

*What is so Pressing about
Disabled Young People's
Worklessness? A Sketch and
Overview*

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Work is a Four Letter Word (Barnes, 2005)

- In the early 21st century, paid work remains a key source of economic, social and psychological capital (Bryson et al, 2002; Roulstone, 1998, 2003).
- Despite predictions of a 'leisure society' (Seabrook, 1988), a 'post scarcity society' (Giddens, 1995) and earlier references in 'special education' writings to 'significant living without work' (Warnock, 1978).....
- Citizenship and its fullest entitlements remain strongly associated with paid work (Beckett, 2006)
- Disabled young people may not be sure if they are work-able or not.

Background

- Unemployment and young people
 - In the UK, 20.9% 16-24 year olds unemployed; 1.68 million 18-24 year olds “economically inactive”
 - In the US 10 million 16-24 year olds unemployed (twice the rate of older workers) (CEAP, 2013)
 - Globally, young people (15-24) are 17% of the population, but represent 40% of the world’s unemployed
 - 37% of young NEETs rarely leave the house, 40% feel they are 'not part of society', 33% have suffered depression and 15% have a mental health condition (ComRes/UCU, 2013)
- Disabled young people and unemployment
 - There is a 30% gap in employment rates for disabled and non-disabled populations
 - 45.9% of working age disabled people are ‘economically inactive’
 - 45% of disabled young people in their early 20s are NEET
 - At age 26, disabled people are nearly 4 times as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled people (Burchardt, 2005; Annual Population Survey, 2012; EHRC, 2010)
- The employment rate for people with mental health problems (all working ages) was only 20% in 2009 (Labour Force Survey, 2009). Emerson and Hatton noted that in 2008 only 8% working age people with learning disabilities were in work (Emerson & Hatton; 2008).
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Social policy and unemployed young people

- “The left-wing establishment in education... that stand in the way of aspirational parents by excusing low expectations and blaming social disadvantage: it's that toxic culture of low expectations – that lack of ambition for every child – which has held this country back” (David Cameron, 2012)
- Transitions services aim to equip young people with ‘*skills they need to compete in a global economy*’ (HMG, 2011) and address ‘*lack of confidence, skills or motivation*’ to find work that ‘*too many young people*’ display (DfE, 2011)
- Focus on aspiration-raising, IAG, “employability”, alongside work on specific “barriers to employment” (Yates & Roulstone, 2013)
- Employability, Life long learning, self-investment, credentialism have failed to engage with the reality of disabled young people’s education status, segregation and experience

Aspirations - the evidence

- Upward trends in both aspirations and work ethic for 1970-born cohort compared to 1958 cohort (Bynner & Parsons, 2000; Schoon, 2007)
- Trends mirror availability of jobs providing possibilities of secure employment
- The aspiration for professional, managerial and technical occupations is widespread even among young people from poorer backgrounds.
- However 'the availability of jobs in higher socio-economic-status occupations is not going to keep up... professional jobs are over-subscribed by about three ambitious young people for each job.' (Croll, 2008: 253)
- Ambitious young people from poorer backgrounds are substantially less likely to achieve their ambitions
- The effects of aspirations are powerfully mediated by social class – lack of clear aspirations associated with vastly different outcomes for poorer young people than for those from wealthier backgrounds (Yates et al, 2011)

Aspirations- Disabled Young People

- Evidence spanning the last 25 years confirms that young disabled people face multiple disadvantage based on both age-related and disability-related risks (Burchardt, 2005; Walker, 1981)
- Evidence suggests that young disabled people wish to enter paid employment at age 16 and that the types of employment they aspire to mirrors closely the preferences of the non-disabled comparator population (Burchardt, 2005)
- By their early 20s disabled young people's aspirations are diminished and by age 24 they are significantly reduced (Ibid).
- In terms of aspirational influences, evidence points to the significance of early familial influences in shaping attitudes and aspirations towards paid work (Hendey and Pascall, 2002).

Transitions to work and “barriers”

- Primary function of transition services has long been to provide IAG to encourage young people ‘to make better choices’ (HM Treasury 2007, 10)
- “Barriers” conceived as a specific set of challenges facing individuals (no attention to structural issues), notably transport difficulties, the availability and cost of childcare, housing costs and potential loss of benefits, or barriers to the acquisition of technological skills.
- Also ‘attitudinal barriers’ – but not well-defined in policy documents
- *Employ Ability* initiative did highlight such “attitudinal” barriers, and aimed to change attitudes of employers towards disabled employees and also to encourage disabled people to ensure their abilities “shine through” their ‘conditions’ (see Connor 2010)

Social Barriers

- Berthoud's secondary analysis of the Family Resources Survey (FRS), points to the diverse impact of impairment and severity of impairment in limiting paid work horizons (Berthoud, 2006).
- We know that disabled people are more likely to experience poverty (Dowling and Dolan, 2001), are more likely to live in areas of limited employment opportunities (Beattie and Fothergill, 2003)
- Disabled people face particular barriers to mainstream environments such as unresponsive transport systems (DPTAC, 2002) and disabling workplace environments (House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment, 1999).

Jeremy

- *“The bus driver didn’t let me on the bus as my pass was one day out-of-date so I was stranded. I didn’t know how to get home without the bus. I said me mum would sort it out once I was home, but he just drove off and left me.....”.*
- *(Roulstone, Harrington and Hwang, 2012)*

Education

- 71 per cent of non-disabled respondents were in full-time education, compared with 62 per cent of disabled respondents (Burchardt, 2005)
- The highest qualification of 48 per cent of disabled young people was at the equivalent of NVQ level 1 or below (GCSE grades D-G or below, including those with no qualifications), compared with 28 per cent of non-disabled young people;
- Three-fifths of non-disabled people reported that they got the education or training place or job they wanted; only just over half of disabled youngsters said the same. (ibid)

ANED (Ebersold, Schmitt and Priestley, 2011) INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR YOUNG DISABLED PEOPLE IN EUROPE: TRENDS, ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- A need for inclusion that mobilises additional resources both for disabled students and educational institutions
- A need for inclusion anchored in a common educational understanding of disability
- A need for inclusion rooted in a reorganisation of the existing school structure
- A need for inclusion that is challenging for young disabled people
- A need for inclusion that addresses existing gaps and barriers

Jenny Morris (1998, 2002, 2009)

- Many further education, training and work experience placements are considered to be 'care' placements for young disabled people, rather than a way of gaining qualifications or paid employment.
- Those with high levels of support needs often leave school at 19 and have no further educational opportunities.
- There are long-held assumptions that young disabled people who have been at special schools will move on to specialist colleges and then into adult day services.
- Many young disabled people have experienced low expectations of careers service professionals and others.

Contracting out and payment by results

- Key policy aim to ‘realign contracts with welfare to work service providers to reflect more closely the results they achieve in getting people back into work’ (HM Government 2010, 23)
- Example – reconfiguration of Remploy from subsidised employment to open market placements and welfare-to-work contracts-debate over factory closures.....
- TECs and (now superseded) LSC also move towards payment by results contracting models of work preparation
- Workstep – outcomes focused: job coaching, mentoring and advice and awareness-raising for employers
- These schemes are heavily dependent for success on local labour market conditions
- Also apt to produce perverse incentives (Rees & TSRC, 2013)
 - Cherry-picking
 - Parking

Complexity of disablement

- Disability and disablement not a monolithic issue
- Wide range of experiences of disablement for disabled young people
- Varying levels of awareness and conceptualisation of associated “barriers”
- Many health conditions also overlap with disability and are associated with disablement
 - E.g. fibromyalgia, Huntington’s Chorea, sickle cell disease, thalassaemia, cystic fibrosis
 - Complex range of experiences
 - Differences in visibility (often relatively invisible and poorly understood)
 - Complex interplay with other experiences – e.g. BME and discrimination, mental health, hospitalisation (predictable and unpredictable), self-care regimens, responsabilisation and clinical relationships, medical/clinical transitions in addition to more usual transitions to adulthood
- Not well covered by relatively simple notions of separable, knowable “barriers” that can be “overcome” by changes in attitudes, access or reasonable adjustment

Derligier-complexity

- Derligier et al's (2007) recent appraisal of the intersection of black youth street culture and its relationship to disability culture takes debate forward. The study of disabled youth identity amongst young black men who acquired spinal injuries as victims of gun crime, suggests a complex interplay between black youth culture and disability cultures which is some distance from the eternal childhood stereotype that has tended to attach to imagery of young disabled people in European society.

Disability, Impairment and Complexity

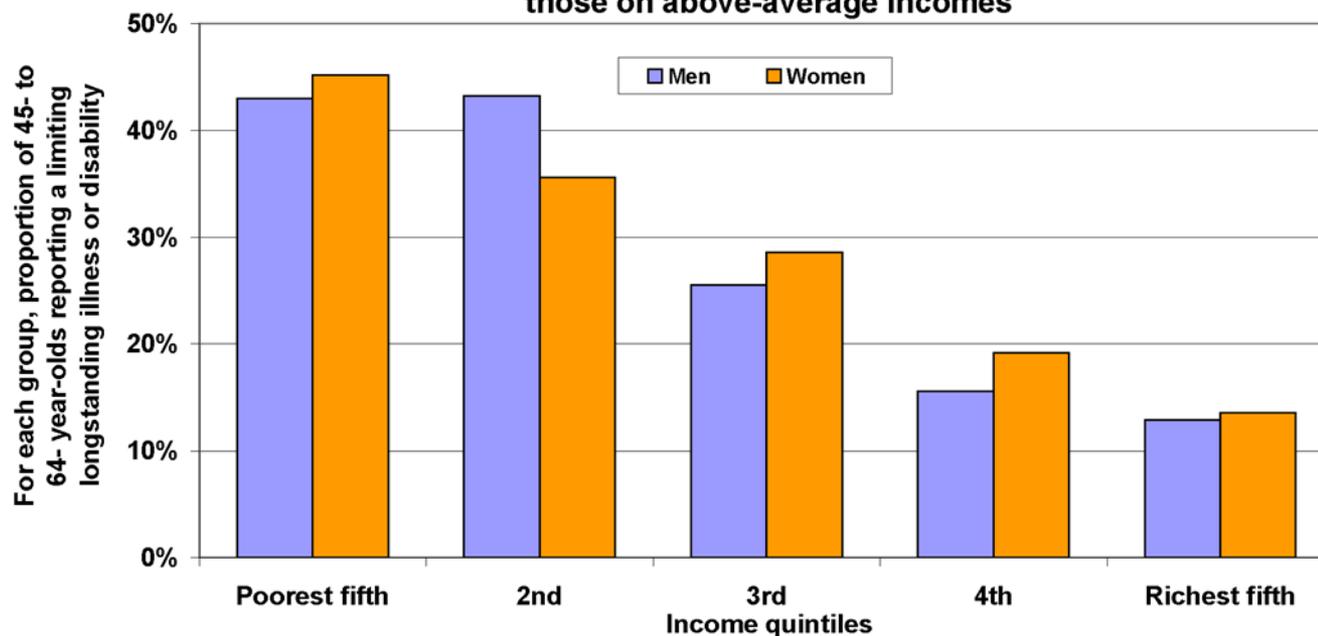
Variables...

- From birth versus adventitious
- Age of onset if adventitious
- Family constructions of I and D
- Wider social network
- Illness, fluctuating, flare-ups?
- Collective, individual, isolated identities?
- Support in the transition (Heslop, 2006)

Multiple disadvantage

- Young people from poorer backgrounds more likely to be confronted with non-standard work, insecurity, jobs without training, underemployment, zero-hours contracts
- Disability and socio-economic status:

Two-fifths of all adults aged 45-64 on below-average incomes have a limiting longstanding illness or disability, more than twice the rate for those on above-average incomes



Source: General Lifestyle Survey, ONS; the data is the average for the three years to 2008; Great Britain; updated Nov 2010

Disability and socio-economic status

- Social class and differential experiences of disability
 - Additional costs of living and relative impact (e.g. JRF, 2004)
 - Family resources – e.g. ‘I was out of school for a while because dad had to stop work and stay in the hospital with me’ [Middle-class young man with SCD]. Job flexibility characteristic of professional (but not manual or service) occupations
 - Impacts and effects of chronic health conditions mediated by social class and family resources (Dyson et al, 2010)
 - Also impacts of transport needs, equipment, dietary requirements, heating costs, keeping multiple medical appointments, etc.

Ethnicity and disablement

- Disability discrimination
- Intersectionality of racist discrimination and disablement
 - E.g. – young people with SCD in schools and stereotypes of “lazy Black boys”
 - E.g. – pain and inappropriate medication led by stereotypes of “drug-seeking young Black men”
 - E.g. – need for organ transplant and stereotype of “non-complaint” Black teenager

Disability and Contested Welfare: Jeopardized Selfhood

- De-legitimation (Skeggs)
- Language of Shirkers and Scroungers (Garthwaite)
- Jeopardized selfhood (Roulstone and Morgan, 2014)
- Class disgust and ‘weaponised policy’ (Tyler)



Increases in Hate Crime

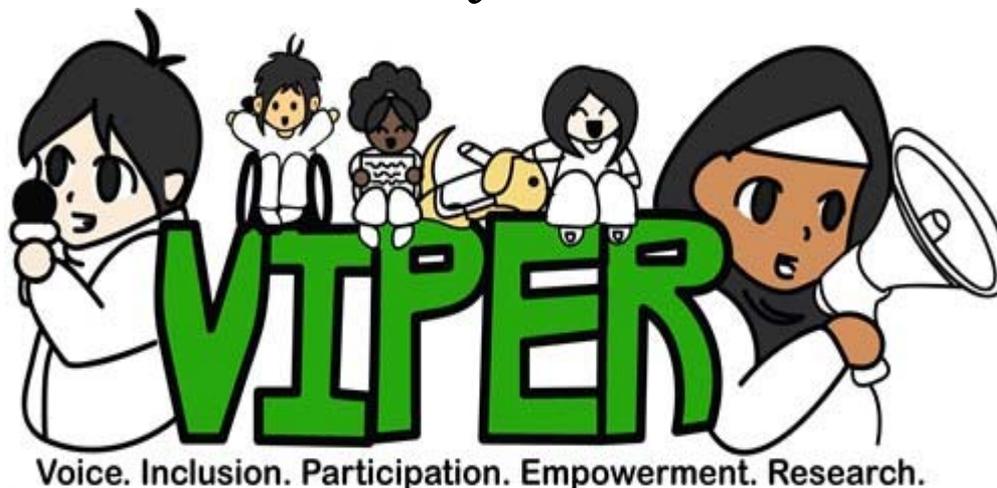
-Official figures show the number of “disability hate crimes” recorded by police forces in England and Wales in 2011/12 increased by almost 25 per cent on the previous year (Ministry of Justice, 2012).

-Miss Pilkington, 38, killed herself and her daughter Francecca Hardwick, 18, by setting light to their car in October 2007 after giving up all hope of the police or local authority taking action against the gang. She had endured a decade of violence, vandalism and taunts aimed at Francecca and her son Anthony, 19, at her home in Barwell, Leics.



Voices of Young Disabled People

- VIPER - Research into young disabled people's participation in decisions about services
- NCB Research Centre, Council for Disabled Children, Alliance for Inclusive Education (Allfie), and the Children's Society





Angel Shed

Inclusivity through theatre

- Angel Shed's vision is that every child (7-16), regardless of disability, income or background be given the opportunity to shine in the performing arts. We are a fully inclusive theatre charity, providing specialist opportunities for children otherwise excluded from this kind of activity.
- <http://www.angelsheadtheatre.org.uk/>

MANCHESTER YOUNG DISABLED PEOPLE'S FORUM

- The Forum promotes the inclusion and participation of young disabled people in Manchester and challenges the discrimination and oppression faced by young disabled people.



Conclusions 1

- Need to examine a broad and complex interplay of issues around disability and employment
- Disablement is complex and poorly conceived in terms of discrete “barriers” to employment
- Simple focus on low or inappropriate aspirations doesn’t fit available evidence
- Inter-relations of multiple forms of disadvantage likely to be having powerful effects for many disabled young people
- Not only about NEETs and unemployment – changing labour market, underemployment, in-work poverty, temporary jobs-without-training

Conclusions 2

- Factors that mediate between aspiration and achievement still require greater investigation
- International insights and transferability analyses
- Can we assume bad transition equates to poor employment outcomes?
- What role do friends, family, community and collective belonging have en route to employment decisions?
(Morris, 2009)
- What role does identity, constructions of work-ability have on employment views and outcomes?
- Should we be looking to broaden achievement and to construct value beyond paid work (Prideaux et al, 2009)?

Independent Living

- Morris (2004)
 - - 'the same opportunities for choice and control as non-disabled people'
 - - challenge to meaning of independence
 - - assistance controlled by disabled people
- CRPD
 - - Article 19
 - - removal of barriers
- Issues of understanding, interpretation and practice