



Department  
for Education

# **Work experience and vocational/technical provision for young people on SEN support: A rapid evidence assessment**

**Final Report**

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Social Science in Government

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## Executive summary

This rapid evidence assessment (REA) focuses on young people aged 16-19 with less complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who are studying vocational or technical study programmes in the further education (FE) or training sectors. 'Less complex SEND' here refers to needs that, in England, would be supported at the SEN support level under the [SEND Code of Practice](#)<sup>1</sup>: that is, the needs of young people with identified SEND but without a statement of SEN or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

The aim of this REA is to identify evidence on the benefits (or otherwise) of work experience<sup>2</sup> for these young people as they prepare to enter paid employment.

Within this overall aim, the REA seeks to answer **three overarching research questions (RQs)**:

1. What evidence is available about the benefits of work experience or substantial work placements for the population of interest in terms of preparing them for and helping them get paid employment?
2. What evidence is available on the effectiveness of education or training provision to help these young people secure a job/career?
3. For the questions above, is there any difference in evidence for young people studying at (i) level 3, (ii) level 2 and (iii) below level 2<sup>3</sup>?

**Four evidence sources** are used to address these questions:

- A focused review of peer-reviewed articles published in English in scholarly journals from 01 January 2000 to 28 February 2018.
- A focused review of grey literature published on websites of relevant national and international organisations
- New analysis of the Next Steps Survey<sup>4</sup> to help answer RQ1
- New analysis of the Labour Force Survey (LFS)/Annual Population Survey (APS) to help answer RQ2.

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Education, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Work experience covers a range of activities from work placements and tasters; work focused projects; employer presentations; through to mentoring. They can be part of targeted SEND provision, more generic vocational programme (such as, Traineeships) or generic academic study programmes. Supported Internships are not included in this review. Throughout the report work experience is used to cover this range of provision.

<sup>3</sup> Examples of these [qualifications levels](#) are: A-Level, advanced apprenticeship (level 3); GCSE grades A\* - C, intermediate apprenticeship (level 2); entry level award, GCSE grades D-G (below level 2).

<sup>4</sup> Formerly the Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England (LSYPE).

## Key Findings

This report is structured to address each of the key research questions in turn: the main findings for each of these questions are set out below.

### **RQ1: Benefits of work experience/placements for students with less complex SEND in preparing for and obtaining paid employment**

The REA identifies an **evidence gap** in relation to work experience for young people with less complex SEND in the FE sector. Very few academic studies or grey literature articles address this group specifically in relation to potential employment-related benefits of work experience: rather, these young people tend to be overshadowed in the literature by those with more complex SEND (i.e. with a statement/EHC plan) or included in wider groups of young people experiencing disadvantage or barriers to education and employment.

Despite this evidence gap, a number of studies do identify benefits of work experience for sub-groups of learners that are likely to include those with less complex SEND. These potential benefits include:

- Enhanced soft skills, including teamwork, responsibility and interpersonal skills
- Greater confidence, improved self-image and construction of a 'pro-employment identity'
- Increased work ethic and motivation to look for work
- Improved employment outcomes and/or progression into further education or training

**No evidence** was found on whether any particular type or length of work experience or level or type of work experience-related support is more effective than others in leading to positive outcomes for young people with less complex SEND. However, from a review of broader literature focussing on learners with and without SEND, it was possible to identify a number of **good practice principles for post-16 providers** relevant to the specific group of interest. These principles relate to the key phases of the learner journey before, during and after work experience and could be usefully communicated and encouraged across the whole range of vocational or technical study programmes which young people with less complex SEND access in the further education (FE) or training sectors.

## **Work experience/placements for young people with less complex SEND: principles of good practice for post-16 providers**

### **The transition phase from school to FE provider**

- Implement effective assessment processes so that young people's aspirations and support needs are well understood by all parties involved
- Ensure that information is shared between schools and FE providers so that providers understand the aspirations and needs of learners and can develop and deliver appropriate provision
- Ensure that effective careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) is available so that learners understand the full range of options available to them and can make informed choices.

### **Employer engagement**

- Ensure that employers have a range of opportunities to engage with work experience by a number of options (e.g. work placements, work tasters, presentations to students)
- Where possible, have dedicated employer engagement resources to identify and support employers and understand factors driving employer engagement

### **Support during the work experience or work placement**

Whether taking an inclusive (across all learners) or targeted (specifically for learners with SEND, including less complex SEND) approach, the following elements are important in ensuring positive outcomes:

- Teaching employment-related skills in class
- Identifying and meeting different learner support needs
- Offering a range of 'work experience' options for learners to engage with, such as work placements, peer mentoring/support and employer presentations
- Monitoring learner progression throughout the programme so that good practice can be understood and built on, and any issues can be identified and addressed early
- Linking work experience to the needs of local employers and the local labour market so that it is relevant to the needs of both learners and employers

### **Progression and aftercare**

- Build progression and aftercare into work experience programmes, for example by undertaking end of programme assessments or providing advice and support into employment or further training

## **RQ2: Effectiveness of education / training in helping young people with less complex SEND into employment**

The limited evidence available from the academic literature is varied and inconclusive with regards to the effectiveness of different types of education and training in supporting young people with less complex SEND into employment.

Evidence on the effectiveness of education and training provision in England in preparing these young people for employment was limited to groups that overlap with, but are not identical to, the population of interest. For example, our new descriptive analysis of the 2016-17 data from the **Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey (LFS/APS)** used a particular disability status (the 'EA disabled II' group, whose day to day activities were affected 'a little' by a health problem) as a proxy for those with less complex SEND. The analysis found that this group, aged 16-19 years in 2016/17, were closer in profile in terms of attainment, economic activity and progression to those 'not disabled' than to those whose health problem/disability affected their daily activities 'a lot'. However, on each variable considered there is a gap between the 'not disabled' and EA disabled II group, with the latter having consistently lower percentages of positive outcomes. This could suggest that while education and training provision for the SEN support group in England is having some positive impact on outcomes for these learners, there is still significant room for improvement to close the gap with 'not disabled' peers.

## **RQ3: Evidence relating to work experience/placements for young people studying at (i) level 3, (ii) level 2 and (iii) below level 2 (RQ3)**

The REA identified an **evidence gap** regarding specific evidence for young people with less complex SEND studying at different levels: there was insufficient evidence in the grey and academic literature to answer this research question.



# 1. Introduction

A key feature of both the 2014 SEND reforms and the government's ongoing reforms of post-16 technical education is a focus on preparing children and young people for adult life, including employment. This is reflected in the [SEND Code of Practice](#)<sup>5</sup> and in the DfE's recent [Post-16 Skills Plan](#)<sup>6</sup> and [independent report on technical education](#)<sup>7</sup>, both of which emphasise the importance of better preparing young people on 16-19 programmes of education and training to enter the workforce and progress in their jobs or careers.

It is in the context of these changes that this REA focuses on preparation for employment via work experience for young people aged 16-19 with less complex SEND<sup>8</sup> who are studying vocational or technical study programmes in the FE or training sectors.

## 1.2. Project aim

While there is a growing body of evidence on effective support for children and young people with SEND in the school/college environment<sup>9</sup>, and some evidence on effective interventions for supporting young people with more complex SEND into employment<sup>10</sup> (e.g. supported internships for young people with statements of SEN or EHC plans), far less is currently known about strategies and interventions that are successful in supporting young people with less complex SEND on vocational or technical study programmes into employment.

This REA therefore aims to identify and assess the available evidence on which types of provision are most effective at giving these young people the skills, knowledge and experience they need to progress into work. It covers available evidence on provision in further education (FE) colleges, vocational settings and training providers, including curriculum-based provision, classroom-based interventions and support that takes place during work experience and work placements. A wide range of 16-19 provision, including Study Programmes, Traineeships and Apprenticeships, are in scope for this study.

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<sup>5</sup> Department for Education (January 2015), Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years

<sup>6</sup> Department for Education and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (July 2016), Post-16 Skills Plan

<sup>7</sup> Independent Panel on Technical Education (April 2016), Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education

<sup>8</sup> In England, the 'SEN support' group of students with identified SEND but without a statement of SEN or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

<sup>9</sup> Department for Education (July 2017), [Special educational needs support in schools and colleges](#)

<sup>10</sup> DfE (June 2017). "Supported internships". DfE.

### 1.3. Research questions

Within the aim above, this work was guided by three overarching research questions (RQs).

**RQ1:** For young people aged 16-19 who have less complex SEND and are studying vocational or technical study programmes in the FE or training sector, what evidence is there about the benefits of work experience or substantial work placements in preparing for and obtaining paid employment? ([Chapter 4](#))

**1a)** Does the evidence point to any particular type or length of work experience or work placement being particularly effective in leading to a good employment outcome? ([Chapter 5](#))

**1b)** What does the evidence tell us about the level and type of support (from the education provider and/or the employer) which is effective in enabling these young people to benefit fully from the work experience/work placement? ([Chapter 5](#))

**RQ2:** What evidence is available on the effectiveness of education or training provision in helping these young people secure a job/career (including evidence important for the target population but less so for non-SEN peers)? ([Chapter 6](#))

**RQ3:** For all of the questions above, is there any difference in evidence for young people studying at (i) level 3, (ii) level 2 and (iii) below level 2? If so, what are they? (Addressed in chapters [4](#), [5](#) and [6](#))

## 2. Background

The following section introduces the population of interest for this REA by examining first the identification of young people with 'less complex SEND' and then the prevalence of this population within the FE sector. It then goes on to explore the government's guidance on work experience for those with SEND and define what is covered by the term 'work experience' for the purposes of this report.

### 2.1. Young people with less complex SEND

In English law, a young person has special educational needs (SEN):

“[...] if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. [...] and if the young person] has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others in the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions”.<sup>11</sup>

Both schools and FE colleges have a duty in law (Section 66 of the Children and Families Act 2014) to use their best endeavours to meet the special educational needs of young people. The SEND Code of Practice sets this out in more detail (Chapters 6 and 7 for schools and colleges respectively). This review focuses on those with 'less complex' SEND<sup>12</sup> - in England, those who are in receipt of SEN support but who do not require a statement of SEN or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. SEN support is described in schools as “action to remove barriers to learning and [putting] effective special educational provision in place”<sup>13</sup> and in colleges as “the college [using] its best endeavours to put appropriate support in place [...] aimed at promoting student independence and enabling the young person to make good progress towards employment and/or higher education, independent living , good health and participating in the community”<sup>14</sup>. According to the latest data available (January 2017), 11.6% of the total school pupil population in England are on SEN support, compared to 2.8% of the total pupil population who have a statement of SEN or an EHC plan.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Children and Families Act 2014. Department for Education (DfE), 2015. *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years*. London: DfE, (Paragraphs xiii-xiv).

<sup>12</sup> Since the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, the SEN acronym has usually been replaced by 'SEND' (special educational needs and disability). Because the legal definition of SEN (given above) does not include all disabilities, the current [SEND code of practice](#) refers to 'SEN and/or disabilities', while the 'SEN' acronym is retained in the term 'SEN support'. This report uses 'SEND' throughout, except in the context of 'SEN support'.

<sup>13</sup> Children and Families Act 2014. Department for Education (DfE), 2015. *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years*. London: DfE, p100.

<sup>14</sup> As footnote above, p114.

<sup>15</sup> Special Educational Needs in England: January 2017, SFR 37/2017

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/633031/SFR37\\_2017\\_Main\\_Text.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633031/SFR37_2017_Main_Text.pdf)

As young people in receipt of SEN support leave school and move on into FE colleges and training, the administrative category of 'SEN support' is less well established. Different funding arrangements apply in this sector: funding for 16-19 year olds with less complex SEN in FE is provided as part of a national funding formula for "additional needs, including those with SEN" but is "not ring-fenced".<sup>16</sup> Historically, the terminology around learners with SEND has also differed between schools and post-16 settings, with the broad term 'learning difficulties and/or disabilities' (LDD) used for post-16 learners instead of SEN or SEND. While the term 'SEN support' is now increasingly used by post-16 providers, it is not at present in consistent usage. In the absence of consistent terminology, this report uses 'less complex SEND' or 'SEN support' to define the level of support needs of 16 - 19 year old learners in the population of interest.

For the reasons described above, it is difficult to access precise information on the number of 16-19 year olds in the SEN support group. The latest data available on Year 11 pupils (aged 15-16 years) is from January 2017 and shows that, out of a total of 529,217 pupils, 55,093 (10%) were receiving SEN support<sup>17</sup>. Based on this, it is possible to estimate that (at least) a similar proportion of 16-19 year old students will be in receipt of SEN support, though this estimate is only approximate as it is not possible to tell from existing data how many young people who received SEN support in school are categorised as having an LDD in the FE or training sectors. This lack of clarity is partly due to the issues relating to terminology noted above, and mirrors what has been described as the "transition cliff" in the "administrative prevalence of learning disabilities" in health services in England<sup>18</sup>. A second factor is the possibility of non-disclosure of needs by 16-19 year olds in the FE or training sectors: post-16, a young person without an EHC plan may choose whether or not to disclose to their education/training provider that they have a SEN or LDD.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.2. Young people with SEND in Further Education

The government's [Post-16 Skills Plan](#) set out its plans to reform the skills system and technical education. The plan indicates the need for tailored and flexible support for young people who might otherwise struggle to benefit from post-school education or training, and makes specific reference to learners with SEND engaged in technical/vocational study.

This REA focuses on young people with less complex SEND in FE. The latest data available on post-16 (Key Stage 4) destinations (2015/16 destinations for the 2014/15

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<sup>16</sup> Department for Education (DfE), 2015. *Special educational needs code of practice: 0-25 years*. London: DfE, (Paragraph 7.29).

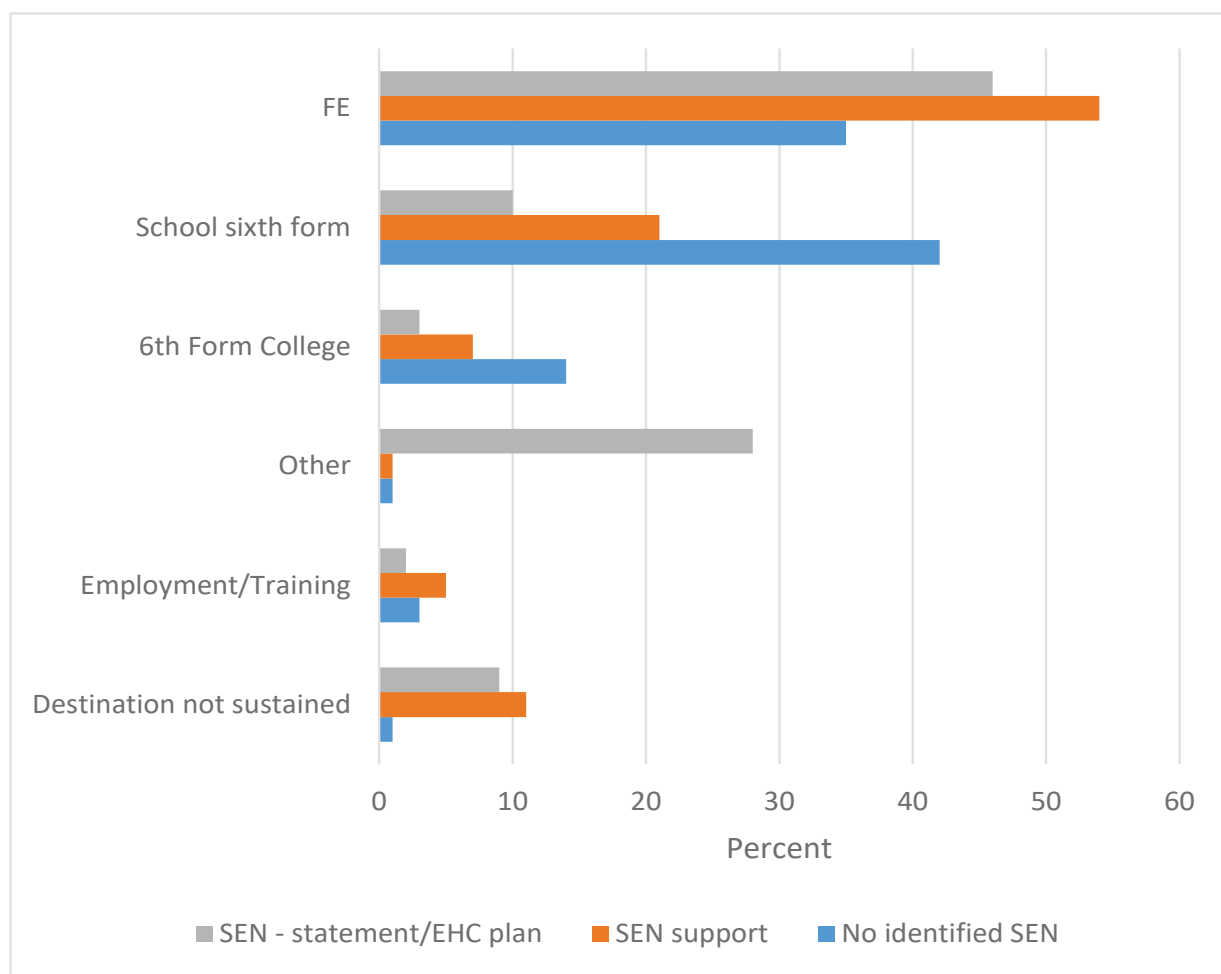
<sup>17</sup> 2015/16 destinations for the 2014/15 cohort (SFR 56/2017, 12 October 2017), p29.

<sup>18</sup> Emerson, E., Glover, G. (2012). The "transition cliff" in the administrative prevalence of learning disabilities in England, *Tizard Learning Disability Review*, 17 (3), 139-143.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Marangozov, R., Gloster, R., Williams, J., Culliney, M., Montalt, J. V., Jacobsen, Y., Cassey, L. (2013). *Supporting learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to access European Social Fund Priority 2 and 5 provision. Evidence Report 2013*. Brighton: Institute for Employment Studies.

cohort)<sup>20</sup> indicates that that the ‘SEN support’ group is almost three times more likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) than the ‘no identified SEN’ group, and slightly more likely than those identified as ‘SEN - statement/EHC plan’ (11% compared to 4% and 9% respectively). Those in the SEN Support group who did move into a sustained education, employment and/or training destination, however, were more likely than their peers without SEN to be on an apprenticeship (8% compared to 6% respectively) or attending an FE provider, including a sixth form college (69% and 52%).

**Post Year 11 destinations by SEND: 2015/16 destinations for the 2014/15 cohort**



Source: Education Data Division, Department for Education 2017

Within FE, this REA looks specifically at evidence related to young people engaged in technical and vocational study within the FE sector. Within this field, there are three performance table categories of technical and vocational qualifications available to 16-19 year olds:

- Level 3 Tech Levels to specialise in a specific technical job

<sup>20</sup> Destinations of key stage 4 and key stage 5 students, England, 2015/16, Department for Education SFR 56/2017, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/651012/SFR56\\_2017\\_Main\\_Text.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/651012/SFR56_2017_Main_Text.pdf)

- Level 2 Technical Certificates, which help young people to get employment or progress to another tech level
- Applied General Qualifications to continue general education at advanced level through applied learning

In the 2015/16 academic year, nearly two thirds (64.0%) of those with SEN at 15 achieved Level 2 by the age of 19 (compared to 85.3% of all 19 year olds), while 27.9% achieved Level 3 (compared to 64.8% of all 19 year olds)<sup>21</sup>. 70.4% of young people with SEN but without a statement/EHC plan achieved Level 2 by age 19, compared to 36.3% of those with a statement/plan. The figures for Level 3 attainment at age 19 are 31.2% and 13.7% respectively.

## 2.2. Work experience for young people with less complex SEND

The SEND Code of Practice makes explicit the government’s desire for young people with SEND to “achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood” (paragraph 1.1), going on to state that “the vast majority of young people with SEN are capable of sustainable paid employment with the right preparation and support” (paragraph 8.31).

In accord with this ambition, young people with SEND are – like all young people in England – expected to follow a study programme. Government guidance<sup>22</sup> on study programmes states that, “all study programmes should include work experience and non-qualification activities, which complement the other elements of the programme and support the student to progress to further or higher education or to employment”. The SEND Code of Practice says that a young person with SEND should be on a study programme which “provides stretch and progression and enables them to achieve the best possible outcomes in adult life” and which includes meaningful work experience with students matched to placements based on a “thorough understanding of the student’s potential, abilities, interests and areas they want to develop” (para 8.30 - 8.33). Bringing young people closer to the world of work is believed to be an important factor in smoothing their transition into employment<sup>23</sup>: as well helping them to identify career paths they may be interested in, experiencing jobs and work settings can help young people to develop the ‘soft’ employability skills which are required in the workplace and which employers currently claim are absent when young people first enter their employ. The importance of work experience is reflected in the national Employer Perspective Survey,

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<sup>21</sup> Statistical First Release SFR16/2017 at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/level-2-and-3-attainment-by-young-people-aged-19-in-2016>

<sup>22</sup> A link to the guidance (updated March 2018 is at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/694413/16\\_to\\_19\\_study\\_programmes\\_guidance\\_updated-March\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/694413/16_to_19_study_programmes_guidance_updated-March_2018.pdf))

<sup>23</sup> BIS and DfE (July 2016) op cit.

which in 2016 found that relevant work experience was rated by 66% of recruiting employers as being a critical or significant factor looked for in candidates.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the importance placed on work experience by the government's study programme guidance and SEND Code of Practice and by potential employers, there is currently little evidence to indicate which forms of work experience are the most effective in supporting young people with less complex SEND into employment. This REA looks to address this gap by identifying and examining evidence on work experience for this population.

For the purposes of this report, 'work experience' is used to cover a range of activities from work placements and tasters; work focused projects; employer presentations; through to mentoring. These activities can be part of targeted SEND provision, more generic vocational programme (e.g. Traineeships) or in a range of academic or vocational study programmes<sup>25</sup>. Some programmes, such as Supported Internships, are aimed only at young people with a statement of SEN or EHC plan and are therefore not included in this REA. Other programmes, such as apprenticeships and traineeships, are available to a wide range of students (dependent on levels of prior attainment) and are tailored to individual learners' needs.

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<sup>24</sup> DfE (June 2017), "Employer Perspectives Survey 2016: Research report". The report is based on a survey of 18,000 UK businesses, stratified by sector and employment size.

<sup>25</sup> Valerie Todd, '(June 2013), "Making Work Experience Work For You: Study Programmes, Traineeships and Supported Internships". DfE and UKCES

### 3. Methodology

The approach used in this study was a rapid evidence assessment (REA). This is a structured and rigorous search of published evidence, though it is not as extensive or formalised as a systematic review. The REA was primarily based on a focussed review of relevant academic, peer-reviewed journal articles and a review of ‘grey’ literature published on websites of relevant national and international organisations. This evidence was augmented by new analyses of two publically available datasets:

- The Labour Force Survey (LFS)/Annual Population Survey (ASP)
- ‘Next Steps’ Longitudinal Study dataset

The approach to each of these evidence sources is discussed in turn in this section.

#### 3.1. Focused literature review of academic articles

The focused review of academic literature included articles published in English between January 2000 and February 2018 and was informed by the principles of systematic reviewing<sup>26</sup>. The parameters of the academic literature review are set out in Figure 2.

**Table 1: Parameters of the focused review undertaken**

Stage	Parameter type	Parameter
All stages	Language	English
	Publication type	(i) Scholarly peer-reviewed (ii) Article in academic journal
	Search	Abstract <sup>27</sup>
	Dates	1 January 2000 to 28 February 2018

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<sup>26</sup> See, for example, H. Carroll et al., (2017) The perceived feasibility of methods to reduce publication bias. PLoS ONE

<sup>27</sup>A trial search was done where the search included ‘all text’ but this significantly increased the number of articles retrieved outside the remit of the work. The ‘Abstract only’ searches were most efficient.



The review had **three stages**: (1) title review; (2) abstract review; and (3) article review. The inclusion/exclusion criteria for each stage are set out in Figure 3.

**Table 2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for each stage of the review**

Stage	Parameter type	Parameter
1) Title review (& quick scan of abstract if required)	Topic	<p><b>Include if about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) SEND young people in 16-19 years age group; and</li> <li>(ii) in vocational or technical education or training within further education or training sectors; and</li> <li>(iii) preparation for, or support to obtain, paid employment</li> </ul> <p><b>Exclude if <u>clearly</u> about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) those with complex SEND</li> <li>(ii) intensive levels of support such as supported internships and projects like Project SEARCH</li> </ul>
2) Abstract review	Topic	As for title review but decision based on <b>detailed reading</b> of the abstract saved in to Endnote database.
3) Article review	Topic	As for title and abstract reviews but decision based on <b>reading of full article</b> downloaded to computer.

The search strategy was informed by expert guidance from two University of Warwick academic librarians. These academic librarians advised that it would not be possible to define ‘less complex SEND’ within search terms; instead, the judgement as to whether or not an article focused on those with less complex SEND would need to be made as part of the review process. The reviewer made the judgement based on the information provided by each article’s author/s as to the level of need of their research population<sup>28</sup>. For example, if needs were described as ‘complex’ or ‘severe’ or ‘profound’, or involved multiple difficulties (e.g. hearing impairment and intellectual disabilities), or the research participants were described as not having been educated in a mainstream setting, these articles were excluded as not focused on young people with ‘less complex needs’.

The search terms were defined in relation to four aspects of the research topic: the population of interest, the context of provision, the type of study programme and the activity of interest (Figure 4).

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<sup>28</sup> And informed by more than 20 years’ experience of research around SEND plus three years working as a Statementing and Review Officer in an local authority SEN team.

**Table 3: The topic specifications that informed the search**

Specification type	Specification
The specific group of young people	(i) young people aged 16-19 (ii) with SEND <sup>29</sup>
The context of provision	Further education or training sector
The type of study programme	Technical or vocational education up to level 3 <sup>30</sup>
The focus of interest	(i) preparation for, or support to obtain, paid employment (ii) work experience or work placement

Seven relevant databases, powered by four different search platforms, were searched (see Annex A for details). The key search terms used in relation to the search specification were selected based on the closest terms included in the thesaurus for each search platform.

Because different terminology is used about learners with SEND in different settings (e.g. 'SEN' or 'SEND' in schools and, historically, 'LDD' in FE colleges) and in different countries (e.g. 'additional needs' in Scotland and 'special needs' in the USA), the 'scoping notes' given for each database were used to choose the concept that most closely mapped on to 'less complex SEND'. This meant that searches were carried out using database-specific terms for 'special educational needs', a phrase broader than 'learning difficulties' but narrower than 'disabilities' (in a test search, searching with 'disabilities' vastly increased the literature found without increasing the relevance of that literature to the focus of the review). As a *post hoc* check, searches were also conducted using the specific phrase 'learning difficulties and disabilities', but this made no difference to the literature found.

The initial search strategy, which included search terms linked to all four of the ways in which the topic of interest was defined, was used with one search platform (EBSCOhost) and one database (Education Research Complete). This strategy resulted in no articles being identified for review, and a number of refinements to the search strategy did not result in any relevant articles being retrieved.

A revised search strategy was then devised based on search terms linked to two of the four topic specifications: the specific group of young people and the focus of interest. The judgement as to whether or not an article related to the other two topic specifications (context of provision and the type of study programme) was then made as part of the review process. The judgement was based on the information provided in the abstract or in the full article. For example, articles where the context of provision was secondary

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<sup>29</sup> The judgement about whether or not this was 'less complex' SEND was made as part of the review, not as part of the search.

<sup>30</sup> Level 3 qualifications include, for example, AS levels, A levels, advanced apprenticeship (<https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels>)

school or residential provision were excluded, as were articles where the type of study programme was not vocational or technical. This revised search strategy was adopted across all seven databases and four search platforms and resulted in **126 abstracts** being saved after Title Review.

Finally, a third search strategy was used only in the cross-searching database, Web of Science, powered by Clarivate Analytics. This had proved to be the most fruitful database in terms of retrieving articles that met the criteria for stage 1 (Title Review) and had duplicated articles retrieved from other databases. The final search strategy was based on the focus of interest (preparation for, or support to obtain, paid employment; work experience or work placement) and a refined version of the specific group of young people of interest. The refinement was that separate searches were conducted in turn for each of the most common (>5%) types of need in the SEN support group, as identified in DfE statistics<sup>31</sup>: moderate learning difficulty (25.2%), speech, language and communication needs (22%), social, emotional and mental health (17.3%), specific learning difficulty (15.1%) and autistic spectrum disorder (5.2%). After Title Review, **168 abstracts** were saved as a result of this third search strategy.

In total **4,116 titles** were reviewed and **356 abstracts** were downloaded to Endnote. After deletion of duplicates, **216 abstracts** were reviewed and **46** met the criteria for review of full article (review stage 3).

Of the 46 articles that were fully reviewed, **none met all four criteria set out in Figure 4**. The revised search strategy therefore confirmed the result of the initial search strategy, while enabling the identification of relevant literature from which broader principles of good practice could be drawn.

## **3.2. Grey literature review**

Grey literature consists of materials and research produced by organisations outside of the normal commercial or academic publishing and distribution channels. Common grey literature publication types include reports (annual, research, technical, project, etc.), working papers, government documents, white papers and evaluations. They are not peer reviewed.

The grey literature review covered **82 websites** located through internet searches and identified by the researchers as relevant to the main research questions. This covered the websites of international organisations (such as the ILO and UNESCO), European and UK governmental organisations (e.g. Cedefop and the Department for Education), other governmental organisations (for example, Ofsted), as well as research institutions

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<sup>31</sup> Department for Education (2017). National Statistics. [Special educational needs in England: January 2017. SFR 37/2017, 27 July 2017.](#)

and third sector organisations (TSOs). A full list of websites visited is contained in Annex B (see Table 2).

Initially, the research and/or publications page (or similar) of relevant sites was reviewed to identify any literature relevant to the study. In addition, a site search was undertaken using the following search terms separately: disab\*; special; work exp\*; and work place\*. Finally, a Google search was undertaken using the search terms of the focused review.

**41 websites** generated literature of broad relevance to the study, and a total of **109 documents** were identified. After reading the summary, the documents were sorted into five thematic areas:

- **Work experience/placements for 16-19 year olds in the SEN support group** – 7 documents (NB: these were relating to the legal framework for the SEN support group, or programmes which may include significant numbers of the SEN support group e.g. Traineeships)
- **Work experience/placements for 16-19 year olds with more complex SEND** – 21 documents
- **Work experience/placements for adults with SEND** – 14 documents
- **Generic work experience/placements for 16-19 year olds** – 19 documents
- **Generic work experience/placements for disadvantaged adults** – 2 documents

For the analysis, 'work experience' was broadly defined and included:

- Specific episodes of work experience in academic or vocational education and training (VET) oriented programmes, including work tasters and placements, presentations by employers and classroom-based employer work projects
- Work experience which forms part of a VET programme
- Traineeships.

This enabled the researchers to include a wider range of opportunities in different education and training contexts.

The detail about work experience programmes found in the grey literature was often greater than that found in the focused literature review of academic articles. This is because evaluation reports are usually commissioned by the funder to include a detailed monitoring and assessment of the programme, and are not limited by word or page constraints.

### **3.3. 'Next Steps' Longitudinal Study**

To examine the possible benefits of work experience for young people with SEND, we undertook new analysis of data from the Next Steps Longitudinal Study (formerly the

Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, LSYPE1). Our descriptive analysis examined whether a work experience placement in Year 11 had any association with subsequent employment and other outcomes, and we considered whether this provided any useful evidence to help answer Research Question 1.

Next Steps is a major longitudinal study that follows the lives of around 16,000 people born in 1989-90 in England. Data was first collected in 2003-04 with young people were aged 13/14 (year 9). Surveys (Waves 1-7) were undertaken on an annual basis with the same respondents until 2009/10 when they were aged 19/20. There was a final survey in Wave 8 in 2015/16, when the original group of young people were aged 25/26. Our analysis was based on responses from Waves 3-6 and Wave 8, combined into a single dataset.

The Next Steps data indicates whether young people in the study had been identified as having a SEN and, if so, whether they had a statement. In addition, the survey records whether young people undertook a work experience placement in their final year of compulsory schooling. This data is relevant here as the only available longitudinal study which allows us to analyse to impact of work placements for young people with less complex SEND. However, because Next Steps looks at Key Stage 4 (KS4) work experience only, the results are not directly comparable with work experience in the context of the post-16 technical and vocational study programmes that are the focus of this REA.

### **3.4. Labour Force Survey / Annual Population Survey**

In order to provide an up-to-date assessment of the effectiveness of education or training provision in helping young people aged 16-19 years with less complex SEND to secure a job (research question 2), we conducted a new analysis of relevant data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) / Annual Population Survey (APS).

The LFS is a quarterly survey of people of working age (16+ years old) in Great Britain. Interviews are undertaken with 60,000 households, providing data on around 85,000 people. Since 2004, the quarterly surveys have been brought together to produce a single Annual Population Survey (APS). The APS is boosted in order to produce samples which can be used to generate local authority level statistical estimates.

The LFS/APS dataset contains detailed information on participant's education and training, including their highest qualification and current learning activity. It also includes data on disability and health conditions, though it does not ask participants whether they have, or have ever, been identified as having SEN. Rather, the LFS/APS asks people whether their current health problems and/or disabilities limit their ability to work or undertake daily activities and, on this basis, differentiates between those people with a disability whose day-to-day activities are limited 'a lot' by their health problem and/or disability, 'a little' or 'not at all'. In our analysis, we used the group who reported being

limited 'a little' by their current health problems and/or disabilities as a proxy for those with less complex SEND. This is not a precise fit to this report's specific group of interest and all conclusions should therefore be treated with caution.

## 4. Benefits of work experience for young people with less complex SEND<sup>32</sup>

This chapter addresses **Research Question 1**: *what evidence is available about the benefits of work experience or substantial work placements for the population of interest in terms of preparing them for, and helping them get, paid employment?*

It presents evidence on the benefits, or otherwise, of work experience or substantial work placements for young people aged 16-19 who have less complex SEND and who are studying vocational or technical study programmes in the FE or training sector.

### 4.1. Academic and grey literature

The REA highlighted an **evidence gap** on this topic in existing datasets and literature. From the review of academic literature, **no research evidence** was found with regards to the benefits (or otherwise) of work experience or work placements specifically for young people with less complex SEND studying vocational or technical study programmes in the FE or training sector.

It was possible, however, to identify **potentially relevant evidence** about the benefits of work experience or work placements for these young people within research focused on groups of young people identified by other labels, such as ‘disadvantaged’ or ‘with disabilities’. This evidence is presented here in terms of the specific benefits that were identified for the groups of young people in question.

- **Employment skills and confidence<sup>33</sup>**: One study used case studies to explore “the career development process and post-school employment outcomes” (p423) for a sample of eight “**individuals with disabilities**” in “living wage occupations 7 to 10 years after exiting high school”. This research identified the key benefits of work experience as:
  - “General employment skills”, such as “teamwork, responsibility, and work ethic” (“One participant commented, ‘I’ve learned persistence. Never quit. What it means to do hard work.’”, (p427).
  - “Opportunities to gain more complex skills” related to “particular industries”; and “greater confidence” (Another participant said, ‘I learned so many little

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<sup>32</sup> The focus is on those studying vocational or technical programmes in the further education or training sectors.

<sup>33</sup> Lindstrom, L., Doren, B., Miesch, J. (2011). Waging a Living: Career Development and Long-Term Employment Outcomes for young Adults With Disabilities, *Exceptional Children*, 77(4), 423-434, See also Trainor, A. A., Smith, S. A., & Kim, S. (2012). Four Supportive Pillars in Career Exploration and Development for Adolescents with LD and EBD. *Intervention in School & Clinic*, 48(1), 15-21, a discursive article that presents secondary evidence of the benefits of paid employment during school holidays and/or weekends,

things that I didn't know about. It made me a lot more confident looking for jobs.”) (p427).

It should be noted that in the context of these case studies, 'work experience' meant paid jobs outside school hours rather than a structured part of a study programme.

- **Construction of a pro-employment identity<sup>34</sup>**: One academic article focused on the concept of “identity construction” as a prerequisite for making the transition from unemployment to employment among “**disadvantaged young adults**” who participated in a 1-year apprenticeship at Jamie Oliver’s restaurant and training facility, ‘Fifteen’. While not focussing on the target population of this review (participants were unemployed rather than in FE or training), this article is nevertheless relevant in its emphasis on the creation of a pro-employment identity as a benefit of work experience. The research, a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews involving 29 apprentices on this reemployment programme in England, found that:

*Participants’ work-related identity emerged through four different pathways. The first pathway (“competence”) centred around changes in perceived competence in performing work-related tasks. The second pathway (“role models”) involved identifying with emergent role models. The third pathway (“group identification”) involved two types of group identification: identifying with positively regarded others in the group or distancing from negatively regarded others in the group. The fourth pathway (“comparison”) involved comparing their current identity to their former identity as a disadvantaged young adult. (Koen et al, p665)*

This study extends the notion of work-related ‘competency’ beyond employment-related skills into internalised beliefs about the self in relation to role model/s, peers, and previous self-image: these conclusions have a clear relevance to the group of young people with less complex SEND that are the focus of this study.

- **‘Hard’ benefits**: Within the grey literature reviewed, one study<sup>35</sup> used a sub-sample of “**youth with limitations from medical conditions**” who applied to take part in Job Corps<sup>36</sup>. Of the total (N=472), 271 were randomly assigned to the treatment group (i.e. they took part in Job Corps) and 201 to the control group (i.e. they were embargoed from Job Corps for three years). This sample was derived from secondary

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<sup>34</sup> Koen, J., et al. (2016). "A whole new future" - identity construction among disadvantaged young adults." *Career Development International* **21**(7): 658-681.

<sup>35</sup> Hock H. et al. (February 2017). "Improving the Outcomes of Youth with Medical Limitations Through Comprehensive Training and Employment Services: Evidence from the National Job Corps Study." Working Paper 53, Mathematica Policy Research

<sup>36</sup> Academic literature on Job Corps was excluded as the intervention was very intensive (including residential living and health care, as well as vocational training and academic education), followed by post-program support to find a job or further training: Schochet, P. Z. and J. A. Burghardt (2008). "Do Job Corps performance measures track program impacts?" *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* **27**(3): 556-576.



analysis of data from “a large-scale experiment conducted for the U.S. Department of Labour using a stratified randomization and sampling design” (p3). This found a range of positive ‘hard’ impacts compared to the control group including substantial increases in the number of hours of education and training received (e.g. 879 hours more in the first year) (p12); a 32% increase in the number of weeks/hours in employment (p15); a significant increase in future earnings (p14/15); economic self-sufficiency and significantly reduced benefit take-up (p16). The study also found that operating costs per participant were lower for youth with limitations from medical conditions than for other vulnerable youths on the programme (p27).

- **Soft skills, education and employment outcomes:** A grey literature evaluation report on **young people on Traineeships in England** did not report outcomes separately for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). However, the analysis identified when particular sub groups deviated from the main analysis and the analysis did not differentiate between trainees with LDD and those without. The Traineeships evaluation (n=2,153 trainees) identified positive impacts on<sup>37</sup>:
  - Soft skills: including team-working (63% said it impacted a lot) and work routine (61%);
  - Job entry: motivation to look for work (61%) and respondent’s self-reported ‘improved chances in future applications’ (56%);
  - Positive destinations: in the year after completing a Traineeship, 69% of young people were in a ‘positive’ destination – this included 34% of young people in employment, 20% on an apprenticeship and 13% in education or training. Of those in work or an apprenticeship, 40% were in the same organisation as where they did their work experience placement, and 24% were in a different organisation but in the same industry.
- **Interpersonal skills:** Similarly, the grey literature evaluation report of the English Work Experience Placement Trials<sup>38</sup> (**FE college students, n=92**) did not report outcomes separately for the quarter (26%) of participants who were “students categorised as SEN School Action Plus”<sup>39</sup> (p22). Benefits of work experience placements for the participants overall included having, “helped to develop the skills necessary for employment, including team work, communication and interpersonal skills, enabling students to become more work-ready.” (p9) “Some students” found, “employment or apprenticeships following their work experience, including opportunities associated with the placements they undertook” (p9) but it was not possible to discern whether or not any of these students were those with less complex SEND.

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<sup>37</sup> Alice Fitzpatrick et al. (July 2017) op cit.

<sup>38</sup> Sims, D. et al. (October 2013), op cit.

<sup>39</sup> ‘School Action Plus’ was a support category before the 2014 SEND reforms. It would currently be included in the ‘SEN support’ category.

## 4.2. Evidence relating to benefits of KS4 work experience for the SEN support group

The **Next Steps dataset** identifies young people with less complex SEND (those with SEN but without a statement) in the 16-19 population and is the only available data source which includes data on work experience for this specific group.

Despite this, the results presented here must be treated with caution. In particular, it is important to note that the Next Steps data pertains only to the work experience offered to school pupils in KS4; that is, at the end of Year 10 or start of Year 11. The context in which this work experience takes place is different to that of the post-16 vocational study which is the focus of this REA: in particular, KS4 work experience is usually only one or two weeks in duration and is not necessarily related to pupils' studies or personal interests and aspirations. It is not therefore comparable to the structured work experience that is a requirement of the vocational or technical study programmes in the FE or training sectors.

The analysis presented here provides cross tabulations of the outcomes of KS4 work experience for young people (including those with a statement of SEN, with SEN and without a statement and with no SEN) when they reached their mid-twenties (see Table 3, page 72). It does not control for other factors which may be associated with later outcomes for these young people. More detailed analysis (beyond the resources of this review) would need to be undertaken to establish significant relationships between undertaking work experience and outcomes.

This analysis uses data from Wave 3 of the Next Steps study, undertaken in 2005-06 with young people aged 15-16 years of age (equivalent to Year 11). It includes a total weighted sample of 12,439 respondents (see Table 1), with cohort members selected to be representative of young people in England at the time the study began in 2004.<sup>40</sup> Of these respondents, 22% (2,737) had been identified as having a SEN in Waves 1 and 2, and 10% (1,287) were currently identified as SEN in Wave 3 (i.e. at Year 11).

Of the total weighted sample, 4% had a current statement of SEN or EHC plan in Wave 3, and 4% did not. Of those identified as SEN in Wave 3, 52% had a current statement/EHC plan and 48% did not.

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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/page.aspx?&sitesectionid=1248&sitesectiontitle>About+the+sample>

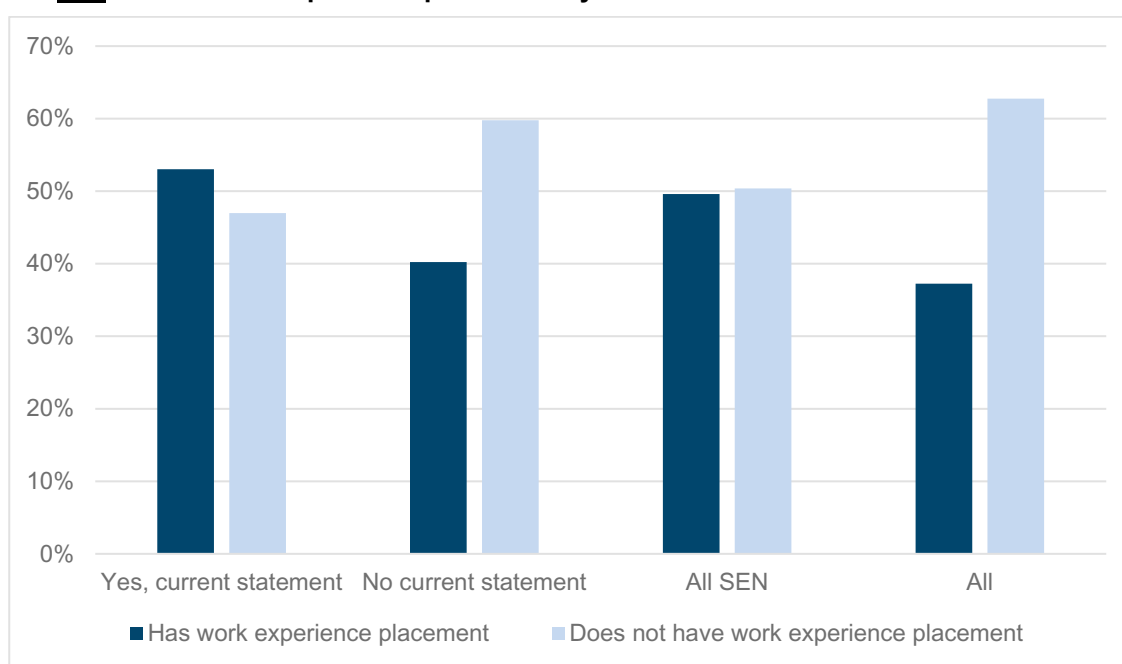
**Table 4: Next Steps Wave 3 sample size 2005/06**

	Number	Percent of total sample
Total weighted sample	12439	100%
SEN in Waves 1 and 2	2793	22%
SEN Wave 3	1287	10%
Wave 3 SEN current statement - Yes	521	4%
Wave 3 SEN current statement - No	475	4%

Source: Warwick IER; LSYPE Wave 3

Figure 5 shows that half of Year 11 young people with SEN ('All SEN') received a short (one to two weeks) work experience placement, which is much higher than for all Year 11 young people ('All': 37%). Year 11 young people with SEN and a current statement/EHC plan (53%) were more likely to have a placement than those with SEN without a statement/plan (40%).

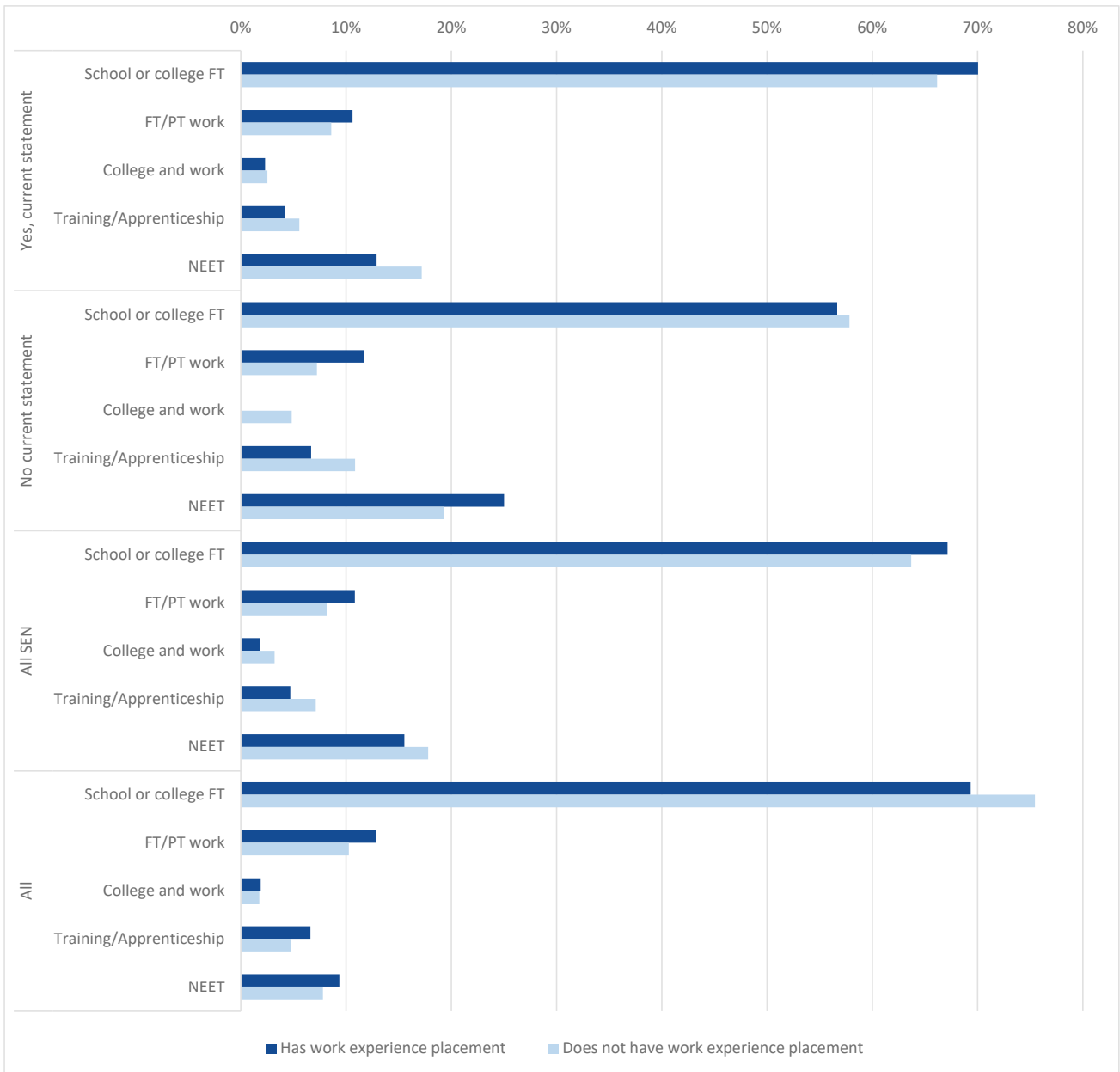
**Year 11 work experience placement by SEN and statement 2005/06**



Source: Warwick IER; LSYPE Wave 3

Figure 6 looks at Year 11 (KS4) work experience placements and Year 12 main activity for the young people in the sample. The data presented here suggests that young people with SEN but no EHC plan/statement (the 'SEN support' group) who had undertaken KS4 work experience were more likely to be NEET in Year 12 than those who had not undertaken the work experience. This was also true for this age-group as a whole (i.e. when non-SEN students were included in the analysis). Students with a statement of SEN or EHC plan, however, were less likely to be NEET if they had undertaken KS4 work experience.

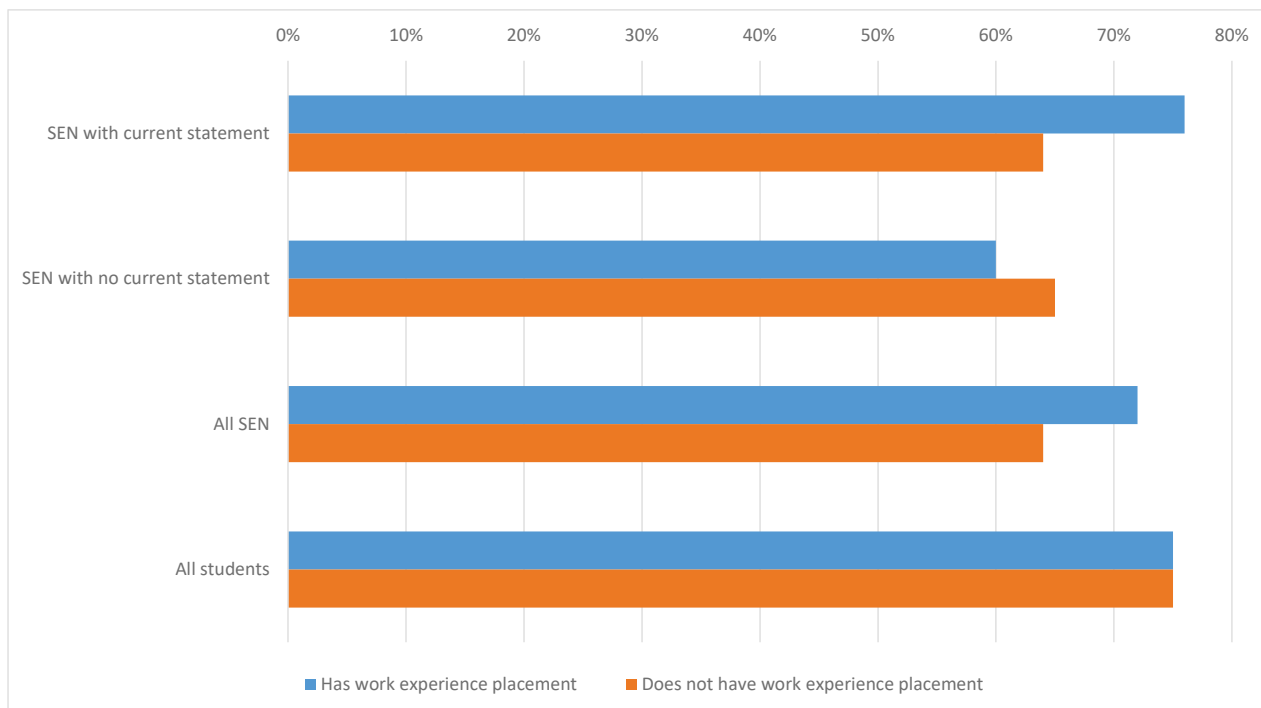
**Year 11 work experience placement and Year 12 main activity 2005/06-2006/07**



Source: Warwick IER; LSYPE Wave 3 and 4

As well as including data on KS4 work experience for the population of interest for this REA, the Next Steps dataset asked respondents about whether school (Year 11) had ‘taught [them] things which would be useful in a job’. Overall, more than two thirds of those with SEN (68%) agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case, compared with three quarters of all respondents (76%). For all groups other than the SEN support group, those who had been on a work experience placement were more likely to agree that school (Year 11) had ‘taught [them] things which would be useful in a job’(Figure 3). In the SEN support group, those who had been on a work experience placement were less likely to agree (60%) with this statement than those who had not had a work experience placement (65%).

**Whether School (Year 11) has taught me things which would be useful in a job 2005/06-2006/07 - % who agreed/strongly agreed**



Source: Warwick IER; LSYPE Wave 3 and 4 (N=4,056)

Data from LSYPE Waves 3 and 4 also gives information about the main activity of young people as they age from Year 11, through Years 12-14, until they reach age 25/26 in 2015/15. This data is summarised in Annex C (see Table 3).

For all groups of respondents, participation in a KS4 work experience placement is not associated with an increased likelihood of economic activity at age 25/26. Respondents who participated in a work experience placement in KS4 appeared slightly less likely to be in work at age 25/26 (80%) than those who had no work experience placement (83%), and were slightly more likely to be in NEET equivalent activities<sup>41</sup> (14% and 11% respectively).

This pattern remains apparent when looking only at those young people with a statement of SEN. In this group, those who took part in a work experience placement in KS4 were less likely to be in work at age 25/6 (47%) than those who did not (51%). Within NEET equivalent activities, meanwhile, those who undertook placements are less likely to be sick/disabled (15% compared to 24%), but more likely to be unemployed (18% and 13%).

Young people with SEN without a statement (the SEN support group) were as likely to be in work at age 25/26 whether they had a KS4 work experience placement or not (75% for both groups), but those who had a placement were more likely to be NEET equivalent

<sup>41</sup> I.e. unemployed, sick/disabled or looking after home/family.

(25% compared to 18%). Within this NEET equivalent group, those who had a KS4 work experience placement were more likely to be sick/disabled (11% compared to 5% of those who did not have a placement) but less likely to be employed (4% compared to 11% of those who did not have a placement).

Overall, the cross-tabulations undertaken for this analysis show that undertaking a KS4 work experience placement does not appear to be related to an increased likelihood of being in work by age 25/26 for any of the groups in the dataset. More rigorous analysis would, however, be required to determine if this was a significant relationship when controlling for other factors. The difference between the context of KS4 work experience and the work experience that is the focus of this report should also be kept in mind.

### 4.3. Benefits of work experience: Conclusions

Very few **academic studies or grey literature articles** identify the SEN support group as a distinct group in relation to research exploring potential employment-related benefits of work experience or work placements. However, a number of studies identify benefits of work experience to both employers and sub-groups of learners that likely included those with less complex SEND. While we are not able therefore to draw out any conclusive findings, the evidence reviewed has pointed towards some potential benefits for these learners, including:

- Enhanced soft skills, including teamwork, responsibility and interpersonal skills
- Greater confidence, improved self-image and construction of a 'pro-employment identity'
- Increased work ethic and motivation to look for work
- Improved employment outcomes and/or progression into further education or training

Almost all of this evidence came from qualitative studies and should therefore be regarded as providing indicative evidence only.

The **Next Steps dataset** identifies young people with less complex SEND (those with SEN but without a statement) in the 16-19 population and is the only available data source which includes data on work experience for this specific group. Overall, analysis of the Next Steps dataset showed that members of the SEN support group who undertook KS4 work experience were as likely to have positive VET and job related outcomes at age 25/26 as those who did not undertake KS4 work experience, but were slightly more likely to be NEET at this age. These are tentative conclusions, and more rigorous analysis would be needed to establish any significant relationships between work experience and outcomes.

Evidence from the literature included elsewhere in this report identifies clear benefits of undertaking work experience. It is possible that the findings from the Next Steps analysis

demonstrate that the provision of work experience is not *in itself* sufficient to improve the transition of the SEN support group into employment: rather, it is the quality, type and context of the work experience that is important if positive impacts are to be achieved.

## 5. Are particular types of work experience/placements or support more effective than others?

This chapter addresses Research Questions 1a and 1b:

**RQ1a)** Does the evidence point to any particular type or length of work experience being particularly effective in leading to a good employment outcome for young people aged 16-19 who have less complex SEND and are studying vocational or technical study programmes in the FE or training sector? (Chapter 4)

**RQ1b)** What does the evidence tell us about the level and type of support (from the education provider and/or the employer) which is effective in enabling these young people to benefit fully from the work experience? (Chapter 4)

The REA identified an **evidence gap** regarding the effectiveness of particular types or lengths of work experience or work placement for young people aged 16-19 with less complex SEND on vocational or technical study programmes in the FE or training sector. Similarly, there is no specific evidence about the level and type of support from providers and/or employers that was effective in enabling this group of young people to benefit fully from a work experience or work placement.

Given this lack of evidence, this chapter explores the broader literature to identify a number of good practice principles which may make work experience more effective in leading to positive employment related outcomes. It then goes on to present relevant evidence on effective types of support for young people who may overlap with (e.g. those with LDD) or include (e.g. those on study programmes) those with less complex SEND.

The chapter also covers the (lack of) evidence about any differences in evidence for such young people studying at (i) level 3, (ii) level 2 and (iii) below level 2 (RQ3).

### 5.1. Work experience for young people with less complex SEND: principles of good practice

Whilst no evidence was found about particular types or lengths of work experience, the REA identified a number of good practice principles around work experience/placements which are perceived as effective in progressing students towards positive employment outcomes.

The rigour of the evidence on this subject varies. Here, it is grouped thematically based on key concepts within a young person's pathway to work experience/work placement and eventual employment. The first stage on this pathway is engaging the young person in the post-16 provision most suited to realising their aspirations; employers must then be engaged to offer work experience/placement opportunities, and young people must be supported to progress towards employment after the work experience/placement is



complete. Evidence from both the academic and grey literature is presented below for each of these stages.

## Principles of good practice: Learner engagement

### The transition phase

From the grey literature review, it was clear that a keystone of effectiveness for work experience/placements is ensuring that young people are accessing the most appropriate provision for their needs: or, as one provider put it, “*the right learner in the right placement with the right support*”<sup>42</sup>.

This begins in the school to FE transition phase<sup>43</sup>:

*It was emphasised that a poor start to FE could be demoralising and hence detrimental to a learner’s progress. Observations also stressed the significance of being aspirational for learners and setting goals and seeking out provision that matched the learner’s ambition rather than the provider’s expertise and experience*<sup>44</sup>.

These problems in the transition phase were exacerbated for post-18 students as less options became available and responsibilities changed from one organisation to another.

The academic literature search indicated that the transition stage was relevant in relation to those with more complex SEND. For example, there is a body of US research<sup>45</sup> focused on the transition to post-secondary education, training or employment of students with SEND at levels that would be considered ‘complex SEND’ in England. This research examines the impact of vocational preparation undertaken with young people with SEND during the last two years of high school (Grades 11 and 12, aged 16-18 years). The descriptions of these upper secondary school-based vocational programmes in the USA, although more intensive than would be delivered for those with less complex needs in England, echo the good practice pointers pulled out from the grey literature.

### Assessment and information sharing

An important element in the transition phase is undertaking an assessment of the learner to understand more about their ambitions and aspirations and any barriers. In some cases the organisation undertaking the assessment may differ from the provider the

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<sup>42</sup> Graham B. (July 2017). "Presentation: Employer Engagement in Schools and Colleges.", Foxes Academy –Work Experience and Transition Outreach

<sup>43</sup> Transition refers to the phase where a learner moves from one type of learning or organisation to another e.g. from GCSEs to A levels or from school to FE provider.

<sup>44</sup> Needs analysis guidance for ETF consortium (September 2016). "FE and skills sector capacity building workforce development programme supporting SEND reforms.", The Education & Training Foundation; SQW

<sup>45</sup> If thought to be useful, although not focused on ‘less complex SEND’, more detail on this could be included.

young person may progress to (e.g. from school to FE provider), in which case timely and accurate sharing of this information is also important.

Concerns have been raised about the effectiveness of transitions by Ofsted. A major issue was that, whilst prior SEND assessments were undertaken, they were either not received by the FE provider or lacked detail<sup>46</sup>. This resulted from a lack of alignment in the timing of the prior assessments and provider recruitment and induction of SEND students, making it necessary for providers to rely on their own assessments.

When assessments were undertaken they did not necessarily result in "...timely or adequately completed [assessments], and did not form a reliable basis on which to plan support or an appropriate programme of learning.". This was partly due to reductions in funding which limited the options available, including work based learning<sup>47</sup>.

Because of communication problems in transition, many providers undertake their own student baseline assessment to determine learners' skills and abilities, aspirations and support needs. This is to overcome systemic problems (see above) but also because students may choose not to disclose a SEND. It also helps providers to fully understand students' aspirations and expectations and feed that into their education and training programme and/or work experience on a broader programme<sup>48</sup>.

Two academic articles reviewed were of potential relevance to the REA population of interest and highlighted the importance of assessment. The first is a US study from the focussing on Project SUPPORT<sup>49</sup>, which targeted "*youth incarcerated [...] possessing: (a) a special education disability (e.g. emotional disturbance, learning disability), (b) psychiatric diagnosis [...] or (c) a combination of both [...]*" (p286). The research focused on recidivism rather than employment, but the target group is likely to have included some young people with less complex SEND<sup>50</sup>. The report highlights some features that align with the good practice identified in the grey literature around learner engagement. For example, a "transition specialist" initially assesses each young person in terms of, "*strengths, needs, interests and life goals to develop a transition plan with services aligned to the unique needs and interests of each project participant*" (p286). This is followed by more detailed "vocational assessments" and "psychological evaluations" to make sure that the post-secondary education, training or employment pathway selected is appropriate for that young person.

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<sup>46</sup> Ofsted, (August 2011), "Progression post-16 for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities".

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> AELP and Fair Train (2016). "Implementing the Work Experience Element of the 16-19 Study Programme: A Good Practice Guide".

<sup>49</sup> Unruh, D. K., et al. (2009). "An Exploration of Factors Reducing Recidivism Rates of Formerly Incarcerated Youth with Disabilities Participating in a Re-Entry Intervention." *Journal of Child and Family Studies* **18**(3): 284-293.

<sup>50</sup> In England, pupils on SEN support are "almost four times more likely to be permanently excluded compared to those without SEN" (p8) and 42% of prisoners in a cited study had a history of having been permanently excluded (p9), Department for Education (2018). *Creating Opportunity for All*. DFE-00072-2018.

A second paper<sup>51</sup> reported a pilot study based on 26 young people with disabilities aged 18-22; 13 in the intervention group and 13 in the matched control group. This used standardised tests/subtests to assess the readiness for “generic physical job demands” in a “blue collar paid job” (p372). The authors reported a significant negative difference (p347) between those in the study “with special needs” and those “without disabilities” (p372) and suggesting that such assessments could be used to design “specific physical training during transition programs” to address this gap in capabilities (p374).

## Careers Information, Advice and Guidance

There is a general concern that school pupils do not receive sufficient information, advice and guidance (IAG) on the full range of post-school options<sup>52</sup>. The Ofsted (August 2011 ) report suggests that this applies to SEND students as well who were not made aware of work-based learning options<sup>53</sup>. It should be noted that the government published its [careers strategy](#) in December 2017 which outlined some measures to address this.

When providing careers IAG for learners with SEND, there is an additional barrier in ensuring that materials are accessible for those with a range of communication needs<sup>54</sup>. In many cases, organisations providing these materials may not be fully aware of their audience’s support needs: this also applies to commercial organisations providing online advice, which is increasingly used by students in the absence of schools career advice.

## Principles of good practice: Employer engagement

### Benefits of work experience for employers

According to the latest Employer Perspectives Survey (EPS; n=18,028)<sup>55</sup>, 20% of employers provide work placements for school pupils, 13% for FE or Sixth Form College students, and less than 1% for those with SEND<sup>56</sup>. This clearly suggests the need for greater efforts, on the part of, providers, employers and other stakeholders, to address this significant gap in work experience opportunities.

While most employers (53%) who offer work experience say it is because, “it provides the experience young people need”<sup>57</sup>, a number of studies have also highlighted the benefits to employers of providing work experience<sup>58</sup>:

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<sup>51</sup> Ratzon, N., Schejter, T., Alon, E., Schreuer, N. (2011). “Are young adults with special needs ready for the physical work demands?”, *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 32, 371-376.

<sup>52</sup> DfE (December 2017), “Careers strategy: making the most of everyone’s skills and talents”

<sup>53</sup> Ofsted (August 2011) op cit.

<sup>54</sup> Tabatha Griffin and Lisa Nechvoglod, (2008). “Vocational education and training and people with a disability: A review of the research”. National Centre For Vocational Education Research

<sup>55</sup> DfE (June 2017) op cit.

<sup>56</sup> Employer Perspective Survey 2016 data tables <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employer-perspectives-survey-2016>

<sup>57</sup> UKCES, (February 2014). “Not just making tea... Reinventing work experience”.

<sup>58</sup> See, for example, *Ibid.* and AELP and Fair Train (2016) op cit.

- **Recruitment:** taking on work experience students can be a potential source of recruitment, leading to a reduction in recruitment costs and access to a wider pool of talent for employers. It can also be advantageous in allowing employers and students to appraise each other before permanent commitment
- **Public engagement:** taking on work experience students can raise the profile of an employer and provide opportunities to engage with local or wider communities<sup>59</sup>
- **Workforce development:** work experience can provide employers with development opportunities for their own workforce, such as communication, coaching and counselling, influencing and negotiation
- **Market insights:** work experience can provide fresh insights to the business, particularly if they rely on a particular customer base
- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** work experience can provide employers with opportunities to meet CSR objectives

Ensuring that employers are aware of these benefits is an important way to increase engagement with providers and with learners.

### Information, advice and guidance

As with learner engagement, it is crucial to make sure that employers are aware of the opportunities available to them. Students are not alone in encountering barriers to accessing effective IAG: employers may also find it difficult to access IAG about providing support to young people in schools or FE whether they have SEND or not, particularly small and medium sized employers who lack a HR function<sup>60</sup>. There are a wide range of work experience activities which employers (and students) can engage with: these could include ventures as varied as work placements, work projects, employer talks, visits to organisations/exhibitions, enterprise activities, seminars and workshops, and employability training. It is important to offer employers different options depending on their different levels of resources and commitment, as well as the types of young people they want to work with<sup>61</sup>.

### Employer / provider relationships

Approaches to employer engagement range from proactive to reactive in different providers. In sourcing work experience for all of their students, for example, West Hertfordshire College take account of local and regional growth strategies, occupational standards and local skills requirements. This enables them to deliver work experience in line with local economic need. The college has also identified sectors where employers

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<sup>59</sup> Social Ventures Australia (February 2016). "Fundamental principles for youth employment."

<sup>60</sup> Tabatha Griffin and Lisa Nechvoglod, (2008) op cit.

<sup>61</sup> See Ofsted, (January 2013). "Helping disabled young people achieve well through effective work-placement schemes: Whizz-Kidz"; and, National Foundation for Educational Research, (April 2015). "Top Tips for senior leaders in schools and colleges: How to provide meaningful experience of the world of work for young people as part of 16 to 19 study programmes".

are experiencing recruitment needs and may therefore be receptive to links with a provider<sup>62</sup>: this signals to employers that the provider is taking a professional and targeted approach to work experience.

In some cases, providers have developed their own businesses to provide work experience to their students. For example, Banbury and Bicester College have established a learning company, initially to provide training opportunities in hospitality, with plans to create more in early years, engineering, hairdressing, and graphics and media<sup>63</sup>.

While proactive approaches can be effective, it is important that they are complemented by reactive approaches for young people wanting to work in specific sectors or settings, or for late referrals<sup>64</sup>. This tends to be a greater problem for providers in rural areas where choice of employer may be more restrictive. However, rural areas can also benefit from having closer ties between different organisations and more direct communication channels.

Some providers have dedicated employer engagement resources, allowing them to identify opportunities and develop longer term relationships with employers. Where this occurs, employer engagement staff will need training if opportunities include SEND young people, either on dedicated SEND or generic provision (e.g. below Level 2). This is to identify employers who understand and can provide the range of additional support needs<sup>65</sup>. It is also helpful to involve employers at the earliest stages of a young person's work experience journey, e.g. in helping to prepare young people with SEND for a work placement<sup>66</sup>.

### **Misperceptions about young people with SEND**

Disabusing employers of misconceptions regarding young people with SEND can be an important part of employer engagement: this REA shows that any negative perceptions surrounding the provision of work experience for young people with less complex SEND are not borne out by evidence. The Traineeships evaluation, for example, found that there was little difference in completion rates and length of time on the programme for trainees with and without SEND<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> AoC, (June 2015) "Successful work experience on study programmes: West Herts College". This study was intended to identify good practice but it did not measure outcomes so no impacts can be reported.

<sup>63</sup> AoC, (March 2014). "Sharing Innovative Approaches to Delivering 16-19 Study Programmes Banbury and Bicester College".

<sup>64</sup> Anne Green, Gaby Atfield and Sally-Anne Barnes (November 2015). "Employer Involvement and Engagement, Talent Match Case Study Theme Report". IER; Sheffield Hallam University, Big Lottery Fund, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research.

<sup>65</sup> D. Sims et al. (October 2013). "Evaluation of the Work Experience Placement Trials; Research report.". DfE

<sup>66</sup> National Foundation for Educational Research, (April 2015) op cit.

<sup>67</sup> Fitzpatrick A. et al. (July 2017). "Traineeships: Year Two Process Evaluation; Research Report.". DfE

One relevant academic study<sup>68</sup> focused on 11 adults with Asperger syndrome and no diagnosed intellectual disability (i.e. a group of young people that might be included in the 'less complex SEND' category). Part of the study focussed specifically on employment issues, with a number of key problems relating to employer engagement identified. These issues included:

- "A paucity of knowledge about Asperger Syndrome among employers and work colleagues" (p538)
- Issues around "communication in the workplace", such as a lack of clear instructions and difficulties relating to "informal socialising" (p539).

In the Discussion section (p544), the authors suggest three key sources of employment-related support for adults with Asperger syndrome:

- "More autism awareness among employers and co-workers"
- "An advocate for people with Asperger syndrome when seeking or first starting a new job" (for some individuals)
- "Social skills training may also assist people with Asperger syndrome to navigate informal social interactions in the workplace"

These suggestions were based on the results of the study as well as suggestions from the participants themselves.

A further qualitative academic study<sup>69</sup> using "participant observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis" was based on 29 "young adults [aged 19-37] with varied physical [or] intellectual disabilities"(p105). It described "a program for employment of young adults with disabilities as a result of [an employer's] corporate social responsibility initiative" (p105) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The participants included two people with disabilities that would be deemed to have 'less complex SEND' in England (e.g. mild hearing impairment) and 27 with 'more complex SEND' (e.g. intellectual disabilities). As part of the initiative, the company employed a "specialist counsellor" responsible for, "planning and monitoring as well as documenting the development of the behavioural, psychological, and professional skills of the employees with disabilities." (p106-7). Across six years, the programme was successful in providing sustained employment for a cumulative total of 36 adults.

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<sup>68</sup> Griffith, G. M., et al. (2012). "I just don't fit anywhere': support experiences and future support needs of individuals with Asperger syndrome in middle adulthood." *Autism* 16(5): 532-546 (Theme 2 on employment issues, p538-540).

<sup>69</sup> Alborn, N., & Gaad, E. (2012). Employment of Young Adults With Disabilities in Dubai-A Case Study. *Journal of Policy & Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 9(2), 103-111.

## Principles of good practice: Outcomes of and progression from work experience

Progression from and aftercare following a work experience or work placement tends to be underplayed or absent from the grey literature. It was difficult to identify any studies which treated this as a key phase within study programmes. In the researchers' experience, this is common across all types of work-related training provision for young people and disadvantaged groups because providers are funded to deliver a programme and not to support people after they have left. There was no reference in the literature to progression and aftercare being a distinct phase in provision which could include, for example, undertaking end-of-programme assessments so that future options, needs and aspirations can be understood and met; also providing advice or transition support into employment or further training.

This is not to say that this phase does not take place, nor that provision does not lead to positive outcomes. However, it is a key phase in the learner journey towards positive employment outcomes and the evidence suggests it tends to be underplayed or absent.

### 5.2. Effective support for young people with less complex SEND undertaking work experience

The REA found **no evidence** specifically about the level or type of support from providers and/or employers that was effective in enabling young people aged 16-19 with less complex SEND, who were on vocational or technical study programmes in the FE or training sectors, to benefit fully from a work experience or work placement.

In part, this lack of evidence may be because the options and programmes available to young people on SEN support and with statements/EHC plans tend to be similar until the end of Key Stage 4, after which they tend to diverge. After Key Stage 4, the options available to learners with SEND but without a statement/EHC plan are often generic (i.e. aimed at the whole non-SEND student population, while those with an EHC plan are still able to access specialist support.<sup>70</sup>

The REA found that the programmes available to young people aged 16-19 in the SEN support group fall into three main categories:

1. Programmes specifically targeted at students with SEND, usually aimed at those with a statement or EHC plan
2. Programmes aimed more broadly at young people facing barriers to educational attainment and progression: these programmes are commonly aimed at those at risk of becoming 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) or with

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<sup>70</sup> For example see, Merton Council, (September 2016), Options for young people with SEN and disabilities aged 14 to 25, Merton Council

experience of having been NEET, and are accessed by a significant number of students with less complex SEND (e.g. Traineeships).

3. Programmes aimed at the whole student population. These are either vocationally oriented or academic (e.g. apprenticeships and Study Programmes).

Programmes targeted specifically at young people with SEND will be managed by staff with expertise in SEND provision, while those aimed at broader populations will tend to draw in resources from internal and external SEND specialists as needed.

The three types of provision outlined above suggest that **those with less complex SEND may be at risk of falling in a gap** between targeted SEND programmes (which tend to attract greater resources) and generic programmes which support a wider spectrum of needs but have less funding and less access to specific SEN support funding (which is not ring-fenced within provider budgets<sup>71</sup>). This issue was articulated within the grey literature - for example:

*“One consultee noted that SEND learners without high needs form the majority of SEND learners but ‘are less visible and receive less funding.’ Another pointed out that most providers were missing the opportunity to exploit assistive technology for the benefit of low needs learners because of the focus on high needs learners through EHC plans.”<sup>72</sup>*

It was difficult to identify any programmes involving work experience/work placements specifically targeted at young people aged 16-19 years with less complex SEND. In most cases, these students are involved in more generic programmes including work experience, such as Traineeships or vocational study programmes. Within generic programmes, such as Traineeships, providers can develop specific provision for young people with SEND. Approximately two thirds of Traineeships are targeted at young people with SEND<sup>73</sup>, and almost one quarter of Traineeship learners (23%) reported that they considered themselves to have a disability or learning disability<sup>74</sup>. Those with less complex SEND were not identified as a sub-group of those with SEND/LDD.

This could be seen as an encouraging development signalling a more inclusive approach, with opportunities developed to meet the aspirations and needs of the individual learner rather than taking a group perspective<sup>75</sup>.

The remainder of this section presents evidence about effective support around work experience or work placements from the grey and academic literature reviewed. Due to

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<sup>71</sup> DfE, 2015. *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years*. London: DfE. Paragraph 7.29.

<sup>72</sup> Needs analysis guidance for ETF consortium (September 2016). "FE and skills sector capacity building workforce development programme supporting SEND reforms.", The Education & Training Foundation; SQW

<sup>73</sup> Coleman N. (March 2015). "BIS Research Paper No. 222, Traineeships: First year process evaluation." BIS

<sup>74</sup> Fitzpatrick A. et al. (July 2017) op cit.

<sup>75</sup> Ofsted, (August 2011). "Progression post-16 for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities".



the lack of evidence on effective support for the specific population of interest, the evidence presented here applies to groups of young people that may overlap with (e.g. those with LDD), or include (e.g. those on study programmes) young people aged 16-19 with less complex SEND.

## Effective support from providers

**Additional support needs: Young people with LDD** are perceived by providers as requiring additional support needs, such as one-to-one support, work coaches, support assistants and additional pre-placement preparation. There is some evidence to suggest that this is the case: for example, the evaluation of the Work Experience Placement Trials found that the average cost per trial was higher for providers developing models for students with LDDs. As one coordinator commented, “...*this [LLDD] cohort definitely has a higher cost than average because of the support required...[but] it has provided value for money because they are the students who need work experience the most, so we have made good use of the funding*”.

However, not all young people with LDDs or SEND will require costly additional support, and the evidence available indicates that the cost of additional support for those with SEND can be lower than for other groups of young people. The Work Experience Placement Trials, for example, had a huge variation in the cost of placements per provider (from £47 to £3, 008), and for models including other vulnerable learners as well as those with LDD costs per placement were not necessarily related to whether students had an LDD. One provider in the Trials placed 22 students with LDD in extended placements (average length of 105 days) at an average cost of £29 per placement, one of the lowest unit costs within the trials<sup>76</sup>.

A range of factors affect the costs of the placements: volume of students is a factor, as are additional costs such as transport, work clothes and reasonable adjustments. Some of the work experience placement trials were also based on a supported internship model, which are likely to be more expensive than other placements.

**Monitoring of progression:** A key element of good practice around work experience/work placements is monitoring of progression to ensure that both learner and employer needs are being met. One example of this can be seen at City College Southampton, which developed ‘Work Experience+’ (an online log) for all **students on study programmes**. This enables the college to identify good practice and areas of risk within placements, as well as monitoring quality and impact. It also enables students to record their work experience activities across a range of areas and have them verified by tutors<sup>77</sup>. Having a well-regulated system to record, monitor and review work experience, assess whether it is meeting its objectives, and check that **students on work**

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<sup>76</sup> Sims D. et al. (October 2013) op cit.

<sup>77</sup> AoC, (March 2014). “Sharing Innovative Approaches to Delivering 16-19 Study Programmes City College Southampton”.

**placements** are engaged in their activities is crucial in ensuring that work experience placements are meaningful in preparing young people for employment<sup>78</sup>.

**Classroom-based skills training:** One academic article<sup>79</sup> reported on a quasi-randomised control trial of a career development intervention, CareerSKILLS, conducted with **young people with low educational qualifications** in the Netherlands.

Participants in the study were 173 “young employees with lower educational levels (i.e. fewer than 12 years of education, non-college)” (p534) who were in the final year of a 3 to 4 year course of “intermediate vocational education”, each specialising in a particular vocational area. They were on “an extensive internship for one to four days per week” when they did the CareerSKILLS intervention (p538).

*The CareerSKILLS intervention was developed to stimulate career competency development and work-related well-being of young employees. Its methodology is based on the JOBS interventions (Caplan et al., 1989) which was developed at the Michigan Prevention Research Center as a preventative intervention for recently unemployed job seekers. (Akkermans et al., 2015, p 535)*

The intervention consisted of four sessions, each of four hours duration (two delivered in one week; two in a second week), followed by a fifth, reflective, session held six weeks later. The session titles were: 1. Who am I and what am I good at?; 2. My passions and my future; 3. My network and my action plan; 4. How do I search for possibilities and how do I present myself? (pp540-541).

The intervention focused on five core components of the JOBS program<sup>80</sup>: (i) developing career self-management skills, including (ii) preparation for potential setbacks and how to overcome these; (iii) using certified trainers; (iv) using active teaching and learning methods (e.g. discussions, role-plays); and (v) creating a supportive training environment where participants “learn from and support each other” (p541).

The outcomes measured were:

- i) career competencies
- ii) work-related self-efficacy and resilience against setbacks
- iii) increased levels of career-related behaviours and perceived employability

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<sup>78</sup> See National Foundation for Educational Research, (April 2015) op cit. and Ofsted (August 2011) op cit.

<sup>79</sup> Akkermans, J., et al. (2015). "It's All About CareerSKILLS: Effectiveness of a Career Development Intervention for Young Employees." *Human Resource Management* **54**(4): 533-551.

<sup>80</sup> The reference cited (p541) is: Price, Friedland, Choi & Caplan (1998). 'Job loss and work transitions in a time of global economic change.' In: X. Arriaga and S. Oskamp (Eds.). *Addressing community problems* (pp195-222). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

- iv) increased levels of work engagement, but not of emotional exhaustion (p537).

The study found “significant main effects” in positive directions for all of these (p544), with the authors concluding that:

*“[...] career competencies and perceived employability are closely and positively related, which indicates that career competencies may be important in fostering employability of the young workforce.” (P547)*

One Finnish study<sup>81</sup> reported increased odds of becoming employed following classroom-based skills training, the content of which was also based on the Michigan Prevention Research Center JOBS intervention, plus a Finnish adaptation of this method (p279). Like CareerSKILLS, the intervention incorporated the five core components of the JOBS program<sup>82</sup>. Although not specifically about young people with SEND, this evidence is relevant because the research took place in an educational context broadly equivalent to a **Level-3 type vocational study programme** in England and is therefore likely to have included some young people with less complex SEND.

The study involved 416 young people being randomised to the experimental (N = 201) or control group (N = 206). The intervention was “the School-to-Work Group method [...] a 5-day intensive course” (p279). The intervention (p279 – p283) consisted of “1 week of 5 half-days and lasted 20 [hours] in total, including breaks”, and focused on developing “job-seeking skills”, “proactive skills related to organizational socialization” (to support “career self-management”) and “anticipatory stress management before entering an organization” (p279-280). It was based on a programme developed in the USA for unemployed adults, and adapted to use with 17-25 year old final year students at five vocational institutes in Western Finland<sup>83</sup> who would be aiming for to enter employment after completing their studies.

The authors report increased odds of employment outcomes for those in the intervention group compared to the control group and, at follow-up, an increased probability of “being employed in a job that corresponded to their education and promoted the accomplishment of personal career plans, compared to the control group” (p289). This intervention may be worth further investigation as something that, potentially, could be tested out in the English context.

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<sup>81</sup> Koivisto, P., et al. (2007). "Effects of the School-to-Work Group Method among young people." Journal of Vocational Behavior **70**(2): 277-296.

<sup>82</sup> The reference cited (p280) was also the same: Price et al., 1998, op. cit.

<sup>83</sup> The authors explain the Finnish context: “About 97% of Finnish adolescents” 16-17-year olds go on to 3-year vocational institute courses or to general upper secondary school. The former leads on to work or tertiary level studies, the latter to further education.

## Effective support from providers *and* employers

**Linking work experience to the needs of employers:** From the grey literature reviewed, it was clear that some providers are linking work experience placements to the needs of local employers and the local economy in order to make work experience activities more relevant to both students and employers. For example, Trafford College worked with employers across a number of sectors to identify the following key capabilities and personal attributes that would help **FE college students** be successful in the workplace:

- **Capabilities:** communication, teamwork, creative problem solving, decision making and emotional intelligence
- **Personal attributes:** resilience, proactivity, flexibility and empathy

**Specific employment training schemes:** One English research article<sup>84</sup> included in the REA reported on a mixed methods investigation (mainly interviews, plus a questionnaire) focussing on 444 **young people, aged 16-24 years, who had been in care**. Because of the intersectionality of disadvantage, this group is likely to have included some young people with less complex SEND<sup>85</sup> (though no data on this was included in the article). The paper focuses on the government's 'From Care2Work' programme, which was developed and delivered by the national Care Advisory Service (NCAS) specifically for young people who had experienced being in care. Dixon suggests that the evaluation of the programme<sup>86</sup> "highlights a number of successes where young people went on to take up full-time employment or were able to acquire the work experience and skill set required to take up further training or education" (p20). These successes were a result of close working between the programme team, the local authority leaving care workers and local employers:

*The programme team acted as intermediaries to bring together local authorities and local employers to develop work experience opportunities for care leavers. Through joint work plans and sharing knowledge of the needs of care leavers, leaving care workers and employers were able to provide young people with time-limited, supported work placements designed to increase work skills and experience, provide an introduction to the work place and improve young people's self-confidence and employability. (p20)*

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<sup>84</sup> Dixon, J. (2016). "Opportunities and challenges: supporting journeys into education and employment for young people leaving care in England." *Revista Espanola De Pedagogia* **74**(263): 13-29.

<sup>85</sup> In England, 30.4% of children and young people, "looked after continuously for 12 months for whom data were available", were on SEN support in 2015/16 (p10), Department for Education (2017). *Special educational needs; an analysis and summary of data sources*. May 2017.

<sup>86</sup> NCAS, (2010). *From Care2Work. Creating opportunities and raising aspirations*. Interim Report. June 2010. London: National Care Advisory Service.

**Broader support strategies:** One literature review<sup>87</sup> relating to “**young adults with disabilities entering the workforce**” identified “developing work opportunities” (p6) as the third of six “strategies to support career advancement” (p4). However, in this context, the literature cited mainly referred to experience of paid part-time jobs undertaken at weekends and in school holidays, rather than work experience as a structured part of a vocational or technical education programme. The other five strategies reflected themes also covered in this chapter: “enhancing individual attributes and skills” (p4), “broadening career exploration”(p6), “obtaining postsecondary education/training” and “growing on the job” (p7); and “changing the workplace” (p8), meaning raising awareness of the benefits of employing young people with disabilities and, where necessary, offering “specific training to increase disability awareness and address disability discrimination” (p9).

### 5.3. Work experience and level of study for young people with less complex SEND (RQ3)

The REA found **no evidence** relating to the question of whether or not the level of study of young people aged 16-19 with less complex SEND made any difference to (i) what type or length of work experience/placement was effective; (ii) to what type or level of support was effective from providers and/or employers; nor (iii) to the benefits of such work experiences/placements for the young people’s subsequent employment.

### 5.4. Effective work experience and work-experience related support: Conclusions

The REA identified an evidence gap with regards to the population of interest and (i) the type or length of work experience or work placement and (ii) the type of provider and/or employer support which was particularly effective in leading to a good employment outcome. In the absence of literature focusing on the specific group of interest, a number of generic good practice principles were identified from the SEN specific, disadvantaged learner and broader work experience/VET literature relating to four key phases of the learner ‘journey’ before, during and after work experience or work placement:

- **Learner engagement:** the importance of the transition phase from school to FE; effective assessment; sharing assessment information; and, effective careers IAG.
- **Employer engagement:** having a number of options available to employers; understanding the reasons why employers want/don’t want to engage in providing work experience/placements; and, dedicated employer engagement resources.
- **Work experience:** identify and meet different support needs; have a range of options; monitor progression; and, link work experience to the needs of local employers and labour market.

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<sup>87</sup> Lindstrom, L., Kahn, L. G., & Lindsey, H. (2013). Navigating the early career years: Barriers and strategies for young adults with disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 39(1), 1-12.

- **Progression and aftercare** tends to be underplayed or absent from the literature. Few studies identify this as a distinct phase, for example, undertaking end of programme assessments and providing advice or transition support into employment or further training.

## 6. Impacts of education and training on employment outcomes for young people with less complex SEND

This chapter presents the available evidence addressing **Research Questions 2 and 3**:

**RQ2:** What evidence is available on the effectiveness of education or training provision to help these young people with less complex SEND secure a job/career (including evidence important for the target population but less so for non-SEND peers)?

**RQ3:** For all of the research questions addressed by this REA, is there any difference in evidence for young people studying at (i) level 3, (ii) level 2 and (iii) below level 2? If so, what are they?

### 6.1. Impacts of education and training: limited evidence

The focussed review of academic and grey literature identified **a gap in the research evidence** relating specifically to the effectiveness of education and training in preparing young people with less complex SEND for employment.

The limited evidence available from the academic literature reviewed suggested that education and training approaches in different countries vary widely, with each study finding different effects on employment outcomes for young people with less complex SEND. For example, studies reviewed that were based on secondary analysis of the USA's National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 suggested a limited impact of education or training provision generally available within that system on employment outcomes for sub-groups of young people with SEND/less complex SEND:

- Post-secondary education (including vocational/technical) was not found to be a significant predictor of employment for young people with autism<sup>88</sup>
- Vocation-related courses taken in upper secondary school had no significant results on employment outcomes (measured eight years later) for individuals who are deaf<sup>89</sup> [This cohort included a minority with less complex needs, roughly equivalent to 'SEN support' level, but the analysis did not separate out outcomes for this sub-group]

One meta-analysis of USA-government sponsored voluntary training programmes<sup>90</sup> for 'disadvantaged youth' (since 1974), meanwhile, found that these training programmes

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<sup>88</sup> Chiang, H. M., et al. (2013). "Factors Associated with Participation in Employment for High School Leavers with Autism." *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* **43**(8): 1832-1842.

<sup>89</sup> That is, when aged roughly 16 – 19-years. Cawthon, S. W., et al. (2016). "The Impact of Intensive Vocation-Related Course Taking on Employment Outcomes for Individuals Who Are Deaf." *Remedial and Special Education* **37**(3): 131-145.

<sup>90</sup> Consisting of one or more of: "remedial education; classroom vocational or skills training; on-the-job training in private sector jobs; and subsidized employment in the public and nonprofit sectors" (p35).

had almost no positive overall impact on subsequent earnings<sup>91</sup> but that specific “classroom skills training” (as opposed to workplace training) did have a “positive payoff” for young people (and for adults). This finding echoes that of the School-to-Work Group Method study<sup>92</sup> reported in Chapter 4 as to the effectiveness of classroom-based employment-related skills training in increasing likelihood of subsequent employment.

In Switzerland, the “predominant form of upper secondary post-compulsory education” is vocational education and training, involving about 66% of all young people in that age group, “mostly in apprenticeship training that combines school-based education at vocational school and work-based learning in a company”<sup>93</sup>. Secondary analysis of two Swiss longitudinal studies<sup>94</sup> compared outcomes for three groups of young apprentices: those on 2-year apprenticeships who had been in special schools (N=28); those on 2-year apprenticeships who had been in mainstream school following a “basic demands” curriculum (N=261); and those on three-year apprenticeships who had been in mainstream schools following a “basic demands” curriculum (N=118). This study suggested the effectiveness of two-year apprenticeships (focused on practical training with one day a week at vocational school) in increasing progression to three-year apprenticeships (measured 18 months later). By 30 months later, around 80% of Swiss young people in the studies were in employment, regardless of whether they had taken the two-year apprenticeship from a special school or mainstream school following a basic curriculum [the group closest to the ‘SEN support’ group in England], or the three-year apprenticeship from a regular school following either a basic or more advanced curriculum. The authors argued that this indicated both the success of the new two-year apprenticeships and helped to identify the key elements of successful VET programmes: “creating favourable learning opportunities, fostering employability and potential upward mobility” (p392).

One English research article<sup>95</sup> (already cited) reported on mixed methods research (mainly interviews) with 444 young people aged 16-24 years who had been in care. The research explored the main activity of these young people as well as reporting on factors hindering their participation in employment or education. The findings of the research are relevant to this REA, as it is likely that some of the young people in the study has less complex SEND: in England, 30.4% of children and young people, “looked after

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<sup>91</sup> Subsequent employment was not measured as an outcome in this study. Greenberg, D. H., et al. (2003). "A meta-analysis of government-sponsored training programs." *Industrial & Labor Relations Review* **57**(1): 31-53.

<sup>92</sup> Koivisto, P. et al. (2007). Op. cit.

<sup>93</sup> Kammermann, M., et al. (2011). "Two-year apprenticeships -- a successful model of training?" *Journal of Vocational Education & Training* **63**(3): 377-396, p379.

<sup>94</sup> Kammermann, M., et al. (2011), op. cit..

<sup>95</sup> Dixon, J. (2016). "Opportunities and challenges: supporting journeys into education and employment for young people leaving care in England." *Revista Espanola De Pedagogia* **74**(263): 13-29.



continuously for 12 months for whom data were available”, were on SEN support in 2015/16<sup>96</sup>.

The research found that around 43% (p17) of the young people in the study had continued in education, almost all (40%) in FE, and that: “fewer than one in ten was involved with some form of apprenticeship or training (7%) or full or part-time employment (9%)” (p19). Some of these young people are likely to have also had less complex SEND. A sub-sample of 52 of the young care leavers in the study also took part in a follow-up interview one year later, focused on their experience of education, employment and training during that time. A key finding was “the relatively high drop-out rate for those who had been in education” (p22) with 44% having “left their course early due to circumstances related to ability, personal troubles or financial difficulties”. Of this 44%, half were NEET at the time of the interview.

The qualitative analysis reported several factors that helped or hindered participation in education, employment or training, including:

- **Personal motivation and aspirations** (p22) - including “choosing the right education course or employment route”
- **Expectations, aspirations and stigma** (p23) – including the positive effects of high aspirations and the negative effects of low expectations from others
- **Personal circumstances and disincentives** (p24) - such as no or low qualifications, family problems, accommodation issues and low mental well-being
- **Information and support** (p25) - including “knowing about financial entitlements and work placements and opportunities available in their areas” and the “essential” nature of have support from formal and informal sources. One source of support reported was having an “employment worker” on a leaving care team who provided individual support to each young care leaver to support their engagement with education, employment and training. “Supportive teachers, tutors and employers” and carers (p26) also played a key role in supporting engagement in the various possible pathways to paid employment.

## 6.2. Evidence from new analysis of LFS/APS

This section presents results of a new analysis of the Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey (LFS/APS) dataset. The analysis uses a proxy measure (disability status) to identify the different qualifications, education and economic activity of young

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<sup>96</sup> In England, 30.4% of children and young people, “looked after continuously for 12 months for whom data were available”, were on SEN support in 2015/16 (p10), Department for Education (2017). *Special educational needs; an analysis and summary of data sources*. May 2017.

people aged 16-19 years with less complex SEND in order to further examine the effectiveness of education and training in helping these young people to secure employment. The analysis was undertaken for young people aged 16-19 in 2016/17.

## **Disability status as a proxy for ‘less complex SEND’**

The LFS/APS dataset does not identify young people with SEND but does identify those with disabilities under the Equalities Act 2010. The survey asks respondents whether they have a health problem and, if so, whether it limits their ability to work or undertake other activities. Respondents with a health problem can answer: ‘a lot’; ‘a little’; or ‘not at all’, and these responses are used to identify respondents as: ‘Equality Act [2010] disabled’, ‘non Equality Act disabled’, or ‘not disabled’. In this analysis, individuals were further classified into four groups:

- ‘Equality Act (EA) disabled I’: those who had a health problem which affected their activity a lot
- ‘EA disabled II’: those who had a health problem which affected their activity a little
- ‘Non-EA disabled’: those who had a health problem which did not affect their activity
- ‘Not disabled’: those who did not report a health problem.

Because there is “a significant overlap between disabled [...] young people and those with SEN”<sup>97</sup>, young people in the ‘EA disabled II’ group were then used as a proxy for those with less complex SEND. In the LFS/APS data set, this group constituted 7% of all 16-19 year olds and 67% of those in the two ‘EA disabled’ groups. This compares relatively closely to the designated SEN support group comprising 10% of all Year 11 pupils and 73% of all Year 11 SEND (Section 1.2).

Analysis was undertaken across the whole population of 16-19 year olds. It should be noted that there are limitations to using the EA disabled II group as a proxy for those with less complex SEND: whilst there is likely to be considerable overlap with the two groups, they are by no means identical. The data presented here is therefore indicative and tentative, not rigorously representative of young people aged 16-19 with less complex SEND and should be treated with caution

## **Education and economic activity for the EA disabled II group**

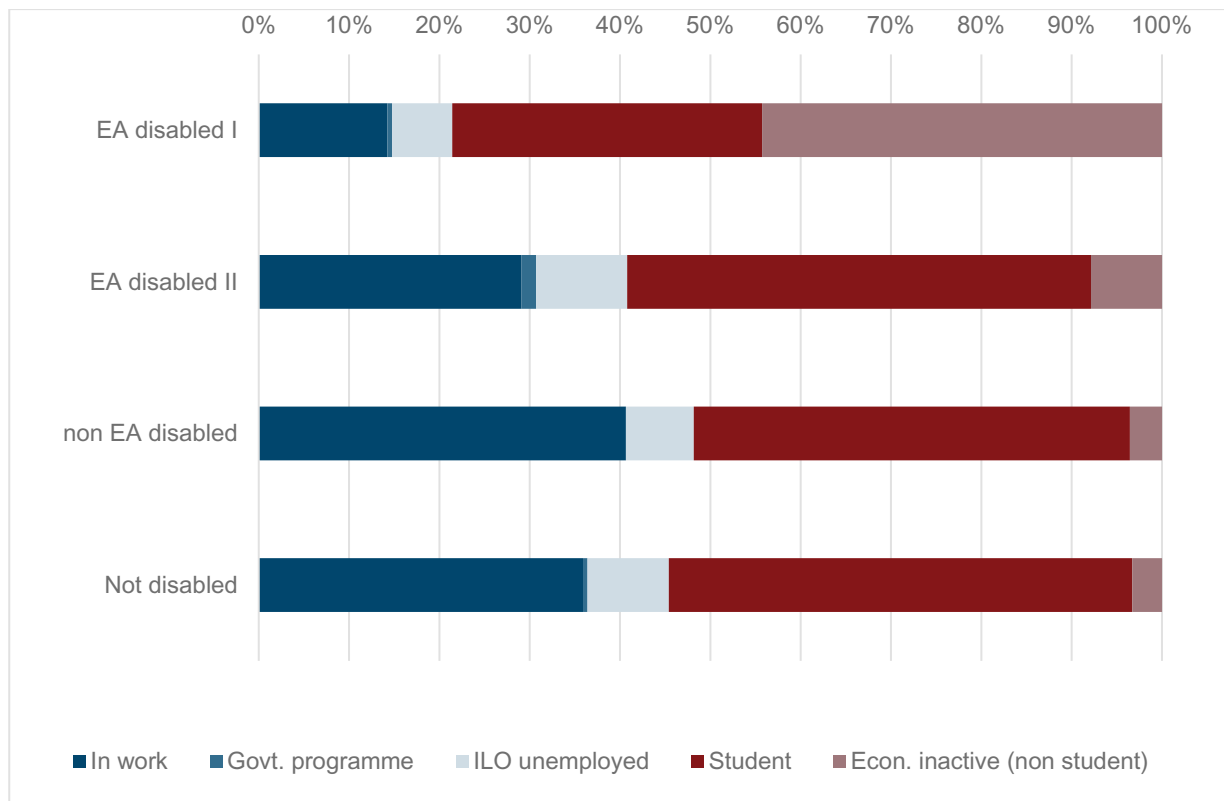
Figure 7 shows the economic activity of young people involved in the survey according to their disability status. Across all four groups identified above, most young people are in

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<sup>97</sup> DfE, 2015. *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years*. (Introduction, paragraph xviii.)

work, in a government programme<sup>98</sup> or studying: 87% of those with no disability fall into this category, along with the (somewhat smaller) majority of those in the EA disabled II group (80%). The proportion of economically active respondents in the 'EA disabled I' group, meanwhile, is considerably lower: with just under half (49%) of respondents studying or working. Additionally, just over two-fifths (44%) of the EA disabled I group are economically inactive (non student)<sup>99</sup>, compared to just 8% of the EA disabled II group.

**Economic activity by disability - 16-19 year olds 2016/17**



Source: Warwick IER; Annual Population Survey 2016/17

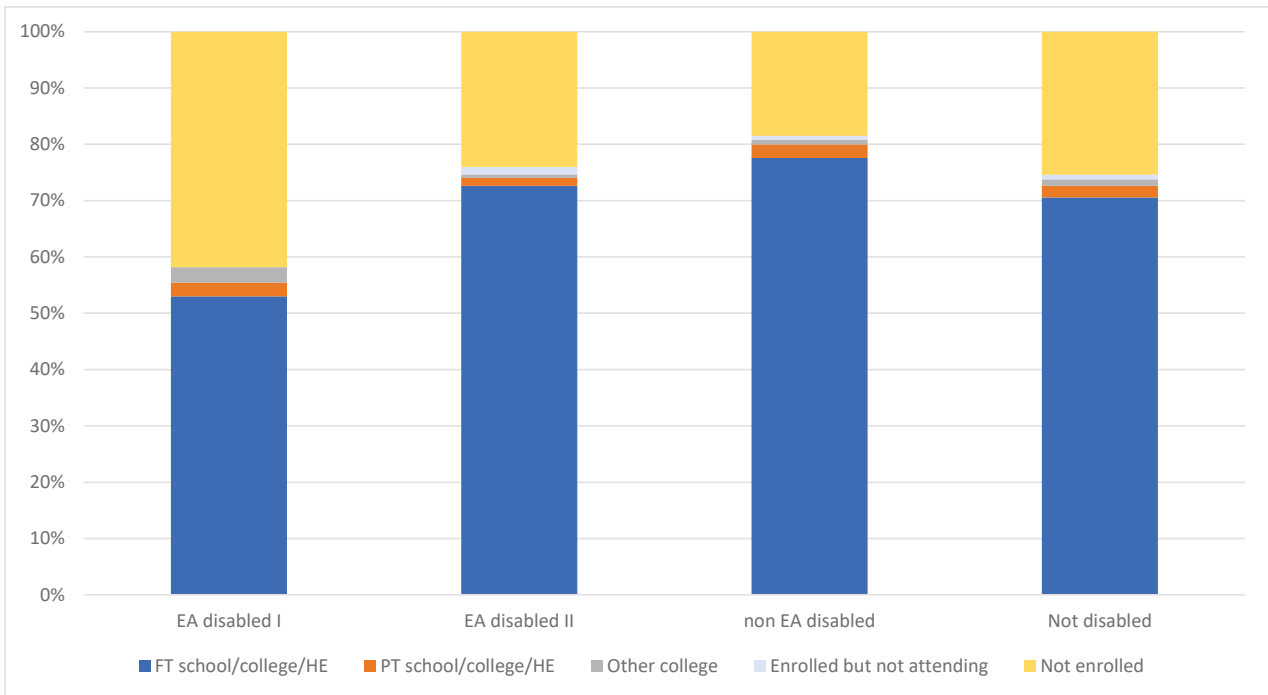
All respondents were asked if they were currently undertaking a course at a school, college or university<sup>100</sup>. Figure 8 shows that most young people in each of the four groups were in education. Almost a quarter (24%) of the 'EA disabled II' group (our proxy group) were on an education/training course at a school, college or university. This compared to 42% for the 'EA disabled I' group and 18% for the 'non EA disabled' group. In the main, young people in each group tended to be participating in full-time education at a school or college (this is mostly at an FE college).

<sup>98</sup> Government programmes are mainly DWP funded programmes such as the Work Programme and sector based work academies.

<sup>99</sup> ILO unemployed includes those who want a job, have actively sought work in the previous four weeks and are available to start work within the next fortnight; or out of work and have accepted a job that they are waiting to start in the next fortnight. Those economically inactive are those not able to or looking for work e.g. students, disabled people and those caring for dependents.

<sup>100</sup> An education course includes any full- or part-time course at a school, college or university.

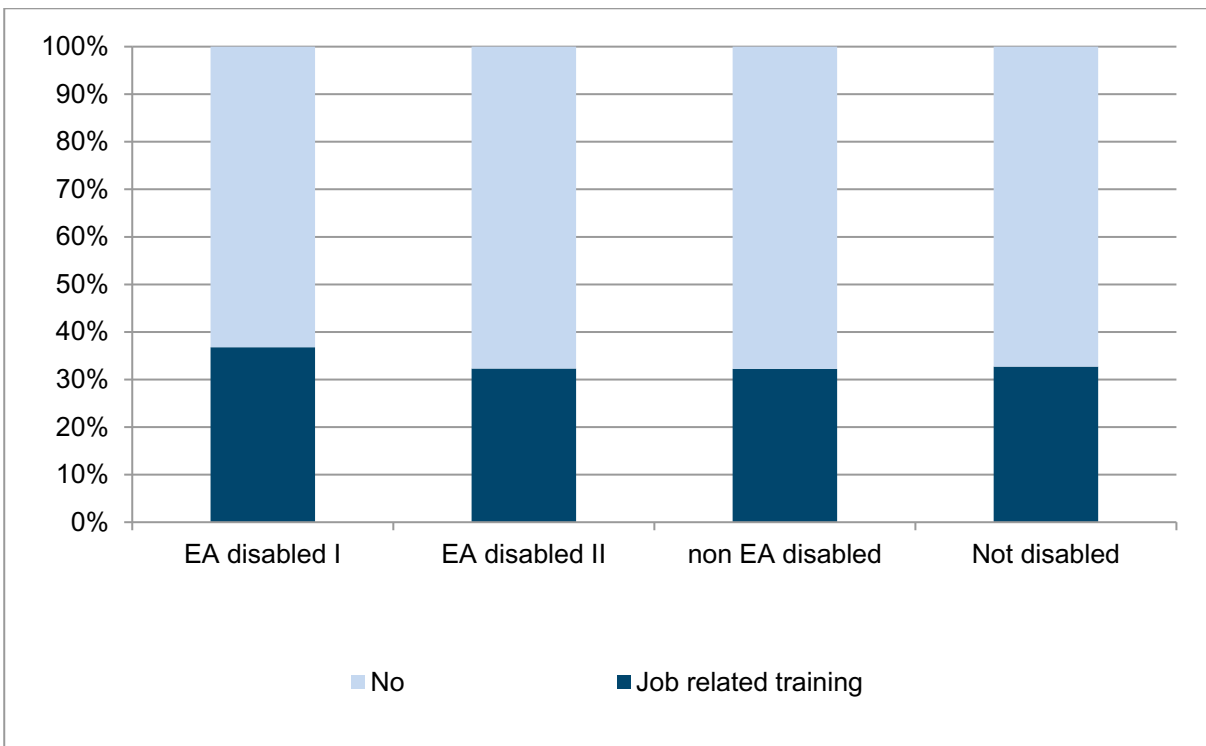
**Place of study for 16-19 year olds on an education and training course 2016/17**



Source: Warwick IER; Annual Population Survey 2016/17

For those young people in work, around one third were receiving job related training (see 9). The highest proportion were those in the 'EA disabled I' group (37%) compared to 33% for the other three groups. However, those in job related training in the 'EA disabled I' group were the least likely to be training towards a qualification (52%), compared to four fifths in the other three groups.

**Receiving job related training - 16-19 year olds 2016/17**



Source: Warwick IER; Annual Population Survey 2016/17

Overall, the analysis of data from the LFS/APS suggests that 'EA disabled II' group (our proxy for those with less complex SEND), are often closer in educational/economic profile to students who are not disabled than to those in the EA disabled I group. However, on each variable considered there is a gap between the not disabled and EA disabled II group, with the 'EA disabled II' group having consistently lower percentages of positive outcomes. This could suggest that education and training provision for the SEN support group in England is having a positive impact on outcomes for these learners, though there is still significant room for improvement to close the gap with 'not disabled' peers.

### **6.3. Education and training for young people with less complex SEND: Conclusions**

There was limited evidence available within the academic and grey literature reviewed as to the effectiveness of education or training provision generally to help the young people who were the focus of the REA to secure a job/career.

From the academic literature reviewed, the evidence that was available suggested variation in levels of effectiveness for this group. For example, three US longitudinal research studies found little evidence for the effectiveness of education and training for this group. This contrasted with stronger evidence of effectiveness of the Swiss system of post-compulsory education and training for this group.

Evidence from England was limited to that relating to two groups that overlap with those with less complex SEND, care leavers and those with disabilities that limit day to day activities 'a little'. This qualitative study relating to care leavers provided indicative rather than representative evidence but suggested that this group faced specific difficulties that made the transition from FE to employment challenging. The evidence relating to those with disabilities limiting activities 'a little' suggested a relatively small negative gap in terms of employment outcomes compared to non-disabled peers. This evidence could be interpreted as showing a relatively positive impact of the English system of education and training for this group. However, this group was a proxy for the demographic of interest in this REA and so these data should be used with caution in relation to young people with less complex SEND.

## 7. Concluding thoughts: Answering the research questions

This REA focussed on young people aged 16-19 who have less complex SEND and are studying vocational or technical study programmes in the FE or training sectors. The research questions focused on evidence around the benefits of work experience or substantial work placements, and on education and training more generally, in terms of helping these young people to prepare for and obtain paid employment.

The specific group of young people who are the focus of this study tended to be **an invisible group** in the academic literature on pathways to employment and within the grey literature from the 16-19 VET landscape. There is much academic and grey literature in this context around young people with a statement of SEN or EHC plan, but far less on the group of young people with identified SEND but no statement or plan. Within the grey literature, this may be in part because while those with more complex needs attract additional funding and providers have statutory responsibilities towards them, those with less complex SEND are not usually identified as a distinct group as far as funding and programmes are concerned.

It is not clear why so little academic attention has been paid to pathways to employment for 16-19 year olds with less complex SEND. One possible explanation is that the 'SEN support' group, who may have multiple disadvantages, are subsumed within foci on other disadvantaged groups of young people (e.g. young offenders, those at risk of offending, those not in employment education or training (NEET)), rather than as a distinct group in their own right.

This is not necessarily to suggest that the needs of the 'SEN support' group are being wholly ignored. There is grey literature evidence, in particular, to suggest that some providers have developed inclusive, person centered approaches in order to provide support based on the specific needs of the individual, whether they have SEND or face other barriers. This is evident in sources concerning support for disadvantaged young people (e.g. the Traineeships programme), significant numbers of whom are likely to have less complex SEND. From these literature sources, it is possible to identify a number of good practice principles for work experience for the young people in the SEN support group who are the focus of this study.

The remainder of this section answers each of the study's specific research questions in turn.

## **RQ1: What evidence is there about the benefits of work experience or substantial work placements for students with less complex SEND in preparing for and obtaining paid employment?**

Very few **academic studies or grey literature articles** identify those on SEN support as a distinct group in relation to research exploring potential employment-related benefits of work experience or work placements. However, a number of studies identify benefits of work experience to both employers and sub-groups of learners that likely included those with less complex SEND. For these learners, benefits include: enhanced soft skills; job search; work related identify; employment outcomes; and, progression into further education or training. For employers, benefits included: recruitment; public engagement; workforce development; and, Corporate Social Responsibility. Almost all of this evidence came from qualitative studies and should therefore be regarded as providing indicative evidence only.

The **Next Steps dataset** identifies young people with less complex SEND (those with SEN but without a statement) in the 16-19 population and is the only available data source which includes evidence on work experience for this specific group. However, the work experience in question is that undertaken in KS4, in a different context to post-16 work experience as part of a VET programme. Caution should therefore be exercised in extending conclusions to the 16-19 age group.

The analysis suggests that of all students in the dataset, those who had undertaken KS4 work experience placements were slightly less likely to go on to have positive VET and employment-related outcomes in their mid-twenties than those who had not undertaken KS4 work experience. Young people in the SEN support group, meanwhile, were as likely to be in employment by age 25/26 whether they had or had not undertaken a KS4 work experience placement, but were more likely to be in a NEET-equivalent group at this age if they had undertaken a placement. There are a range of potentially important exogenous factors that it was not possible to control for in this analysis, and these are therefore tentative conclusions. More rigorous analysis would need to be undertaken in the future to establish any significant relationships between work experience and outcomes.

### **RQ1a. Does the evidence point to any particular type or length of work experience or work placement being particularly effective in leading to a good employment outcome?**

We found no **evidence on whether any particular type or length of work experience leads to positive job outcomes** specifically for the young people who were the focus of the REA.

In the absence of literature focusing on the specific group of interest, a review of broader literature focussing on learners with and without SEND made it possible to identify a number of **good practice principles for post-16 providers** relevant to the specific group of interest. These principles relate to the key phases of the learner journey before, during and after work experience or work placement:

### **The transition phase from school to FE provider**

- Effective assessment so that young people and their advisers understand aspirations and support needs and choose the most appropriate provision;
- Sharing information (e.g. between school and FE providers) so that providers understand the aspirations and needs of learners, and develop and deliver appropriate provision;
- Effective careers IAG so that learners understand the full range of options available to them, and can make informed choices.

### **Employer engagement**

- Ensuring that different employers have a range of opportunities to engage with by offering a number of 'work experience' options (e.g. work placements, work tasters, presentations to students)
- Understanding the reasons why employers want/don't want to engage
- Where possible, have dedicated employer engagement resources to identify and support employers

### **Progression and aftercare**

This tends to be underplayed or absent from the literature. Few studies identify this as a distinct phase, for example, undertaking end of programme assessments and providing advice or transition support into employment or further training.

## **RQ1b. What does the evidence tell us about the level and type of support which is effective in enabling young people with less complex SEND to benefit fully from the work experience/work placement?**

As discussed above, there is little evidence from the literature on work experience/work placements for the 16-19 year olds in technical or vocational study programmes which distinguishes the SEN support group. It was not therefore possible to determine specific levels or types of support which are more effective than others: it was, however, possible to draw out from the broader literature on this topic a series of elements which appear to underpin effective employment-related support for young people similar to those who are the focus of this study.

Whether taking an inclusive (across all learners) or targeted (specifically for learners with SEND, including less complex SEND) approach, the following elements are important in ensuring positive outcomes:



- Teaching employment-related skills in class
- Identifying and meeting different support needs
- Offering a range of 'work experience' options for learners to engage with, such as work placements, peer mentoring/support or employer presentations etc. that learners can engage with. In addition, some providers have worked with social enterprises or developed their own enterprises
- Monitor progression through the programme so that good practice can be understood and built on, and any issues can be identified and addressed early
- Linking work experience to the needs of local employers and labour market so that it is relevant to the needs of learners and employers

## **RQ2: What evidence is available on the effectiveness of education or training provision in helping young people with less complex SEND progress into a job/career?**

As there were **few literature sources which focused on employment outcomes for learners with less complex SEND** compared to those with more complex SEND or to those without SEND, it is difficult to identify the effectiveness of distinctive provision for the SEN support group beyond the good practice principles identified in the previous section.

The limited evidence available from the academic literature is varied and inconclusive with regards to the effectiveness of different education and training systems in supporting young people with less complex SEND into employment.

A new descriptive analysis of the 2016-17 data from the **Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey (LFS/APS)**, used a particular disability status (those whose day to day activities were affected 'a little' by a health problem) as a proxy for those with less complex SEND. We found that this group were closer in profile in terms of attainment, economic activity and progression to those 'not disabled' than to those whose health problem/disability affected their daily activities 'a lot'. They had lower levels of attainment and participation than those 'not disabled' but not hugely different. However, the latest destination data suggests that Year 11 young people in the SEN support group are more likely to become NEET in Year 12, albeit by a small amount. They are also more likely to be in NEET-equivalent groups by their mid-twenties than people with no SEN, but much less likely than those who had a statement/EHCP. These data could be interpreted as showing a relatively positive impact of the English system of education and training for this sub-group of disabled young people, suggesting that, while there is room for improvement in terms of closing the gap with non-disabled peers, current approaches seem to be working reasonably well. However, this was a proxy group for the young people of interest to this REA and so these data should be used with caution in relation to young people with less complex SEND aged 16-19 years on vocational or technical study programmes in FE or training sectors.

### **RQ3: How does the evidence differ for young people studying at (i) level 3, (ii) level 2 and (iii) below level 2?**

The REA identified an evidence gap regarding specific evidence for young people with less complex SEND studying at different levels: there was insufficient evidence in the grey and academic literature to answer this research question.

### **Overall conclusions**

The main conclusion from this REA is that there is little evidence – in the literature or available longitudinal datasets – that can be used to address the stated research questions for 16-19 year old students with less complex SEND. This group of young people tend to be overshadowed in the literature by 16-19 year old students with a statement/EHC plan, and in many cases appear only as part of a wider group of disadvantaged young people or as part of inclusive approaches which seek to support all learners' needs.

Despite this lack of evidence, a wide range of studies identified as part of this REA suggest that there are positive outcomes associated with work experience for groups similar to or including our population of interest.

Alongside these studies, this report's new analysis of longitudinal data suggests a subtler picture of the value of work experience. The Next Steps data on the impact of Year 11 work experience placements (which are different to the 16-19 focus of this study) showed that those who had undertaken these placements were slightly less likely than those who had not to have positive employment-related outcomes by the time they were in their mid-twenties. While the conclusions that can be drawn from this analysis are tentative until a more rigorous analysis can be undertaken, one interpretation of the data is that the provision of work experience is not *in itself* sufficient to improve the transition of the SEN support group into the world of work. Rather, the work experience must be of good quality and appropriate to the needs of the learner in question. This conclusion is supported by the good practice principles identified by this REA, which underpin effective practice around work experience placements for young people with less complex SEND as well as for other similar groups.

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## Annex A – Focused literature review

### Key specifications included in initial search strategy

	<b>Keyword from REA specification</b>
<b>1</b>	young people
<b>AND 2</b>	“SEN support”
<b>AND 3</b>	vocational study programme
<b>OR 4</b>	technical study programme
<b>AND 5</b>	further education
<b>OR 6</b>	training sector
<b>AND 7</b>	Employment
<b>OR 8</b>	Work experience
<b>OR 9</b>	curriculum-based
<b>OR10</b>	provision

### Key specifications included in revised search strategy

	<b>Keyword and Synonyms</b>
<b>1</b>	(SEN OR “special educational need* OR “special need*)
<b>AND 2</b>	(employ* OR work OR job OR career*)
<b>AND 3</b>	(training OR support OR program* or intervention* OR placement* or “work experience”)
<b>AND 4</b>	(youth OR young adults)

In the third search strategy, (SEN OR “special educational need\* OR “special need\*) was replaced with search terms relating to specific areas of need, in turn: "moderate learning difficulties"; ("speech, language and communication needs" OR “communication difficulties” OR “speech and language difficulties”); (“social disadvantage” OR disadvantage\* OR “emotional and behavioural difficulties” OR “mental health”); (“specific learning difficulties” OR dyslexia).

## Databases searched

Database	Coverage	Platform
1. Education Research Complete (full text)	All levels of education from early childhood to higher education, and all educational specialties, such as multilingual education, health education, and testing.	EBSCOhost
2. ERIC (Abstracts)	information from journals in the Current Index of Journals in Education and Resources in Education Index	EBSCOhost
3. British Education Index	references to 350 British and selected European English-language periodicals in the field of education and training	EBSCOhost
4. Emerald	120 British journals and the Emerald Business, Management & Economics e-Book Collection (1991-2016)	EmeraldInsight
5. ABI/INFORM Global	1850 full-text titles covering business and economic conditions, corporate strategies, management techniques, competitive and product information, company and tax law	ProQuest
6. ASSIA	indexing and abstracting tool covering health, social services, psychology, sociology, economics, politics, race relations and education	ProQuest
7. Web of Science (Abstracts) – cross-searching platform	simultaneous cross-searching of a range of citation indexes and databases	Clarivate Analytics



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## **A note about drawing on international literature**

The literature search was international in scope. However, the project brief meant that any interventions included needed to be ones that could potentially and realistically be implemented within the English context of vocational and technical study programmes in the FE or training sectors. This meant that those offering intensive support were excluded.

It proved impossible to draw on international literature without also investigating the vocational and technical education system in each country that was the setting of a potentially interesting article. Each country had a different education and training system which could not always be easily related to the English context. In addition, each country had its own system of support for young people with SEND, and its own set of definitions around SEND. Other terms also had context-specific meanings. For example, it appeared from the USA abstracts and articles read that 'work experience' there almost always meant what we, in England, would term 'part-time jobs' or 'summer jobs'. Similarly, for example, 'job placement' in the USA was not a synonym for 'work placement' in the UK, meaning instead intensive support to obtain a job for a person with SEND.

## Annex B – Grey literature review

**Table 1 Websites with relevant literature**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Web address</b>
AELP	<a href="https://www.aelp.org.uk/resource-and-information-centre/">https://www.aelp.org.uk/resource-and-information-centre/</a>
Association of Colleges	<a href="https://www.aoc.co.uk/">https://www.aoc.co.uk/</a>
Behavioural Insights	<a href="http://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/">http://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/</a>
Campbell Collaboration	<a href="https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/">https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/</a>
CBI	<a href="http://www.cbi.org.uk/">http://www.cbi.org.uk/</a>
Centre for Longitudinal Studies	<a href="http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/default.aspx">http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/default.aspx</a>
Centre for Research on Learning and Life Chances	<a href="http://www.llakes.ac.uk/">http://www.llakes.ac.uk/</a>
Centre for the Economics of Education	<a href="http://cee.lse.ac.uk/">http://cee.lse.ac.uk/</a>
Children and Young People Now	<a href="https://www.cypnow.co.uk/">https://www.cypnow.co.uk/</a>
Cochrane Collaboration	<a href="http://www.cochrane.org/">http://www.cochrane.org/</a>
DfE, DWP, BIS etc.	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications</a>
DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&amp;catId=22">http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&amp;catId=22</a>
Education and Employers	<a href="https://www.educationandemployers.org/research-main/">https://www.educationandemployers.org/research-main/</a>
Education and Training Foundation	<a href="http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/">http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/</a>
Education Endowment Foundation	<a href="https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/">https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/</a>
EPPI Centre	<a href="http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=53">http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=53</a>
European Expert Network on Economics of Education	<a href="http://www.eenee.de/eeneeHome/EENEE.html">http://www.eenee.de/eeneeHome/EENEE.html</a>
Gatsby	<a href="http://www.gatsby.org.uk/">http://www.gatsby.org.uk/</a>
ILO	<a href="http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/lang--en/index.htm">http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/lang--en/index.htm</a>
Institute for Apprenticeships	<a href="https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/">https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/</a>

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Web address</b>
IPPR	<a href="https://www.ippr.org/">https://www.ippr.org/</a>
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	<a href="https://www.jrf.org.uk/">https://www.jrf.org.uk/</a>
Learning and Work Institute	<a href="http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/">http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/</a>
Living Map of Jobs Innovators	<a href="https://jobsinnovators.org/">https://jobsinnovators.org/</a>
National Foundation for Educational Research (Nfer)	<a href="https://www.nfer.ac.uk/">https://www.nfer.ac.uk/</a>
National Institute of Economic and Social Research	<a href="https://www.niesr.ac.uk/publications/search">https://www.niesr.ac.uk/publications/search</a>
OECD - education	<a href="http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education;jsessionid=1m44398oar1y8.x-oecd-live-02">http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education;jsessionid=1m44398oar1y8.x-oecd-live-02</a>
OECD - employment	<a href="http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment;jsessionid=1m44398oar1y8.x-oecd-live-02">http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment;jsessionid=1m44398oar1y8.x-oecd-live-02</a>
OECD library	<a href="http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/">http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/</a>
Ofsted	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted</a>
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	<a href="https://www.phf.org.uk/publications/">https://www.phf.org.uk/publications/</a>
Poverty Reduction in Europe: Social Policy and Innovation (ImPRovE)	<a href="http://improve-research.eu/">http://improve-research.eu/</a>
Rethink Mental Illness	<a href="https://www.rethink.org/">https://www.rethink.org/</a>
Sutton Trust	<a href="https://www.suttontrust.com/research/">https://www.suttontrust.com/research/</a>
The Centre for Vocational Education Research (CVER)	<a href="http://cver.lse.ac.uk/publications/default.asp">http://cver.lse.ac.uk/publications/default.asp</a>
The Mindset	<a href="http://www.themindset.org.uk/media/publications/">http://www.themindset.org.uk/media/publications/</a>
UK Commission for Employment and Skills	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-commission-for-employment-and-skills">https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-commission-for-employment-and-skills</a>
UNESCO	<a href="http://www.unesco.org/ulis/en/advanced_search.html#6401922">http://www.unesco.org/ulis/en/advanced_search.html#6401922</a>
University College London	<a href="http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/">http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/</a>
VOCEDplus	<a href="http://www.voced.edu.au/">http://www.voced.edu.au/</a>
Work Foundation	<a href="http://www.theworkfoundation.com/wf-reports/">http://www.theworkfoundation.com/wf-reports/</a>

# Annex C – Analysis of work experience

**Table 2 Whether work experience placement impacts on subsequent economic activity – Wave 3 to Wave 8 (N=1287)**

Wave 3	Wave 4 main activity	W3 work exper. placement		Wave 5 main activity	W3 work exper. placement		Wave 6 main activity	W3 work exper. placement		Wave 8 main activity	W3 work exper. placement	
		Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No
<b>SEN with current statement</b>	FT Education	70%	66%	FT Education	57%	56%	FT Education	48%	41%	Education	6%	5%
	Working	11%	9%	Working	18%	18%	Working	17%	23%	Working	47%	50%
	College and work	2%	3%	College and work	1%	2%	College and work	1%	1%	Unpaid work	8%	4%
	Training/Apprentice	4%	6%	Training/Apprentice	8%	8%	Training/Apprentice	7%	9%	Training/Apprentice	-	-
	NEET	13%	17%	NEET	16%	15%	NEET	27%	26%	NEET equiv. <sup>101</sup>	39%	41%
	Other	-	-	Other	-	-	Other	-	-	Other	1%	0%
<b>SEN without current statement</b>	FT Education	57%	58%	FT Education	29%	39%	FT Education	19%	33%	Education	0%	4%
	FT paid work	12%	7%	Working	38%	32%	Working	40%	32%	Working	75%	75%
	College and work	0%	5%	College and work	2%	4%	College and work	0%	4%	Unpaid work	0%	4%
	Training/Apprentice	7%	11%	Training/Apprentice	9%	4%	Training/Apprentice	9%	13%	Training/Apprentice	-	-
	NEET	25%	19%	NEET	22%	21%	NEET	32%	17%	NEET equiv.	25%	18%
	Other	-	-	Other	-	-	Other	-	-	Other	0%	0%
<b>All respondents</b>	FT Education	69%	75%	FT Education	51%	56%	FT Education	44%	49%	Education	4%	5%
	FT paid work	13%	10%	Working	29%	26%	Working	33%	31%	Working	80%	83%
	College and work	2%	2%	College and work	1%	1%	College and work	1%	1%	Unpaid work	1%	1%
	Training/Apprentice	7%	5%	Training/Apprentice	9%	6%	Training/Apprentice	7%	6%	Training/Apprentice	-	-
	NEET	9%	8%	NEET	10%	10%	NEET	15%	13%	NEET equiv.	14%	11%
	Other	-	-	Other	-	-	Other	-	-	Other	1%	1%

Source: Warwick IER; LSYPE Waves 3 to 8. ('exper.' = 'experience'.)

<sup>101</sup> This includes the same categories used for 16-18 NEETs i.e. long term and temporarily sick, injured or disabled, those looking after the family/home, waiting for the results of a job/course application and no reason given.





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