



# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Teenagers' career aspirations versus the reality of the UK jobs market

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## Foreword

Welcome to our most recent piece of research, an exploration into the career aspirations of 14 – 19 year olds at one of the most crucial decision making cross roads in their lives. The 3,154 young people we surveyed are making decisions now that will shape their futures. But do they have all the information they need to make informed choices that will give them the best chance of thriving in the workplaces of today and tomorrow?

We have compared the findings of the research with labour market predictions provided by economic modellers EMSI, enabling us to demonstrate differences between the young people's aspirations and the job opportunities that will be available to them as they hit the jobs market over the next 5 – 10 years. We commissioned this research as we forge pathways to the workplace for young people with our new curriculum for 14 to 19 year olds, the City & Guilds TechBac, and through our apprenticeship offer.

The findings of the research are concerning but not entirely unexpected. Young people are optimistic but often not prepared for the realities of the UK jobs market. Salary expectations are high, often career aspirations don't match demand in the workplace and young people aren't generally aware of what employers are looking for. They have great expectations now but their dreams are likely to be dashed if they carry on along their current trajectory.

The research backs up what we've been saying for some time: young people need better and more consistent exposure to employers and the workplace throughout their education. This includes the chance to undertake work experience, hear from employers about the range of jobs available and get inspired to work in previously unimagined areas. It is this early understanding of the workplace that can help young people secure that all important first step on the career ladder.

There also needs to be a recognition from parents, young people and teachers that whilst university can be an amazing route to a great career it is not the only route and is not always the best one. Our research shows that the vast majority of young people want to go to university despite many not knowing what they want to study. With EMSI telling us that under a third of the available jobs between 2015 and 2022 are predicted to be graduate roles and the average debt on leaving university now standing at £44,000 that's a pretty significant gamble. This single minded focus on university is in part thanks to the poor quality advice young people are receiving about the workplace. Rather than giving careers advice based on real local labour market intelligence, 14-19 year olds are being exposed to a narrow range of careers, with a one-size-fits-all education route to get there.

While steps are being taken to improve careers advice for those still in education, much more needs to be done. We need to change our education system to make it truly responsive to employer needs and ensure that every young person has the chance to follow their own path to career success. We at City & Guilds look forward to working together with the education sector, Government and employers in the coming years to ensure that young people in this country receive the right education and advice so that they are fully prepared to take on the world when they leave education.

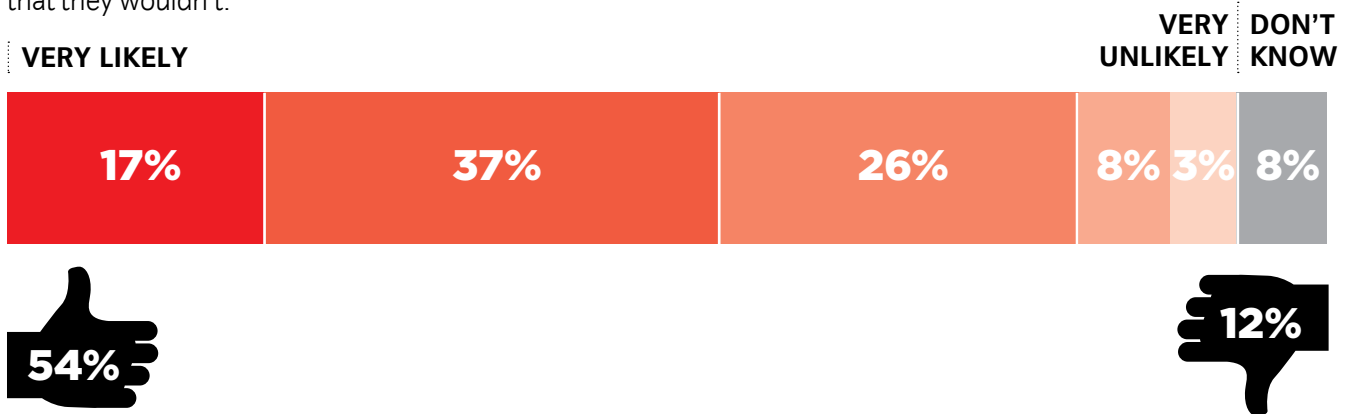
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirstie Donnelly'.

Kirstie Donnelly MBE  
MD City & Guilds

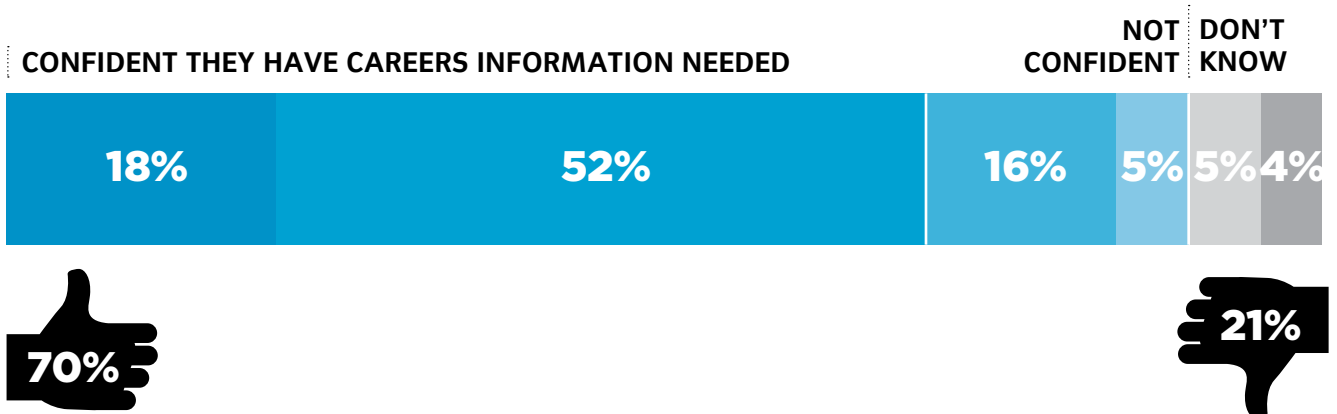


## YOUTHFUL OPTIMISM

The young people who responded to the survey were generally pretty optimistic about their futures with 54% thinking that they would be likely or very likely to end up in the job of their choice and only 12% thinking that they wouldn't.



70% of our respondents told us that they were confident they had all the information they needed to make an informed choice about their career. However, this confidence may be misplaced as our survey demonstrated respondents opting for jobs where there are limited employment opportunities, having high salary expectations and misunderstanding the best way to land the job of their dreams.



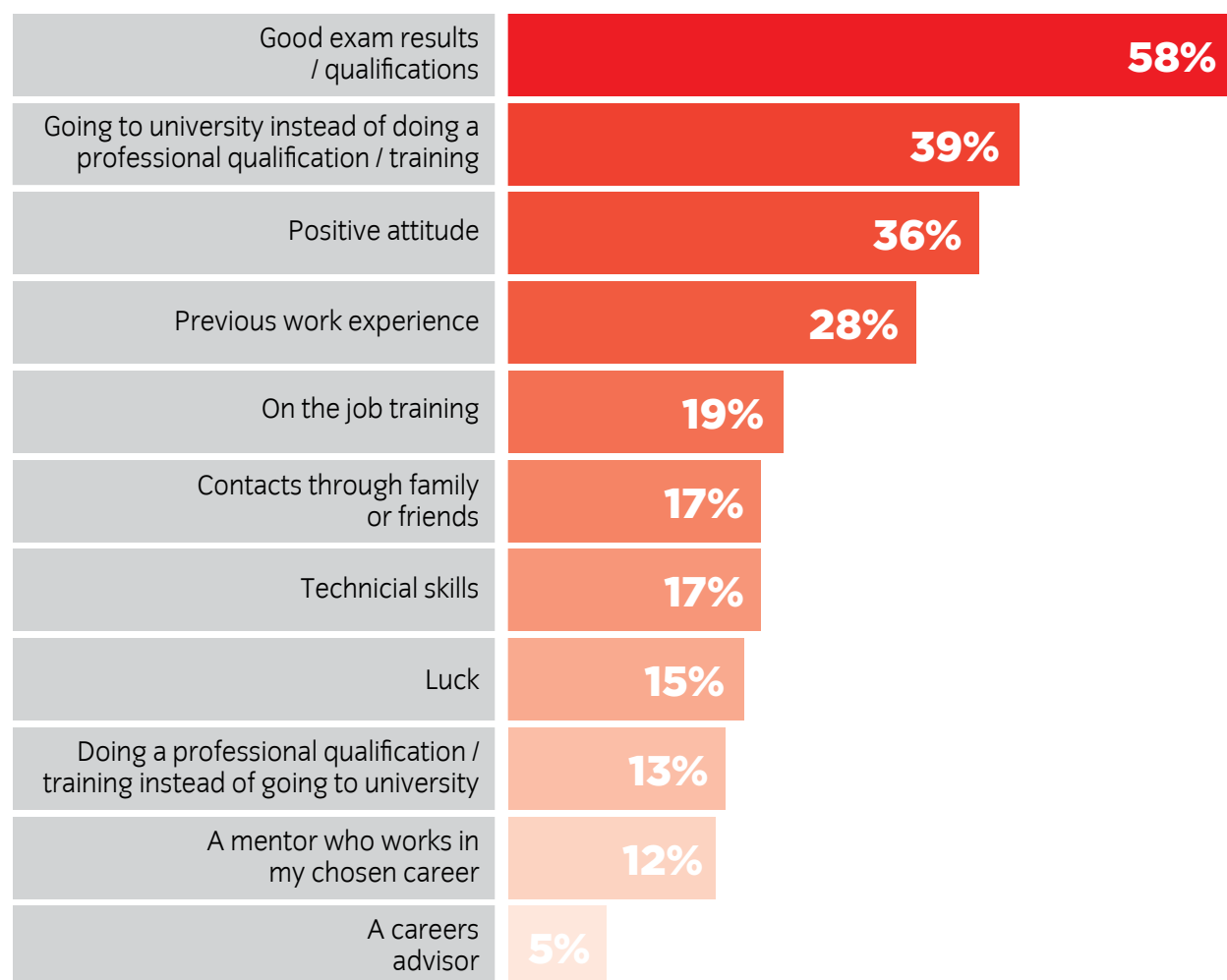
Respondents were also misinformed about the best way to get a good job. Only 28% thought that previous work experience was important whilst employers have a very different view. In a City & Guilds survey 78%<sup>1</sup> of employers told us that they think work experience is essential to ensuring young people are ready for work while two thirds of employers (67%) would be more likely to hire a young person with work experience over someone with none.



**IMPORTANCE OF WORK EXPERIENCE - YOUNG PEOPLE V EMPLOYERS**

Amongst our respondents there was a clear bias towards good exam results (58%) and going to university (39%) as the best route to a good career. This is above alternative training routes such as on the job training ie: apprenticeships (19%) or a professional qualification or training (13%).

### RESPONDENTS RATED THEIR TOP THREE 'MOST IMPORTANT' REQUIREMENTS TO GETTING A JOB THEY ENJOY



### Barriers to getting the job

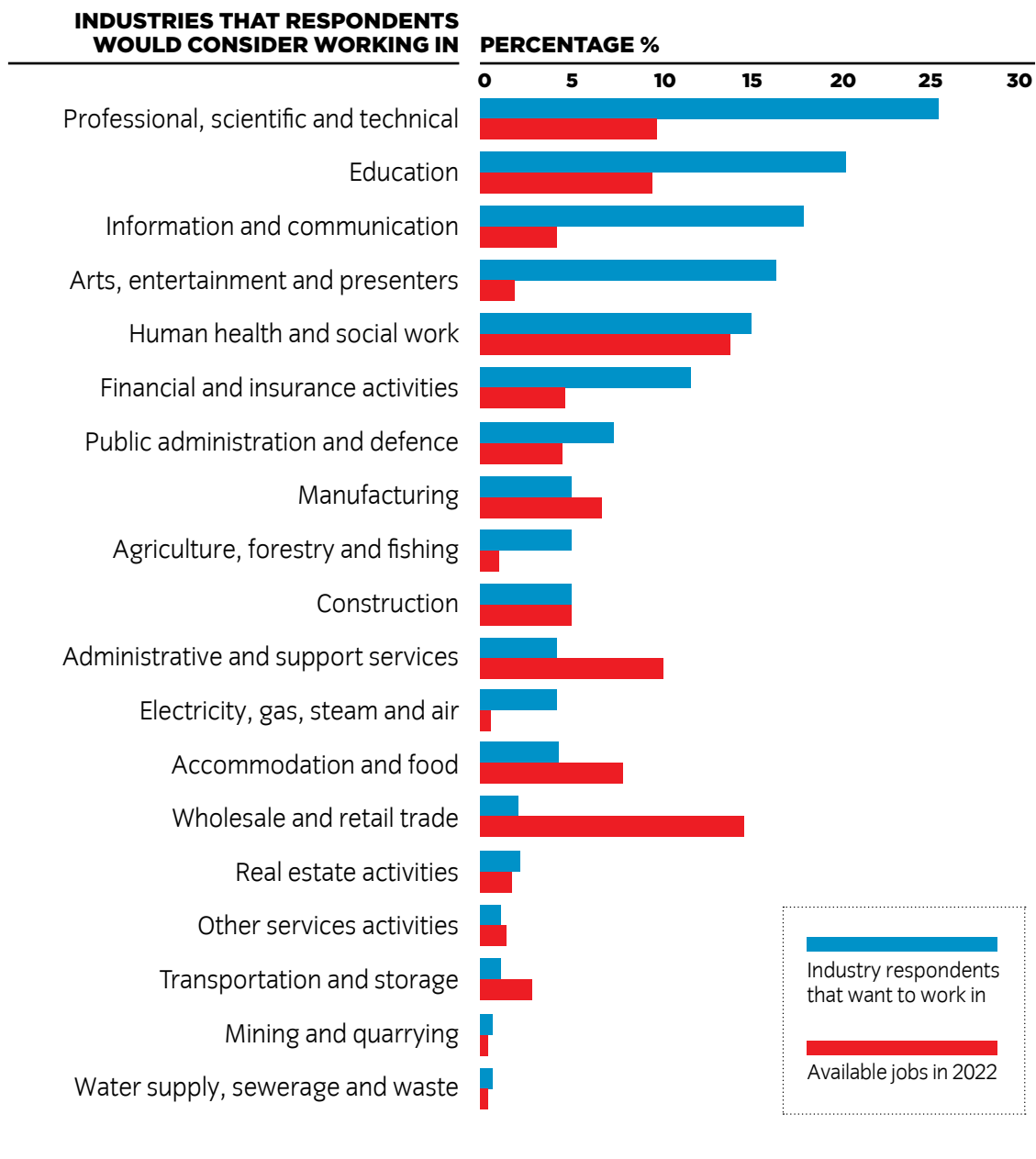
Respondents were most likely to pick competition (47%) as the biggest barrier they would face when trying to land their dream job. This is not an unreasonable assumption when our data suggests that so many young people will be chasing after a narrow pool of jobs. Many young people seem to have opted for well-known, well-paid careers such as doctors but there are many jobs that will be available in similar fields with far fewer young people chasing those roles.

## FUTURE JOBS MARKET

Economic modellers EMSI have analysed what the jobs market is going to look like in 2022<sup>2</sup>.

From this we know that the number of available jobs is expected to continue to grow between 2015 and 2022, rising by 1,388,007 in this timeframe. Between 2015 and 2022 the total number of available jobs will be 9,636,803<sup>3</sup>.

The all-important question is what are the jobs going to be and how do young people's aspirations match up to the realities of the jobs market they will enter?



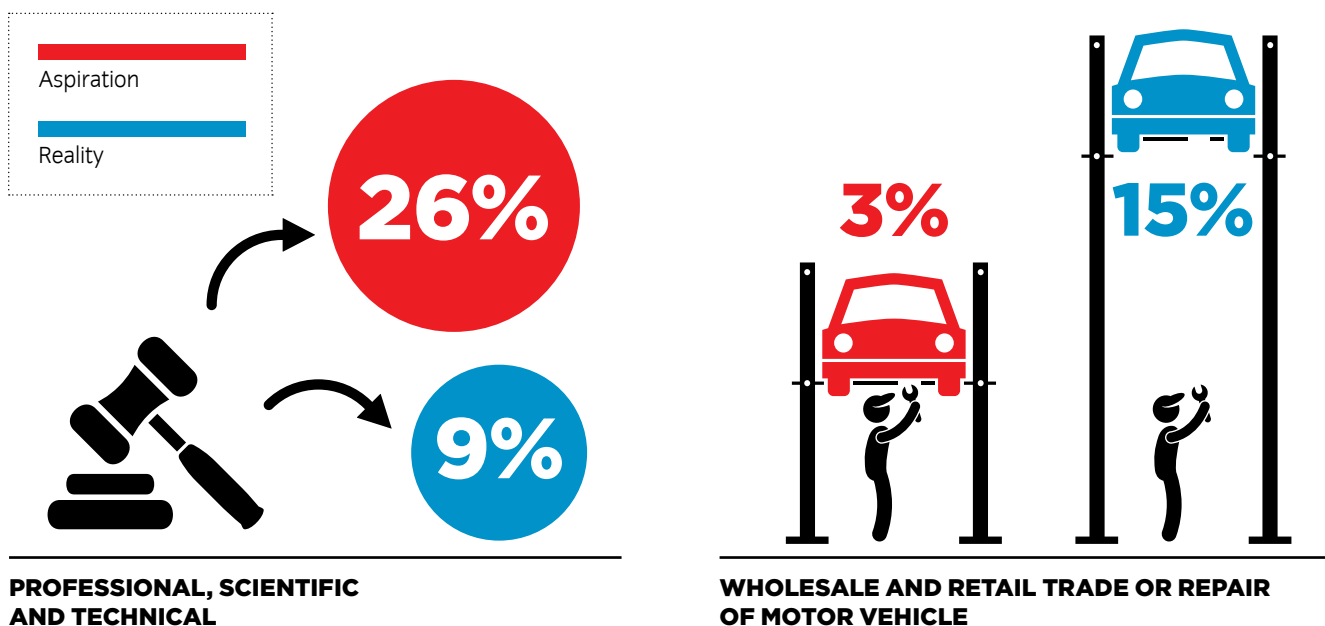
2: This is as far as current available market data extends.

3: This takes into account the churn of employees leaving roles due to retirement or to look for other positions

As we can see there are some significant mismatches in the industries that the young people aspire to work in and those where the jobs will be. For instance 26% of respondents said they would consider working in professional, scientific and technical activities, whereas the proportion of people working in this sector in the forecast for 2022 is actually just 9%.

Additionally, 19% of respondents cited information and communication as a possible career area, yet the proportion of people currently working in this sector is 4%, and is set to remain at 4% in 2022.

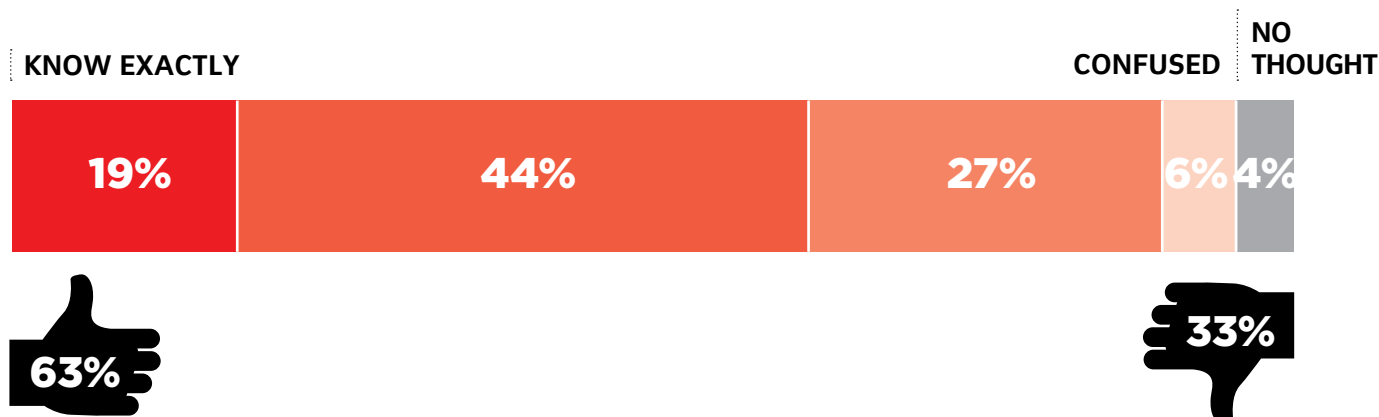
Just 3% of respondents said they would consider working in the wholesale and retail trade or repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, yet collectively these sectors will employ 15% of the labour market in 2022.



In addition, and to be expected, young people are also unsure about where they are headed. A third of respondents are still undecided about which area they want to work in and men are more likely than women to have given it no thought at all (5% vs 2%).

Poor careers advice and a lack of exposure to employers is contributing in part to these narrow ideas about employment. City & Guilds' Making Education Work research in October 2013 showed that young people found interactions with employers to be the most useful form of careers advice and yet these are not happening enough across the board for our young people.

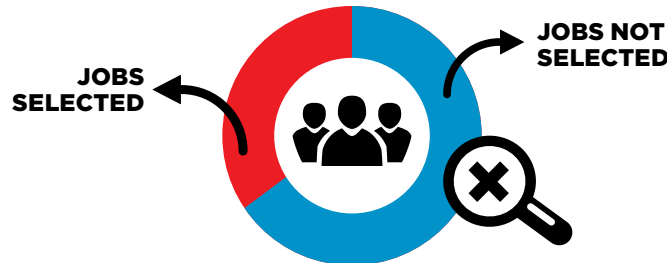
**DO RESPONDENTS KNOW WHERE THEY WANT TO WORK?**



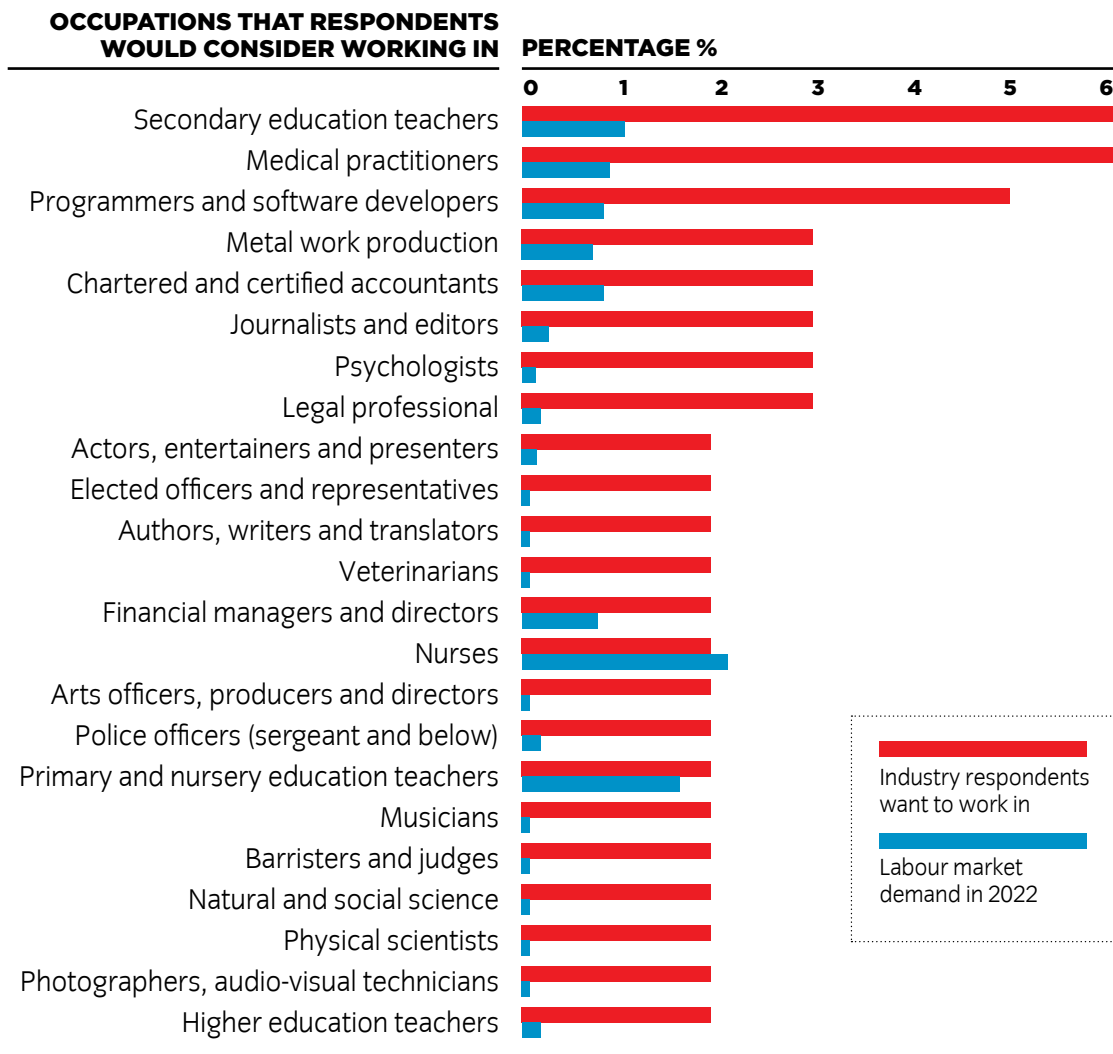
## ASPIRATION VS REALITY

When we looked beneath the surface and asked respondents about specific job roles we found more differences between aspiration and reality

When asked to state their preferred future job our respondents selected from a relatively narrow pool of jobs that represented just 34% of the roles that will be available<sup>4</sup>. Overall almost 2/3rds of the jobs were not selected by anyone.



As can be seen from the chart below the jobs most frequently chosen are ones that young people would commonly be exposed to (ie: secondary school teacher, police officer, doctor) or ones that they may have seen in media representations. As an example 3% stated that they wanted to be a psychologist. This is equivalent to 120,000 14 – 19 year olds in the UK population whereas we know that there will actually only be 7,550 jobs available in this area between 2015 and 2022 – a huge mismatch.





This is a worrying situation given the high levels of youth unemployment that still exist today and one that could be avoided by helping young people to better understand the world of work and the specific roles they could aspire to in their chosen industry.

### Salary expectations and top paying careers

The young people who responded to the survey had high salary expectations on average anticipating they will earn £40,661 per year a decade from now. However, many of the high paying jobs were completely neglected by our respondents. Below is a chart showing the highest paid jobs available that none of our respondents chose.

#### HIGHEST PAID JOBS WHICH NONE OF OUR RESPONDENTS CHOSE



Air traffic controllers

**£74,393.83**



Senior professionals of educational establishments

**£49,248.94**



IT project and programme managers

**£46,407.77**



Purchasing managers and directors

**£47,585.04**



Health services and public health managers and directors

**£40,879.13**



Functional managers and directors n.e.c.

**£40,401.11**



Taxation experts

**£41,320.54**



Research and development managers

**£41,932.24**

Young people need to be given a better understanding of the progression routes available in their chosen industries. It's clear from our research that hardly anyone aspires to be a manager or director and yet it's this level and above that commands the salaries the young people are expecting to earn.

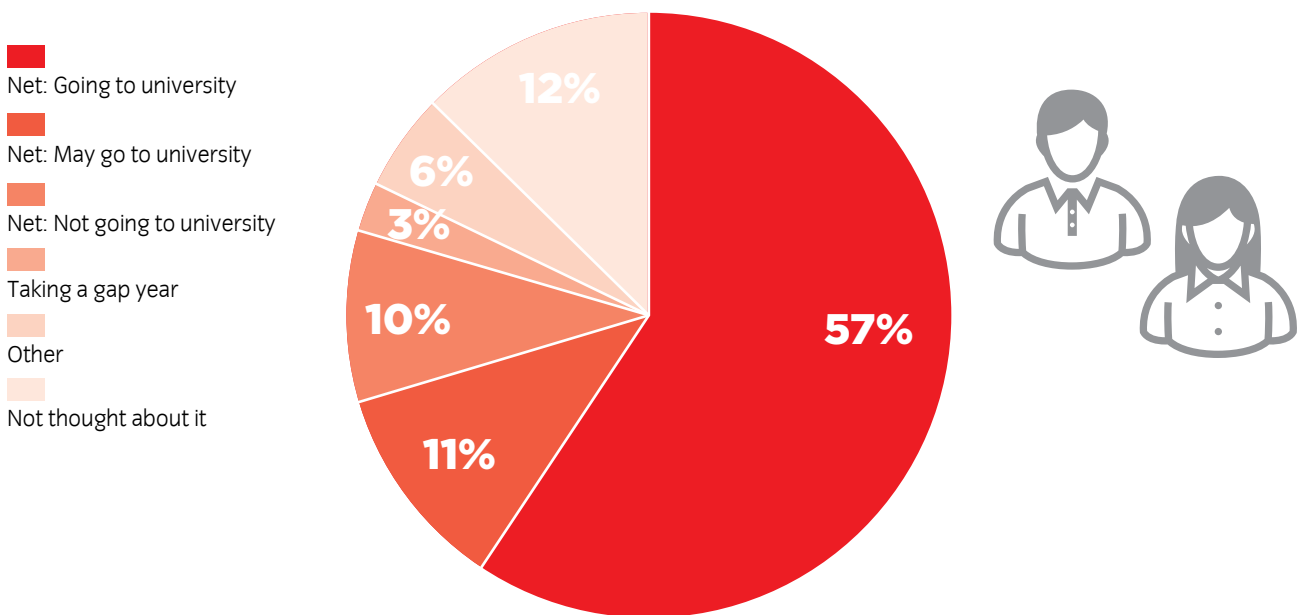
## CAREERS ADVICE

A lack of high-quality careers advice in the UK and limited access to employers means that young people often have to make decisions about their futures with scant information to guide them about what the jobs will be and how to access them.

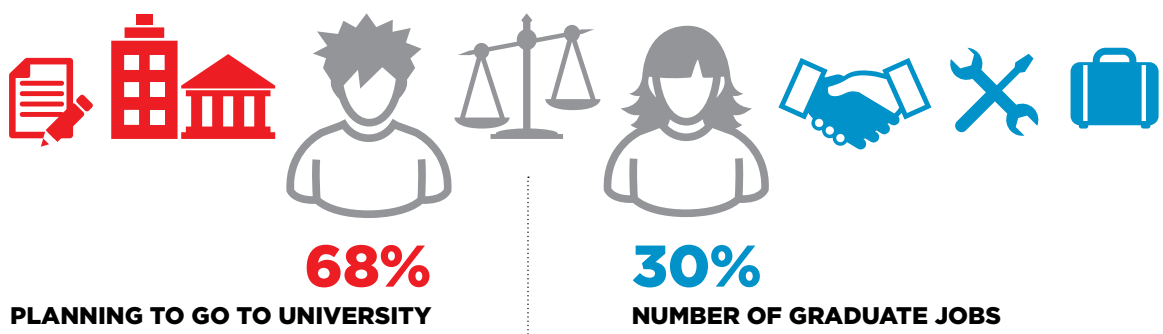
Following Government targets to get 50% of people into university by 2010 there has grown a strong bias towards university as an education route in the UK amongst parents and educators. Our research indicated that there is a widespread belief that studying for a degree will lead to a well-paid job and fulfilling professional career and whilst in many cases this is true it isn't always the case. This misconception has led to a significant over-supply of graduates in the UK with a recent piece of research by the CIPD stating that 58.5% of graduates end up in non-graduate jobs<sup>5</sup>.

A large majority (68%) of our respondents told us that they are planning to go to university despite over a third of those who are definitely planning to go not knowing what they intend to study. In fact only 10% of the young people surveyed said that they definitely weren't going to university.

### % OF PEOPLE PLANNING TO GO TO UNIVERSITY



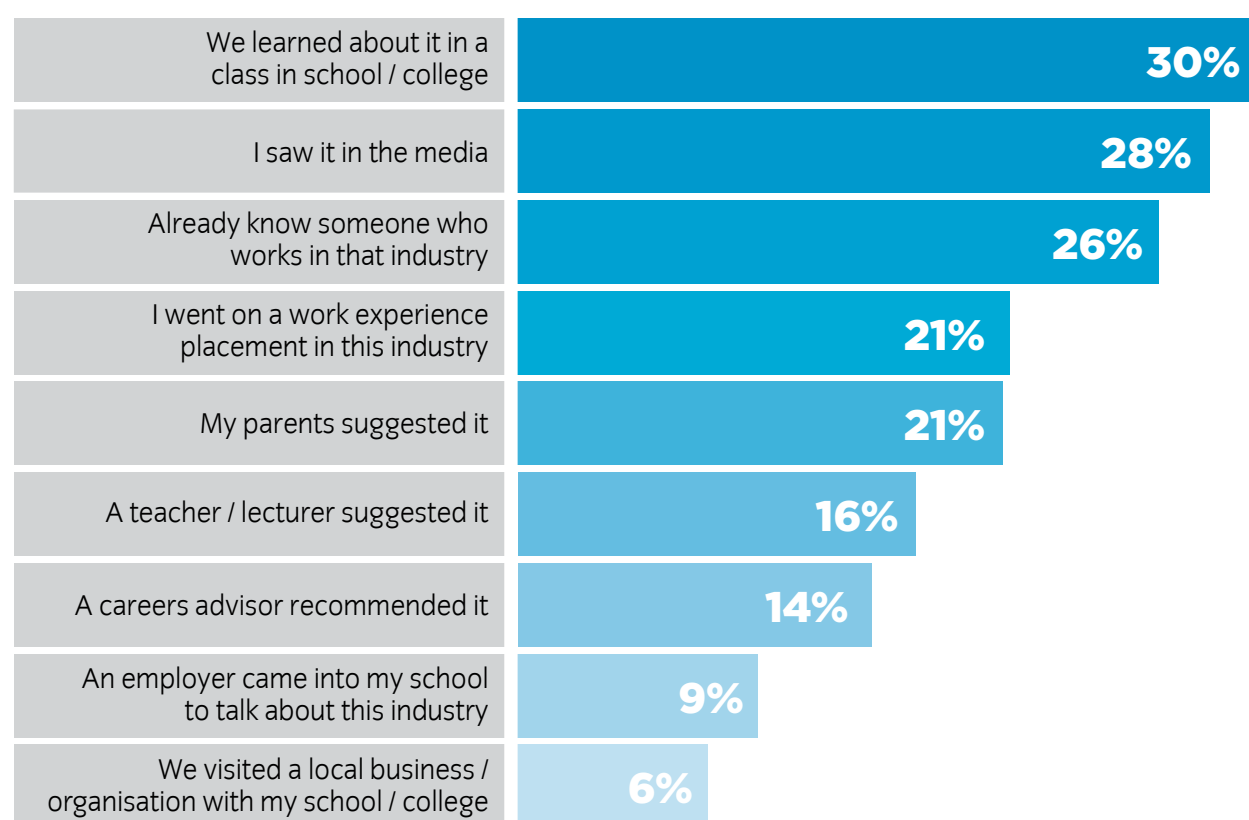
Of the jobs that will be available in 2022 EMSI state that only 30% of the available jobs are likely to be at graduate level meaning that over half of the young people intending to go to university may well be racking up a large and unnecessary debt.



When asking respondents how they found out about their chosen career the lack of access to balanced careers advice was clear. 6% of respondents stated that they wanted to be secondary education teachers despite only 1% of jobs being available in this area. This is unsurprising as teachers are currently being asked to provide the majority of careers advice which means they are unintentionally favouring subjects that they understand.

We also saw that almost as many respondents had heard about their career through the media as had learned about it in school. Clearly this is not an ideal situation as media representations of industries can lack depth and accuracy and relatively few job roles are portrayed.

### HOW YOUNG PEOPLE HEARD ABOUT THE JOB OF THEIR CHOICE



It is worrying that so few young people learned about their career from an employer meaning that they may not have an accurate understanding of what the role of their choice is like and crucially that they only consider roles that they see in their immediate sphere of influence.

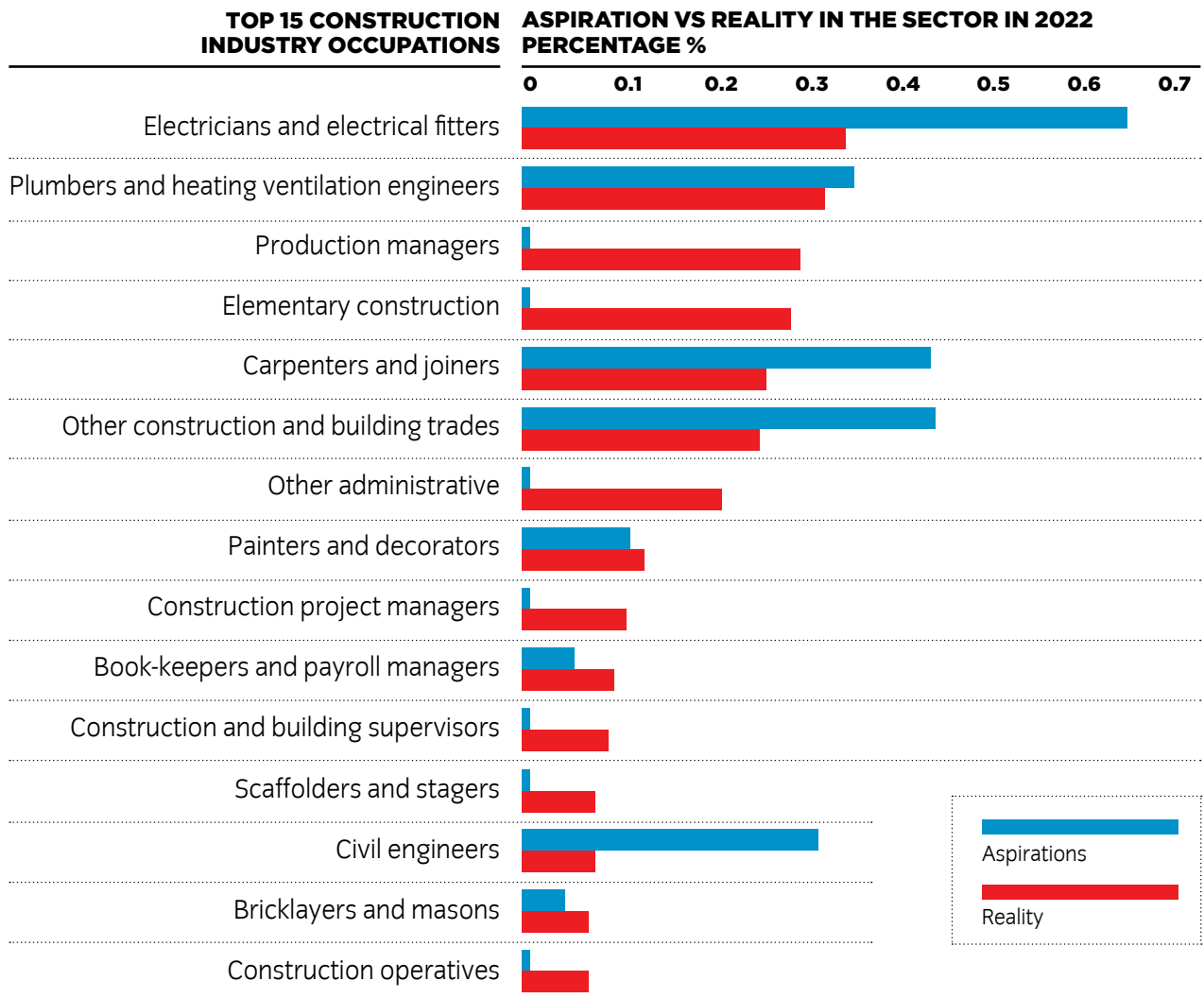
Our research also indicates that careers advice is not seen as important by young people. Just 5% said that a careers advisor would help the most in getting a job they would be satisfied with and when asked why they were thinking of a certain career, only 14% said that a careers advisor had recommended it. Respondents were also unable to recognise that good careers advice can help secure a great job. Only 8% of those surveyed agreed that a lack of good careers advice is a barrier to getting a good job.

## SPOTLIGHT ON CONSTRUCTION

In this section we have focussed on the skills needs expected in the construction industry where it has been well documented that there is a skills gap. The Government’s ‘National Infrastructure Plan for Skills’ highlighted that the UK will need 150,000 more construction engineers and 250,000 more construction workers by 2020. This is to meet the demand of a pipeline of £411 billion planned public and private construction projects that include HS2 and the extension of Heathrow.

Looking only at the number of respondents who have said that they want to work in the construction industry there seems to be a close match between available jobs (5%) and career aspiration. However, when we start looking at the specific jobs which will be available the picture is quite different with some jobs (ie: electricians and engineers) clearly preferred and others (e.g. production managers) not chosen at all. This has the potential to translate into skills gaps over the coming years if young people don’t get to experience the possible job opportunities in these areas through work experience or meeting employers in these industries.

The graph below shows the 15 highest demand jobs in the construction sector in 2022 (as a percentage of the total workforce in Britain) mapped against the percentage of respondents who selected that job.



With some of these occupations, there appears to be a reasonably good fit between aspiration and available jobs, for instance, plumbers and heating and ventilating engineers are very closely matched. With others, however, there are some significant mismatches. We can see that 0.32% of the young people wanted to be civil engineers whilst the available jobs in the construction sector will be just under 0.01%. This is perhaps unsurprising, as it has been well publicised that we will need many engineers and that these jobs are well paid. In contrast none of the respondents stated that they intended to become production managers and directors in this industry but its forecast that there will be around 83,453 of these jobs available in 2022 and this role is in fact the second highest paid job listed in the graph.

Encouraging employers to go into schools to inspire young people and make them aware of the huge range of jobs available to them in this sector is essential in addressing these mismatches. It is only by giving young people an insight into available roles that they will begin to consider them as potential careers.

## FOCUS ON HUMAN HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK

The aging population means that the human health and social work activities sector will experience the most growth over the coming years, with around 319,326 or 23% of all the new jobs that will be created by 2022.

### 23% OF NEW JOBS CREATED BY 2022 WILL BE IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

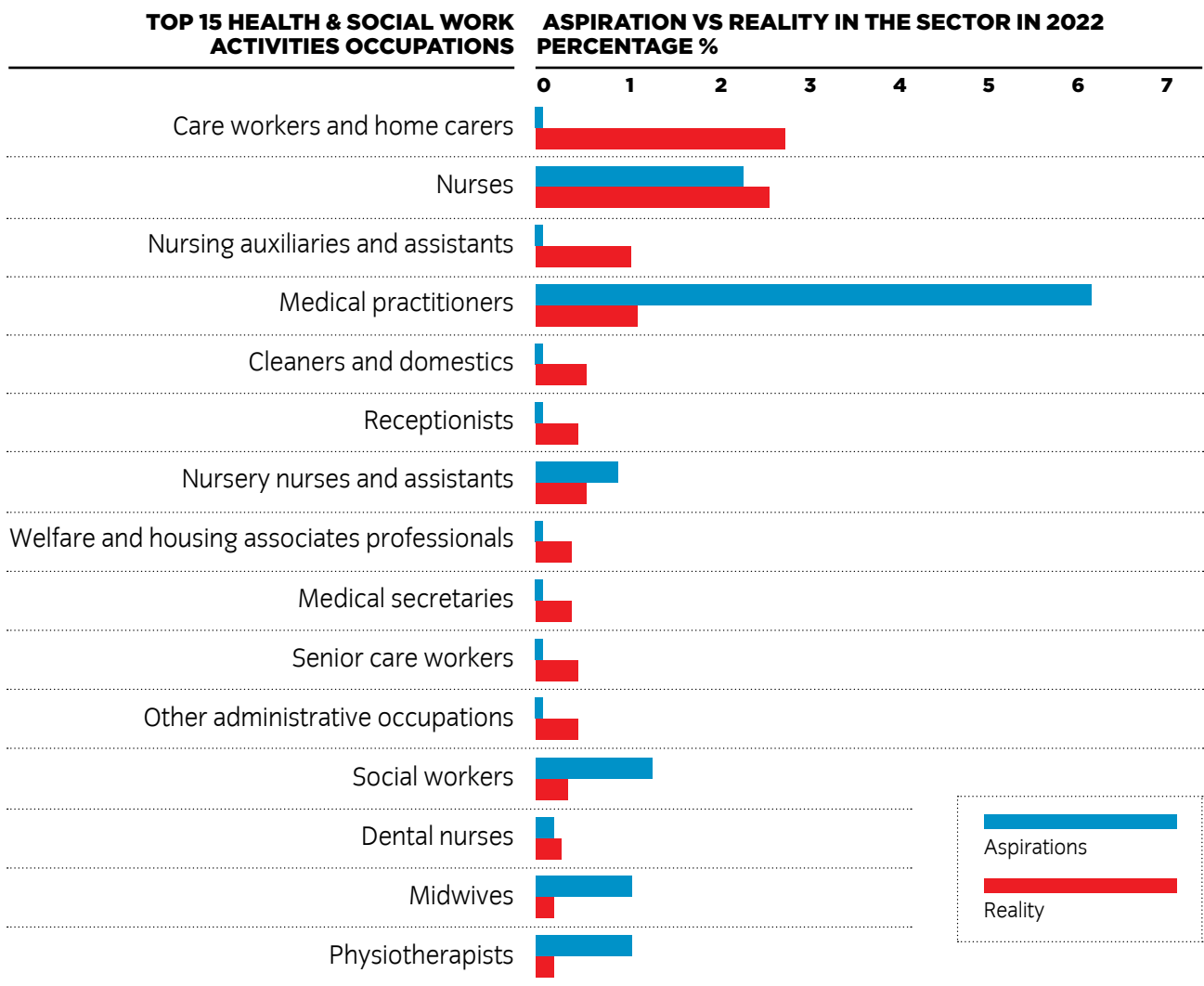




The graph below shows the top 15 occupations within this sector as a percentage of the total British workforce in 2022, set against the percentage of respondents who said they want to work in these occupations.

As you can see, there are some clear mismatches between aspiration and available jobs. For instance, almost 6% of respondents said that they wanted to be medical practitioners, yet the forecast for 2022 shows that only 0.798% of the British population will be employed in this occupation.

In contrast, high availability roles such as nurses, nursing auxiliaries and assistant and care workers and home carers had few or in some cases no respondents opting for them. Once again this highlights the need for careers advice to give young people a much more objective view of the jobs that are likely to be available so that young people can make more informed choices.

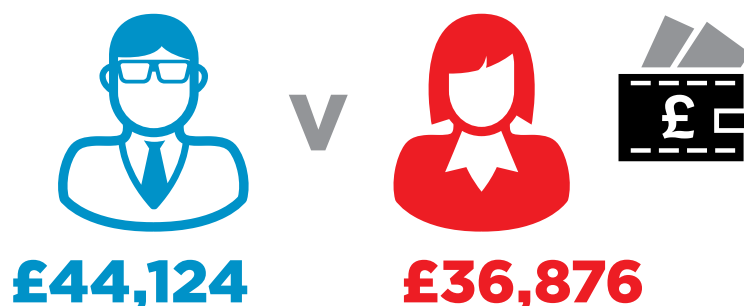


## SPOTLIGHT ON GENDER

It's clear from the young people's responses that there are still big gender differences in their expectations.

The salary expectations of men and women varied considerably with men predicting they'd earn an average of £44,124 whilst women went for a much lower £36,876. There is also a lack of confidence seen among young women, with a larger percentage (30%) stating they lack confidence that they have all the information needed to get a job they would be happy with versus 24% of young men.

### BOYS VS GIRLS SALARY EXPECTATIONS

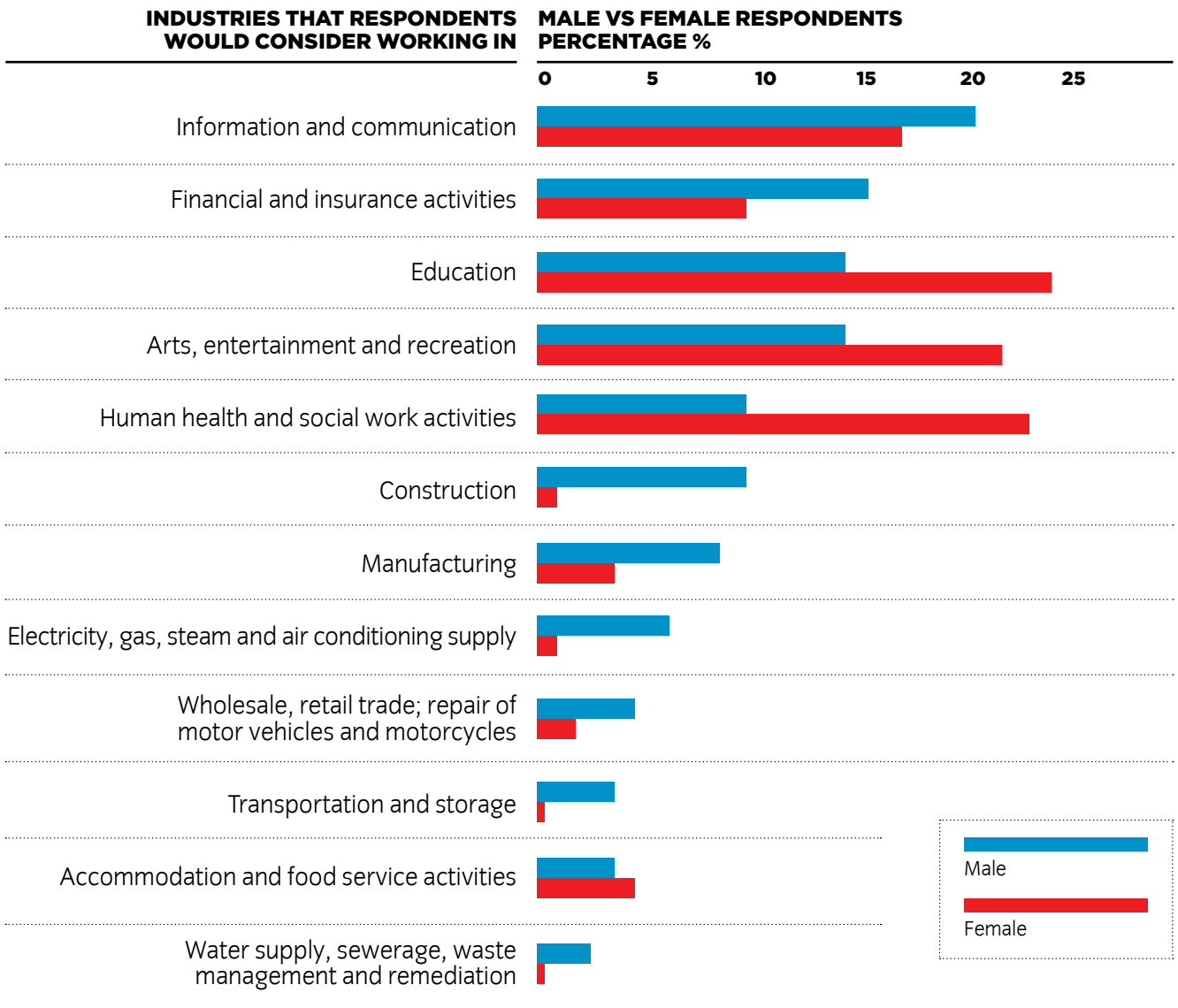


Conversely young women are clearly better informed about the value of work experience. A third of women (32%) believe work experience will result in getting a job you enjoy versus just under a quarter (24%) of men. This seems to come from experience as female respondents were more likely to have tried a variety of work experience, coming out on top for work shadowing, voluntary work and part-time, vacation and casual work. Male respondents were also more likely to have had no work experience at all.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF WORK EXPERIENCE	MALE	FEMALE
Work experience placement through school / college (usually a week long)	<b>49%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Work placement (with a company, usually 6-12 months long)	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>
Work shadowing (observing an employee in the workplace)	<b>10%</b>	<b>13%</b>
Internship (intensive programmes for up to 3-6 months)	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>
Voluntary work (unpaid work, normally for a cause)	<b>22%</b>	<b>32%</b>
Part-time, vacation and casual work (working alongside your studies or in your holidays)	<b>26%</b>	<b>30%</b>
Full-time paid job	<b>3%</b>	<b>4%</b>
Gap year (working and travelling for a year, during or after your studies)	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Other	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>
None – I have not had any work experience	<b>29%</b>	<b>25%</b>



Stereotypes also remain in the types of industries young women and men stated that they would like to work in. Construction attracts almost no women respondents. In contrast education and health and social work are the most popular choices amongst women.



Good careers advice and giving young people access to role models working in gender biased industries who counter the stereotypes will be essential in getting young people to consider careers in areas not generally thought of as being ‘for them’.

If we are to increase women’s salary aspirations we must encourage them to consider careers in traditionally more male dominated industries such as finance and engineering where salaries are often higher.

To address the gender inequality in the workplace and equally importantly the skills gap in the UK we must also address the gender bias that current exists in school and even within the family. We know for example that girls are as interested in STEM subjects as boys at primary age but this interest has generally waned by the time they reach 14<sup>6</sup>.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is good news for young people in this report. The jobs market is set to grow over the next eight years and there will be plenty of job opportunities for those leaving education to choose from. However, this all depends on the right information being made available to young people at the right time.

The following recommendations will help young people to choose the path that is right for them rather than the one that leads to a dead end.

We are at a crucial time for 14-19 education with reforms underway and more to come. Now is the time to make changes to the system to give the future generation of workers the very best start in life and the ability to become a workforce to be reckoned with on the world stage.

### Careers advice is key

- Careers advice must be independent, based on accurate local labour market information, and have strong links to business so that young people are given a realistic view of the jobs market in their local area and across the country.
- Young people, their parents and educational institutions need to be made aware of the types of jobs that are available across the UK both now and in the future so that they can make informed choices that help them progress into a sustainable career.

### Employers more involved in the education system

- Young people need to be given better and more consistent exposure to employers and the workplace throughout their education to give them insight into the vast array of careers that are available to them.
- We need to get employers to recognise the value of educational routes other than traditional academic ones and create the demand for people with professional and technical qualifications and apprenticeships.

### University isn't the only route to a great job

- Young people of all abilities need to be made aware of all the educational pathways available to them to get to their chosen career.
- We need to tackle the misinformation about the education system that still exists by raising the profile of professional and technical education among the general public in this country.
- We need to create a world class apprenticeship system with a focus on quality at every level and support for the development of higher level and degree level apprenticeships.

## METHODOLOGY

This research was developed to help us to understand the career aspirations of 14 – 19 year olds in the UK at a formative time in their lives when they are deciding the next steps in their education or first steps into their careers. We also wanted to see what influenced young people's decisions and how realistic their career choices were considering the future of the UK jobs market.

### YouGov

We commissioned market research agency YouGov to carry out the research. YouGov surveyed 3,154 young people aged between 14 and 19 between 10 September 2015 and 22 September 2015 asking them about their career aspirations. The survey was carried out via YouGov's online research panel and weighted to be representative of the UK sample aged 14-19 years old (age and gender).

The following regions were boosted to the following unweighted figure:

Region

- Birmingham 114
- Leeds 166
- Liverpool 101
- London 353
- Manchester 132
- Newcastle 77

We then commissioned economic modellers EMSI to forecast the UK labour market in 2022 (as far forward as current available data allows) and map our respondents aspirations against reality.

### About EMSI

EMSI data is created from a collection of nine Government sources that are combined to provide multi-layered cross-checking. Every year, EMSI data is updated with more than 20 million data points describing labour market conditions across Great Britain. Industry data is gleaned from several Government sources and combined with other trustworthy datasets to create a staffing pattern that matches industries with occupations. This information is used in conjunction with other surveys to create detailed occupation data. EMSI industry data comprises 563 industries in 128 geographies (NUTS 3) and the 20 highest-level industries in 385 detailed geographies. It provides jobs data from 2003 to 2022 and has information on earnings from the present year. Its staffing data comprises 353 occupations across 128 broad geographies and 25 high-level occupations across 385 detailed geographies.





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