKILLS

The report suggests that more needs to be done to ensure young people leave education with the confidence and skills they need to thrive in the workplace.

KEY FINDINGS

- Soft skills are considered by young people, teachers and workers to be as important to achieving success in life as good grades
- 43 per cent of young people don't feel prepared to enter the workforce, with 43 per cent of those who feel this way believing their soft skills are not good enough
- More than a quarter of teachers (27 per cent) think that their students don't yet have all the soft skills required to do well after school
- 72 per cent of workers felt they didn't

have all the soft skills to do well in their role when they first started working

A CASE FOR EARLY INTERVENTION

The research shows that the transition from primary to secondary school can really knock a young person's confidence, and that many students feel they would benefit from additional support at this time.

KEY FINDINGS

- 44 per cent of young people found their confidence dropped when they moved to secondary school. This figure is higher among young people who are predicted or attained fewer than 5 A*-C grade GCSEs or Scottish equivalents (57 per cent)
- 37 per cent of young people did not feel there was enough support



available at their school to help them cope with the challenges of moving up to secondary school

TEACHER TALK

The research shows that teachers think the development of soft skills is crucial to helping their students to succeed both in education and in later working life.

KEY FINDINGS

- 92 per cent of teachers think that supporting students to develop soft skills can help to improve their overall academic performance
- 45 per cent of teachers think that a lack of soft skills is one of the most likely factors to hold students back in life
- 91 per cent think schools should be doing more to help to develop soft skills

VIEWS FROM THE WORKFORCE

According to the research, people who are in work believe that a lack of soft skills often makes the transition from education to the workplace difficult.

KEY FINDINGS

- 72 per cent of workers said they did not have all the soft skills required to do well when they first started working
- 64 per cent of workers who felt they lacked skills when they entered the workforce stated that this meant they struggled to find a job when they were starting out
- 43 per cent of workers think that employers are not doing enough to upskill new recruits coming into their industry

CONCERNS FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

Teachers are worried that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are lacking in confidence and aspiration compared to their more advantaged peers.

KEY FINDINGS

- 89 per cent of teachers think that disadvantaged students are being left behind in school
- 82 per cent of teachers think their school could do more to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds

STEPPING UP SOFT SKILLS

Young people, teachers and people in the workforce agree that soft skills such as teamwork, communication and confidence are as important to achieving success in life as good grades*.

While young people consider maths and literacy to be the most important things to learn at school, soft skills including confidence and communication are next in line – ahead of subjects like IT and languages. When asked why they think these skills are so important, 62 per cent of young people said that having them will help them to get a job.

Worryingly, 43 per cent of young people don't feel prepared to enter the workforce**, with 43 per cent of those who feel this way believing their soft skills are not good enough and 46 per cent saying their confidence is too low. More than half (52 per cent) of young people feel their school does not fully support them to develop in these areas.

When comparing these findings with the views of workers and teachers, it appears the concerns young people raise are not unfounded. More than a quarter of teachers (27 per cent) think that most of the students they teach don't yet have all the soft skills required to do well after school, and 91 per cent think schools should be doing more to help students to develop these skills.

Similarly, the top five things workers think young people typically most lack when entering the workforce are soft skills including confidence, communication, reliability and team working, above things like maths and literacy. 72 per cent of workers felt they themselves didn't have all the soft skills necessary to do well when they first started working, while 64 per cent felt a lack of skills meant they struggled to find a job when they were starting out.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SOFT SKILLS VS. GOOD GRADES



17 per cent of young people, 31 per cent of teachers and 33 per cent of workers said that it's more important to develop soft skills than it is to get good grades.



59 per cent of young people, 51 per cent of teachers and 52 per cent of workers think it's just as important to develop soft skills as it is to get good grades.



24 per cent of young people, 18 per cent of teachers and 15 per cent of workers said that it's more important to get good grades than it is to develop soft skills.

*59% of young people, 51% of teachers and 52% of workers think it's just as important to develop soft skills as it is to get good grades.

**5 per cent of young people feel very unprepared to enter the workforce, 16 per cent feel somewhat unprepared and 22 per cent feel neither prepared nor unprepared]

CASE STUDY: LEWIS DIDD



Before getting involved with The Prince's Trust I wasn't working to my full potential at school, sometimes avoiding attending classes altogether. I suffered from anxiety and my lack of literacy skills made things even more difficult.

The Prince's Trust Achieve programme offered me opportunities and activities that I enjoyed taking part in, such as sport, enabling me to learn leadership and teamwork skills. I also had the chance to develop life skills through sessions on career planning and gaining work experience.

During the course, I gradually grew into a happier, more confident and determined person. Although I was initially reluctant to participate, the course has given me amazing opportunities and allowed me to grow as a person, to believe in myself and to aim high.

I have used the skills and experiences I gained on the Achieve course to take my next steps including a Level 3 Public Services course at Carshalton College. I have also applied to train as a paramedic.

A CASE FOR EARLY INTERVENTION



More than one in ten 11-12 year olds (15 per cent) **don't believe in themselves**



27 PER CENT of 11-12 year olds often **worry about how they are doing at school**



Almost a fifth of 11-12 year olds (19 per cent) **think they will amount to nothing**, no matter how hard they try

The transition from primary to secondary school can really take a toll on young students. According to the research, 60 per cent of young people felt overwhelmed and 44 per cent found their confidence dropped when they first moved up to secondary school.

The situation is worse for those who are predicted or attained fewer than 5 A*-C grade GCSEs or Scottish equivalents, with 70 per cent saying they felt overwhelmed and 57 per cent associating the move with a drop in confidence.

Alarmingly, 37 per cent of young people did not feel there was enough support

available at their school to help them cope with the transition from primary to secondary, and over a quarter (28 per cent) worry that their lack of confidence will affect their future prospects.

In recognition of these challenges, The Prince's Trust recently changed the scope of its popular Achieve programme, which is delivered in schools across the UK, to accommodate students as young as 11. The programme supports students who are at risk of underachieving at school or college to develop soft skills and build their confidence and motivation, so that they can fully engage with education and reach their full potential.

TEACHER TALK

While the pressure is on to ensure students achieve the best grades they are capable of, teachers recognise that there is significant value in helping their students to also develop life and character skills beyond the core curriculum.

Three of the top five skills teachers consider the most important for students to develop at school are communication, confidence and teamwork. 92 per cent of teachers think that supporting students to progress their soft skills can help to improve their overall academic performance.

Notably, while 45 per cent of teachers think that a lack of soft skills is one of the most likely things that would hold students back in life, only 32 per cent think the same of a lack of good grades. However, more than a quarter (26 per cent) of teachers think that most of the students they teach don't yet have the soft skills required to do well after education, and 91 per cent think schools should be doing more to help students to develop these skills.

When asked what more their school could do to support students who are at risk of underachieving, 49 per cent of teachers suggested more small group teaching, 43 per cent suggested introducing new strategies to encourage better pupil engagement and 40 per cent suggested providing more emotional support.

THINGS TEACHERS THINK COULD HOLD STUDENTS BACK IN LIFE



45 per cent of teachers think that a **lack of soft skills** is one of the most likely factors to hold students back in life



32 per cent of teachers think a **lack of good grades** is one of the most likely things to hold students back in life



28 per cent of teachers think a lack of support with **challenges at home** is one of the most likely factors to hold students back in life



27 per cent of teachers think a **lack of confidence** is one of the most likely factors to hold students back in life



27 per cent think **poor mental health** is one of the most likely factors to hold students back in life.



CASE STUDY: SARAH KLAUBER



The Prince's Trust gave me a second chance. A family tragedy left me feeling lost and angry and it was soon after that I started to struggle at school. I was constantly clashing with teachers and other students and my attendance dropped to 40 per cent. Eventually, I gave up on going to classes altogether.

I needed a lot of support and it wasn't until I came into contact with The Prince's Trust that things started to change for the better. I would probably have dropped out and failed my exams if I hadn't joined The Trust's Achieve programme at my school.

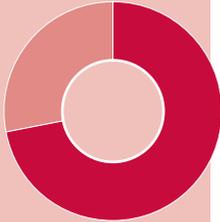
The programme really helped to get me back on track and I soon started to feel happier and more confident in my abilities. It helped me to develop lots of skills I didn't know I had and even helped me to get a job. I loved it!

I feel positive now as I have more stability, I know what's going on in my life and how to manage everything effectively. In my last job I completed an apprenticeship in business and administration, and have just moved on to a new company where I'm now working as a Technical Administrator.

I would recommend The Prince's Trust to anyone who finds that they need support; I don't know what would have happened to me without the help I received.

VIEWS FROM THE WORKFORCE

72 per cent of workers felt they didn't have all the soft skills to do well when they first started working



64 per cent of workers who felt they lacked skills when they entered the workforce stated that this meant they struggled to find a job when they were starting out



67

per cent of employees don't think they had enough support at school to develop their soft skills



43 per cent of workers think that employers are not doing enough to upskill new recruits coming into their industry



When asked what skills they lacked when they entered the workforce, 50 per cent of workers said confidence, 23 per cent said communication and 19 per cent said the ability to look after their mental health. A lack of hard skills such as maths, reading and writing were less of a concern, at 13 per cent and 6 per cent respectively.

The tasks most likely to make people feel nervous require robust soft skills,

with 'giving presentations', 'discussing conflicting points of view with colleagues' and 'managing a team' topping the list of most daunting tasks.

When asked what support they think employers should invest in to help upskill new recruits, 46 per cent of workers said training opportunities to help develop soft skills, 45 per cent felt on-the-job training would be beneficial and 39 per cent favoured apprenticeships.

CONCERNS FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS



Young people from the poorest backgrounds are more likely to worry that their lack of confidence will affect their future prospects*.



Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to think that they will achieve their predicted grades**.

Unfortunately, it comes as no surprise that the level of young people's confidence and self-belief varies depending on their socio-economic background, with students from disadvantaged backgrounds typically faring worse than their wealthier peers.

This, as well as the knock-on effect low confidence can have on the hopes and aspirations of their students, is something that teachers are acutely aware of. Equally worrying is that 89 per cent of teachers think students from disadvantaged backgrounds are being left behind in school, and 82 per cent think their school could do more to help these students.

WHEN ASKED WHY THEY THINK STUDENTS FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS ARE BEING LEFT BEHIND...



60 PER CENT OF TEACHERS said that in their experience, these students often face challenges outside of school that prevent them from focusing on their studies...



52 PER CENT said they tend to have lower aspirations than other students and...



46 PER CENT said that the self-confidence of these students tends to be lower than that of other students.

*(32 per cent of young people from the poorest backgrounds worry that their lack of confidence will affect their future prospects, compared to 28 per cent of young people overall) ** (Only 40 per cent of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds think they will achieve their predicted grades, compared to almost half (47 per cent) of young people overall)

ABOUT THE PRINCE'S TRUST

The Prince's Trust helps young people who are unemployed or struggling at school to transform their lives and believes that every young person should have the chance to succeed.

The Trust has long recognised the importance of helping young people to build their confidence and skill sets, as well as the value of providing support early on in their development.

To this end, the charity is committed to helping thousands of school pupils and college students across the UK each year to develop the skills they need to thrive both in education and in the workplace, in addition to the courses it runs for unemployed young people who have already left the education system.

The charity's Achieve programme, of which HSBC is the largest corporate supporter, helps young people who are at risk of underachieving at school or college to succeed in education. The programme complements existing

learning in the formal education setting, supporting 11 to 19-year-olds to develop soft skills, engage with education and unlock their potential.

With your support, we can help even more young people move into a positive outcome.



For more information about The Prince's Trust and the Achieve programme visit: princes-trust.org.uk



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Prince's Trust would like to thank the young people who are featured as case studies in this report.

The Trust would also like to thank HSBC for supporting this report and for its continued support of the Achieve programme.



Find out more

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