

BACKGROUND

Doing work experience can help young people build understanding, confidence, job/life skills but it's not that easy to get especially in low-income and coastal areas.

 **Only about 1/3 of young people** say they feel confident they've got relevant work experience to be able to get a job (35%)¹

 **Less than 1/2 of young people** say they felt ready for work when they left education (47%)¹

 **Young people in the UK** are less likely to have done work experience than young people internationally²

 **Well connected families help** – most teachers said family connections help some young people find it easier to get good work experience (76%)³

What are the barriers to work experience for young people in coastal towns?



CIRCLE study
by the sea

Kent Youth Research
Network



Researchers & authors: Crystal, Anagha, Luke, Mariam and Mark



Young people living on the coast can have extra barriers to getting local work experience

- fewer businesses to offer work experience⁴
- more seasonal businesses⁴
- slower local growth and incomes⁴
- higher levels of unemployment in families⁵
- poorer transport links⁵
- lower school attendance & higher levels of young people not in education, employment or training⁵

But that's not the whole picture.

Background information on the CIRCLE study by the sea project



WHO ARE WE? HOW DID WE GET INVOLVED?

young people (15–19 yrs) living in/near coastal towns, in England

Circle study advisory group members/work experience students

did research skills training with Kent Youth Research Network (KYRN) in May 2026

chose to research work experience – have experienced the difficulties first-hand and want change

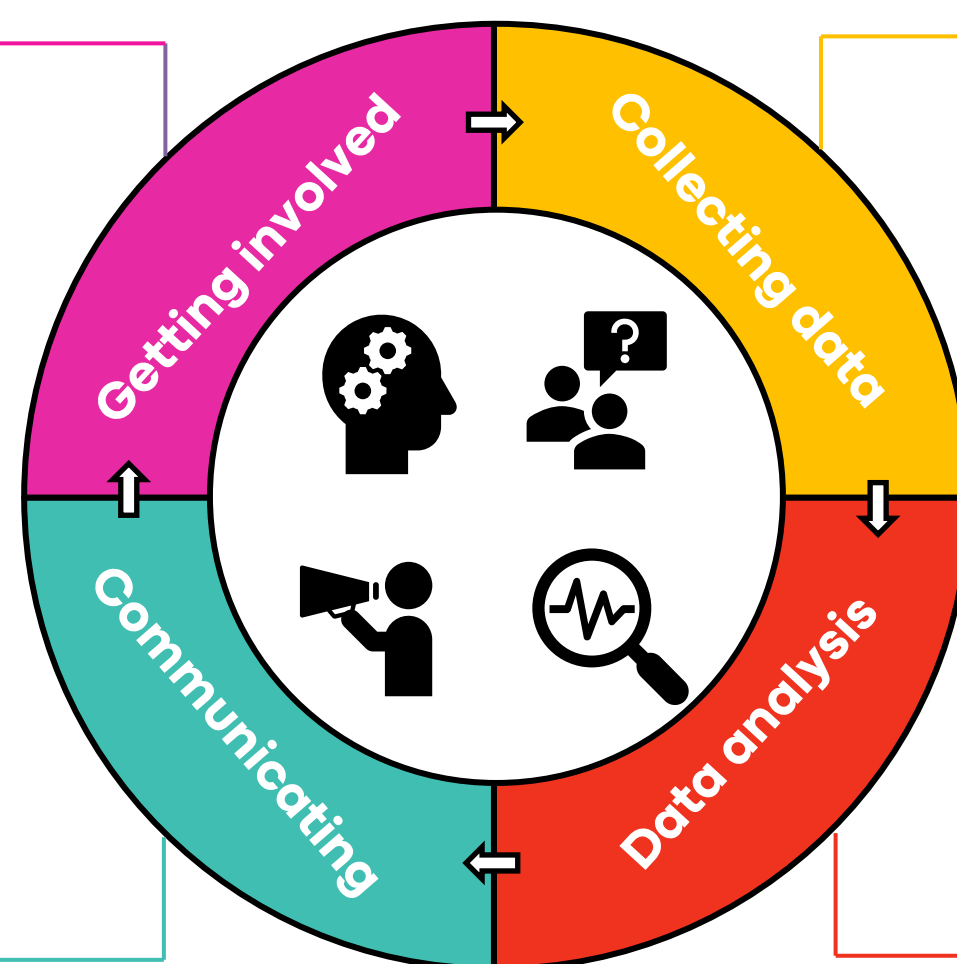
WHAT'S NEXT? COMMUNICATING FINDINGS

- 1 complete data collection and analysis,
- 2 we're planning the best ways to tell the right people the right information so they listen, understand, support, eg: MP, council

Getting work experience 'relies on who your parents know' (Milburn report, 2026)

Does this sound familiar? Some people don't have this option.

We wanted to find out more with young people living in coastal towns.



OUR OBJECTIVE

To hear from young people living in coastal towns in the southeast of England about their experiences and recommendations for getting and doing work experience.

COLLECTING DATA

Created information sheets and consent forms. So far in July–Aug 2026 we interviewed

- 8 young people via school
- 5 young people via our youth centre
- 1 took consent & audio-recorded interviews
- 2 KYRN transcribed audios, we identified the messages.



ANALYSIS & EARLY FINDINGS

applying can be hard, stressful & frustrating without contacts

need stronger support & well-advertised local active schemes & opportunities

need staff to be supportive – it's motivating when it works well

need 'more opportunities and information... more support and access through school' (Nat 17)

'it just felt unsuccessful' (Starbucks, 16)

'I had contacts but if you didn't it would be a lot harder' (Elliot, 17)

'I felt really satisfied that I'd learned lots of new things' (Tom, 15)

References:

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