Educating young adults to be work-ready in Ireland and the United Kingdom: A review of programmes and outcomes

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Across Europe, young adult unemployment remains an important issue. Those who have grown up in contexts of social and educational disadvantage can find it particularly difficult to find work. In response, governments, charitable foundations and in the rare case, researchers, have developed programmes of training and work-based learning to help them enter the workforce. These programmes aim to improve the young adults' work-readiness (also known as work-preparedness or career-readiness), which can be viewed as a set of competencies including career motivation, basic skills, job-specific skills, higher-order thinking skills, social skills and personal characteristics and attitude. Despite a growing literature on these competencies, major work-readiness programmes in Ireland and the UK are documented as trying to get young people into work quickly, rather than on enhancing their work-readiness thereby improving human capital. We examine this issue by reviewing work-readiness programmes' designs and outcomes, in relation to conceptualisations of work-readiness and Elder's (1998) life-course theory. In doing so we provide detail on how programmes connect to the socio-historical context, operate in relation to the school-to-work transition, impact young people through networks of linked lives and influence their agency in young adulthood and opportunity for cumulative agency throughout the life course.

> 'The thing I didn't like about school was that they didn't tell you enough about what a big step there is from school to work. You have to get on with people and you have got to be responsible in your work.' (Boy, apprentice joiner)

> 'I thought work would be much the same as school and no one ever told me that it was not.' (Girl, factory worker)

> (Gow & McPherson, 1980, pp. 75 and 70)

These young people's statements were recorded in a nationally representative study of Scottish school leavers in the late 1970s, when leaving school at age 15/16 years for entry-level positions in the workforce was commonplace (Gow & McPherson, 1980). Although they are nearly 40 years old, they mirror modern concerns voiced by young people, employers and researchers who observe a gap between the competencies

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young people have and those needed for entering the world of work (Margo et al., 2010; Lowden et al., 2011).

These persistent concerns overlay a rapidly changing employment context for young people that includes a rise in temporary jobs (Pastore, 2014) and a call for more skilled labour (Falcıoğlu, 2014). Both situations have impacted the knowledge and skills useful for finding and maintaining employment in the 21st century (O'Neil et al., 2014). This has given rise to the concept of work-readiness, which can be described as the skills, knowledge and attributes that are necessary for functioning in the workplace (Cabellero & Walker, 2010). These competencies have been operationalised in studies of employers' perceptions, conducted across a 40-year period in Western nations (reviewed in ACT Inc., 2000 and, e.g. Jones, 1996; Jackson, 2010; O'Neil et al., 2014), and by large companies specialising in workforce training and recruitment (Clark et al., 2013). They include, for example, self-management and the ability to get along well with others (O'Neil et al., 2014), as captured in the statement from the boy in 1970s' Scotland.

Despite a growing literature on these competencies, programmes in the UK and Ireland, designed by local governments, youth services and other non-profit organisations to help unemployed young people move into employment, have been described as taking a 'work-first' approach (Meager et al., 2014). Theoretically, those types of programmes focus on getting young people into work quickly through delivering training in being interviewed and job searching, and by providing routes to employment through entry-level work experience. Another perspective on how to enhance work-readiness is the human capital approach (Hamilton et al., 2013) where ideally programmes would help young people improve their work-readiness competencies, so that they are better able to manage their careers and work productively after programme completion and throughout their life course. Specifically, we might expect a knock-on effect from high quality training delivered in young adulthood that sets young people on a positive career pathway accompanied by lifelong learning of job-specific and social–emotional skills.

In life-course theory (Elder, 1998), major transitions such as the one from compulsory schooling to optional further or higher education, employment or training, are shaped by socio-historical forces and are lived by individuals within a network of interlinked lives. Within this world of social influences and constraints, young people exercise their agency in responding to the opportunities and challenges presented by the school-to-work (STW) transition, for example, by selecting career pathways in employment and education (Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2016, 2017). On the one hand, work-readiness programmes that take a work-first approach may offer increased opportunities for agency by helping unemployed young people acquire financial and social resources through employment. On the other hand, if they steer young people into low-paid entry-level jobs, these programmes might be reproducing class inequalities that create a loss of potential agency for individuals with lower economic capital (Simmons & Thompson, 2011).

Accordingly, the aim of this review is to analyse the designs and documented outcomes of major work-readiness programmes in the UK and Ireland, and to frame a discussion on whether they are offering young people opportunities to develop their work-readiness competencies with regards to life-course theory and agency. To begin

we offer a brief definition of work-readiness drawn from the international literature, which frames our analysis of programme designs and outcomes. Next, we document the major components of work-readiness programme designs, then perform a thematic analysis of programme outcomes. Finally, we discuss our findings in relation to Elder's (1999) life-course theory, focusing on the notions of historical time and place, the timing of lives, linked lives and the socio-ecological model of human agency (Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2017). Through this discussion we address silences in the literature regarding higher-order thinking skills and the role of communities, families and significant others, in work-readiness programme designs and outcomes.

Work-readiness

The term work-readiness began receiving regular use in the 1960s and 1970s, by authors writing about vocational education and occupational training in the USA. This coincided with the implementation of Job Corps in 1964, the US federally managed employment support programme for disadvantaged youth. Job Corps was officially launched by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964,[1] which laid out President Lyndon B. Johnson's mandate for ending the 'war on poverty'. Similar to now, the Job Corps programme of the 1960s offered vocational education and training, and work experience to young men and women aged 16–22 years, so that 'their employability may be increased' Economic Opportunity Act. (1964). Title I - Youth Programs, Part A - Job Corps.

Over 50 years later, the indicators of work-readiness are still under development. Three main approaches to conceptualising work-readiness can be identified from the literature. In the first, researchers focus on the 'generic competencies' or skills that employers value across industry sectors. They use interchangeable terms for 'generic' including 'basic', 'common', 'core', 'employability', 'enterprise', 'essential', 'functional', 'key' and 'transferrable' (Cabellero & Walker, 2010; Lowden et al., 2011). To identify key generic competencies, researchers have canvassed the views of employers, employees, unions, policy makers, educators and other researchers through informal conversation, questionnaires, interviews, observation and panel discussions (e.g. O'Neil et al., 2014). The resulting lists of competencies have then been thematised into broader conceptual frameworks.

In 2000, ACT Inc. (the organisation responsible for the American College Test) published a report for the US Department of Labor that compared 55 different work-readiness competency frameworks developed mainly in the USA but also in Australia, New Zealand, the UK and Mexico. Like other meta-reviews of these frameworks (e.g. Jones, 1996; Jackson, 2010; O'Neil et al., 2014), the ACT Inc. (2000) review found that many competencies were analogous or conceptually interrelated across the different frameworks, such as negotiation and the ability to compromise. Accordingly, many finer grained domains overlapped, suggesting that broader domains are more useful in working with the work-readiness construct. Drawing on five major US frameworks including one that was developed using the results of the ACT (2000) report, O'Neil et al. (2014) identified core, broad domains of work-readiness as being:

(1) Basic skills (including reading, writing, mathematics, speaking and listening).
(2) Higher-order thinking skills. [For example, critical and creative thinking: Critical thinking is a process of evaluating information critically, logically and systematically, often with the goal of solving a problem (Glaser, 1941) or assessing the validity of a claim (Ennis, 1962), while being metacognitive about thinking (Byrnes & Dunbar, 2014). It can also involve creative thinking when people construct novel ideas that they then critically evaluate and act on (Paul & Elder, 2014). In creative thinking, people create these novel ideas often by amalgamating information in unique ways and connecting disparate factors (Piawa, 2010). Both types of thinking are helpful in the workplace, e.g. for dealing with problems and finding creative ways to work effectively.]
(3) Interpersonal and teamwork skills (such as leadership, working with diverse others, negotiation and conflict resolution).
(4) Personal characteristics and attitude (incorporating self-oriented psychological resources such as self-esteem, motivation, self-regulation and goal setting; attitudes to work; and physical self-management such as dress and grooming, and freedom from substance abuse).

Jones (1996) in a similar meta-analysis of work-readiness frameworks identified the same 4 domains, although these were titled slightly differently: 'basic skills', 'thinking skills', 'people skills' and 'personal qualities'.

Given the results of the meta-reviews, there is reasonable evidence to support the universal relevance of these domains in certain Western contexts. However, researchers continue to examine people's perceptions of generic competencies with the goal of creating up-to-date and user-friendly frameworks. This is necessary, because generic competency frameworks are socially constructed, reflecting what is valued at that time. For example, UK researchers interviewed employers from eight large companies in England and Scotland, and staff from 14 universities, and analysed documents from those organisations, to ascertain important work-readiness competencies for university graduates (Lowden et al., 2011). Despite being conducted at least a decade after the most recent study identified by ACT Inc. (2000), and in the UK, nearly all the resultant skills can be fitted neatly into the four common domains identified by O'Neil et al. (2014) and Jones (1996), as follows: literacy, numeracy and information technology skills (e.g. core domain of basic skills); problem solving and ability to use initiative (e.g. thinking skills); team working, ability to follow instructions, interpersonal, communication and leadership skills (e.g. social skills); and personal attitudes and outlooks including motivation, tenacity, commitment and self-management (e.g. personal qualities). The only skill without a clear match was 'knowledge of the business' (Lowden et al., 2011). This UK example indicates the relevance of the meta-frameworks developed by O'Neil et al. (2014) and Jones (1996) for research and practice.

The second approach to identifying work-readiness adds 'job-specific' skills to the notion of generic competencies. There, work-readiness is defined as the extent to which individuals possess certain combinations and levels of skills that are generally required to perform a specific job. Companies such as ACT Inc. and government agencies (e.g. the UK's National Career Service[2]) have profiled thousands of jobs,

using criteria gathered from employers and employment specialists. In tandem with their occupational profiles, ACT Inc. have developed a framework of job-specific and generic competencies, and training materials to enhance those in individuals. This framework divides work-readiness into 'foundational cognitive skills' (reading for information, mathematics, problem solving and critical thinking), 'soft skills' (personal characteristics and behavioural skills such as adaptability and cooperation), and 'occupation-specific skills' such as welding, data entry or medical knowledge (Clark et al., 2013). This perspective acknowledges the importance of employee–employment fit, where individuals and specific jobs are more or less suited to each other.

The third approach focuses on people's work-readiness 'career motivation'. Generally, research on this topic focuses on adults with physical or intellectual barriers to employment, such as chronic health problems, head injury or intellectual disability (Chan et al., 2006; O'Neill & Wolf, 2010; Rose et al., 2010). A common way to assess this type of career motivation draws on a conceptual framework originally designed for use in addiction research. There, participants are asked to report on their work-readiness pre-contemplation (e.g. how ready they feel to look for work), contemplation (the extent to which they think about finding work) and action (to what extent they are actively job searching) (Lam et al., 1991). The career motivation component of work-readiness can be positioned within O'Neil et al.'s (2014) domain of personal characteristics and attitudes, although it is rarely mentioned by studies on work-readiness generic and job-specific competencies. In this review, we suggest that career motivation is an important quality of work-readiness that should not be overlooked by the broader frameworks, especially in the context of young people who are developing their career identities in response to education and employment opportunities at the STW transition (Schoon & Lyons Amos, 2016).

To summarise, in this review we have identified six common types of work-readiness skills prioritised by employers and present in the literature on work-readiness as a competency. These are: job-specific skills, basic skills, thinking skills, social skills, personal qualities, and career motivation. These competencies are presented in Table 1.

Review methods

In the second part of this review, we focus on major work-readiness programmes for unemployed young people in the UK and Ireland. To identify programmes, we searched Irish and UK Government websites and publication databases, and the websites of private businesses and not-for-profit organisations operating in the field of youth work, with a focus on services in Ireland to inform our ongoing research into work-readiness in Irish youth. In total, we searched 61 websites (Table 2).

We also searched the Educational Resource Information Catalogue (ERIC) for publications on work-readiness programmes, using the search string 'Job training' OR 'occupational training' OR 'work placement' OR 'work experience programme' OR 'work experience program' OR 'school-to-work programme' OR 'school-to-work program' OR 'work experience' OR 'work-based learning' OR 'school to work' OR 'employment training' OR 'employment program' OR 'employment programme'. We then searched within results for 'United Kingdom'

Table 1.   Work-readiness competencies

Work-readiness competence	Description
Job-specific skills	Psychological and behavioural skills that enable an individual to do a specific job, e.g. using spreadsheets, computer programming, sales techniques
Basic skills	Literacy, numeracy and information communication technology skills
Thinking skills	Critical and creative thinking, metacognition
Social skills	The ability to work well with others, e.g. interpersonal, communication and teamwork skills, leadership, conflict management, and responding appropriately to people's instructions and requests
Personal qualities	Latent psychological qualities of the individual relating to work, including attitudes towards work and the workplace (e.g. valuing diversity), tendency for work engagement, and self-regulation when working
Career motivation	Drive for developing own career pathway, including conscious management of career in response to environmental factors

OR 'Northern Ireland' OR 'England' OR 'Scotland' OR 'Wales' OR 'Great Britain' OR 'Ireland' OR 'Republic of Ireland' and limited the results to publications from 2007 onwards. This yielded 202 publications that we reviewed using manual screening of titles and abstracts.

Our inclusion criteria were that programmes were active any time between 2006 and 2016 that they must admit young people aged anywhere between 15 and 24 years, and that they were designed to help unemployed people from all walks of life (i.e. not just university graduates, as there is a substantial literature on graduate employability) move towards or into employment. The limitations of this approach were that we did not identify programmes that had no information online, which may include past programmes and programmes under development. We also excluded one publication on an employability programme in the North East of England as this focused on programme outcomes and had no information on programme design (Seddon et al., 2013). Our strategy resulted in the identification of 18 major national and community programmes from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the UK, all conducted after 2007 (Table 3).

A second outcome of our search was the identification of programme evaluations. Of the identified work-readiness programmes, nine had evaluations that we could access online, or obtain privately from the programme providers (Fleming, 2015). Four programmes had multiple evaluation documents (the Work Programme, Work Experience Programme, Sector Based Work Academies and Entry to Employment), whereas the other programmes had one evaluation document each (Table 3). Only the ethnographic evaluation of the Entry to Employment (E2E) programme was published as a series of academic texts (e.g. Simmons & Thompson, 2011a) whereas the other evaluations were written as non-peer-reviewed reports. This demonstrates a lack of peer-reviewed evaluations of major work-readiness programmes in our focus locale. We use the findings from the programme evaluations, to enrich our review of programme designs, and as the data for our thematic analysis of programme outcomes.

Table 2.   Major websites searched

Country	Organisation
Ireland	Department of Social Protection (DSP)
	Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)
	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI)
	Department of Education and Skills (DES)
	Irish Youth Justice Service (at the DCYA)
	Irish National Training and Employment Authority (FÁS)
	The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOU)
	Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)
	Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI)
	SOLAS—Further Education and Training Authority
	National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)
	Irish Youth Foundation
	Youth Work Ireland (a consortium of regional youth services)
	Limerick Youth Service
	Canal Communities Regional Youth Service (Dublin)
	Carlow Regional Youth Service
	Cloyne Diocesan Youth Services (CDYS)
	Clare Youth Service
	Donegal Youth Service
	FDYS Youth Work Ireland
	Kildare Youth Services
	Youth Work Ireland Midlands
	Kerry Diocesan Youth Service (KDYS)
	Youth Work Ireland Meath
	Tipperary Regional Youth Service (TRYS)
	Waterford & South Tipperary Community Youth Service
	Ossory Youth (Kilkenny)
	Youth Work Ireland Galway
	Youth Work Ireland Monaghan
	Youth Work Ireland Cork
	Youth Work Ireland Louth
	Youth Work Ireland Co. Longford
	Youth Work Ireland Laois
	Youth Work Ireland Roscommon & NE Galway
	North Connaught Youth & Community Service
UK	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
	Department for Business Innovation and Skills (DBIS)
	Department for Education (DfE)
	National Centre for Education Research (NCER)
	Youth Employment UK (YEUK)
	UK Youth
	YouthNet UK
	The Work Foundation
	Tomorrow's People
	The Prince's Trust
	London Youth
	British Youth Council
	Youth at Risk

Table 2.   (Continued)

Country	Organisation
Scotland	The Scottish Government
	Community Jobs Scotland
	Inspiring Scotland 14:19 Fund
	Youth Link Scotland
	Apex Services
	Youth Scotland
Wales	The Welsh Government
	Careers Wales
	Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services
Northern Ireland	Nidirect Government Services
	Northern Ireland Youth Forum
	Hope for Youth
	Youth Action

Results

Review of programme designs

National programmes in Ireland

In 2013, Ireland's government committed to the European Commission's Youth Guarantee scheme (European Commission, 2013), offering all 18–24 year-olds the opportunity to develop the education, skills or experience necessary to find employment within 4 months of leaving school or work (Department of Social Protection, 2013). The scheme is delivered by the Department of Social Protection in collaboration with other government departments, Ireland's further education and training authority SOLAS (*an tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna*, which is also the Irish word for light), and community partners including Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI), and the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI).

Young adults are identified as being eligible for the Youth Guarantee, when they register for unemployment benefits. At this point they are assigned to a case officer at an employment agency, who asks them to sign an initial contract and meets with them later to develop a personal progression plan. At any time during this process, the young adult can enrol in a suitable employability support programme using the 'Intreo' service (the name Intreo is derived from both the abbreviation of the word Introduction and *Treo*, the Irish for direction). There are a range of programmes on offer, tailored for different subgroups including university graduates, aspiring entrepreneurs, young adult job seekers with limited qualifications and work experience, and the long-term unemployed. If the young adults are seeking education and training to enhance their chances of employment, they are able to apply for one of the hundreds of free training courses run by local Education and Training Boards, and managed by SOLAS. Example courses are in career planning and employability skills, accounting, forestry, hospitality and musical instrument design, although some more specialist courses require a minimum prior qualification for entry.

Table 3. Programme designs

Programme	Generic skills	Job-specific skills	Work experience	Mentoring	Financial benefits	Sanctions
Ireland						
Intreo	Yes	Yes	–	–	–	–
First Steps	Yes	–	Yes	Yes	Yes	–
JobBridge	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes	–
BITCI Youth Guarantee	Yes	–	Yes	Yes	–	–
ENERTI	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	–	–
All Great Britain						
SBWA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	–	–
Work Experience	–	–	Yes	–	–	–
Work Programme	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	–	Yes
E2E	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	–
VTalent Year	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes	–
Scotland						
Community Jobs Scotland	–	–	Yes	–	Yes	–
Inspiring Scotland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	–	–
BP Young Leaders	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	–
Wales						
Job Growth Wales	–	–	Yes	–	Yes	–
Learning for Work	Yes	–	Yes	–	–	–
Routeways	Yes	Yes	–	–	–	–
Northern Ireland						
YES	–	–	Yes	Yes	Yes	–
Steps 2 Success	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	–	Yes
Frequency of design component across programmes	12 (67%)	9 (50%)	16 (89%)	12 (67%)	8 (44%)	2 (11%)

If the young adults prefer to focus on work experience, they can enrol in one of Ireland's many work experience programmes that reserve a set number of places for 18–24 year-olds. *First Steps*[3] is Ireland's main developmental internship programme developed especially for unemployed 18–24 year-olds with little education or work experience. There, case officers guide young adults to apply for a work experience placement offered by employers across the country. The placements are mentored and part-time to allow for further education or training and a gradual transition to full time work. While on the placement, young adults are paid their usual unemployment benefit plus an additional €52.50 towards expenses incurred. Before the placement, the young adults do a short work preparation course that teaches them about work etiquette, social skills, self-management, dress and grooming. JobsPlus Youth is an extension of the internship programme and an incentivisation scheme that pays between €7500 and €10,000 over a 2-year period to an employer if they recruit and retain in employment a person under 25 years of age who is long-term unemployed.

Previously, unemployed young adults were also eligible to apply for work placements on the *JobBridge*[4] scheme, which was viewed as a more advanced version of

First Steps in that placements were designed for mainstream (non-vulnerable) people, were freely advertised online, and sometimes required a minimum qualification. We were unable to find an evaluation of First Steps or JobsPlus, however Doorley (2015) published an evaluation focusing specifically on young people's experiences on JobBridge, which we include in this review. The Minister for Social Protection announced the closure of the JobBridge scheme following a second external evaluation of the scheme and advice received from the Labour Market Council (2016). Job-Bridge is to be replaced with a more targeted work experience programme in 2017.

Community programmes in Ireland

Our search for community programmes in Ireland uncovered many examples run by educational charities and youth support services across the country. Of these, two had evaluations that were made available to us or published online. The first was the *BITC Youth Guarantee Pilot Programme*, run by BITCI in 2014 in collaboration with the Ballymun Job Centre in Dublin, and funded by the Department of Social Protection, as part of the Irish Youth Guarantee. This programme was based on an existing programme at BITCI for unemployed immigrant adults, and was a precursor to First Steps. Of the 29 young adults involved in the pilot programme, 35.5% had criminal convictions, 41.4% reported substance abuse, 10.3% reported mental health issues, 20.7% reported medical issues, 6.9% were homeless and 3.4% required childcare (Fleming, 2015). The young adult participants first developed a career action plan with a case worker at the Ballymun Job Centre, then attended a 2.5-day training course where activities related to confidence building, communication and coping skills, CV writing and interviewing were on offer. This was followed by a 4-week unpaid work placement. The young adults were encouraged to retain their relationship with the case worker after the work placement, to help them with job searching and applying for education and training (Duggan et al., 2015; O'Reilly, 2015).

The second programme was the *Equal North East Re-Integration Training Initiative* (ENERTI), which was established by the educational charity Equal[5] in Galway. This was a 3-year pilot programme for unemployed males, which was followed by an 18-month mainstreaming initiative for both genders. Both programmes were evaluated by McGinn and Sen (2009) for the Foras Áiseanna Saothair (FÁS), Ireland's then National Training and Education Authority (the precursor to SOLAS). Many of the 169 participants in ENERTI had significant barriers to employment including long-term unemployment, little education, literacy difficulties, substance abuse and offending. A dedicated team of three 'Equal' practitioners selected participants, delivered courses, mentored participants, arranged work placements, established links with prospective employers and followed up with participants for up to a year afterwards.

The ENERTI applicants were first interviewed using the HARP (holistic assessment, reintegration and progression) toolkit, to ascertain their suitability for the programme, and to inform subsequent provision. Eventual participants then attended two weeks of education and training. There, participants took personality, emotional intelligence, learning skills and literacy tests, and participated in group work sessions to identify existing skills and set new career goals. They discussed their results with instructors who helped them develop individual action plans. All participants also did

short, nationally recognised courses in health and safety, and manual handling. In the second week of the training, participants took 'skills sampling' courses that were chosen to fit interests of all in the group. Example courses were hand skills and computers, hand tools, retail sales, first aid and payroll. At the end of each week, participants were visited by guest speakers from industry. The induction period was followed by a work placement, during which participants continued to be mentored by the Equal instructors.

National programmes in Great Britain

In England, Scotland and Wales, the UK's Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) provides employability support programmes for 18–24 year-olds. At the time of writing, the UK has not implemented a Youth Guarantee in line with EC recommendations, although it did run a similar scheme called the Youth Contract for 16–24 year-olds, between 2012 and 2015.[6] There are three main schemes for 18–24-year-old unemployed young adults operating across the UK although the Scottish Parliament are moving towards devolving this provision (Kidner, 2015).

The first scheme, *Sector Based Work Academies* (SBWAs), is managed by the employment service Jobcentre Plus. Jobcentre Plus staff work with employers to organise pre-employment training that can be delivered by local colleges, training organisations or employers, that is paid for by the UK Skills Funding Agency and by the Scottish Parliament in Scotland. The training generally takes the form of accredited courses by which participants can gain qualifications. This is followed by a work experience placement that is expected to end in a guaranteed interview. SBWAs have been advertised to employers as a type of 'alternative recruitment process' (Thomas & Jordan, 2013, p. 23), where they can train participants at no cost to themselves, and get to know participants before interviewing them for a job. Generally, SBWAs are offered by larger employers (with 250 or more employees), possibly owing to the complex nature of the programme with its multiple elements and coordination demands (Coleman et al., 2013). Often, participants only experience the training component (70%), with a minority of participants (21%) undertaking all three components of education/training, work experience and an interview (from a survey of 1053 participants by Coleman et al., 2014).

The second scheme is the *Work Experience Programme* that offers 2–8 week-long work placements to young adults. There is little about this programme online, but from the evaluations we can gather that the placements have most often been in shops (45% of 1,118 survey respondents), offices (25%), warehouses (10%) or in outdoor work (8%) (Coleman et al., 2014). The majority of placements (89%), unlike the SBWAs, have been offered by smaller establishments with 50 or fewer employees. The five most common tasks undertaken during the work placements were dealing with members of the public (43%), organising stock or goods (40%), administrative tasks (25%), cleaning (22%), and responding to telephone calls, emails or letters (15%) (Coleman et al., 2014).

Third, young adults are eligible for the UK's *Work Programme*. This programme is mandatory for 18–24 year-olds claiming unemployment benefits for nine or more months and for older adults claiming benefits for 12 or more months. People's

benefits can be cut if they do not attend. Also, adults who are in some way disadvantaged in the labour market, through for example, developmental disability, can volunteer for the programme and are not subject to those sanctions. Programme providers are paid a start fee for each participant and obtain further lump sums when participants find a job, and if they sustain that job over a period of weeks. The amount of money paid to providers differs per the participants' level of need (i.e. around £14,000 for a person who is severely disadvantaged, compared with around £4,000 for mainstream young adults). In November 2015, the DWP announced that it was replacing the Work Programme with a Work and Health Programme scheduled to begin in late 2017, of which there are few published details at the time of writing.

An evaluation of the Work Programme (Meager et al., 2014) further detailed that providers could design their own approach to delivering the contract, under minimum guidelines. This 'black box' approach allowed for personalisation and use of local services and ideas. Most participants involved in the evaluation ($N = 4,715$) received training regarding CVs, job applications and interviewing (64%), completed an action plan with their advisers (49%) and had a skills assessment (38%). Far fewer participants were referred to job-specific training courses (17%) in for example, hospitality or carpentry, or had generic work-readiness skills training (14%) in for example, literacy or self-management. Very few were supported with other barriers to employment including help with drug and alcohol problems (2.8%), housing (7.7%), caregiving responsibilities (4.5%) and having a criminal record (6.3%). Although participants were helped in securing work placements by their advisers, there was no structured work experience component and few guidelines were given to employers.

Another noteworthy programme that has now ended is the UK's *Entry to Employment* (E2E) scheme (now called S2S) that ran between 2002 and 2010. Simmons and colleagues extensively evaluated this programme using ethnographic methods (e.g. Simmons & Thompson, 2011a). E2E was managed by Connexions, which used to be the UK's careers education and guidance service, in collaboration with other organisations. All providers followed minimum guidelines set out by the DWP. These included supplying participants with elements of a core curriculum comprising key skills (literacy, numeracy, and information and communications technology), vocational skills, and personal and social skills; the foundations of the work-readiness construct we described earlier. This training took place in a range of organisations including Further Education (FE) colleges, training services, and charities and businesses specialising in work-based learning (Simmons & Thompson, 2011a). Connexions also allocated an adviser to participants who worked with them throughout the programme; organising and monitoring their provision, and giving them careers counselling when needed (Russell et al., 2010). Participants received a weekly allowance and had their programme expenses paid for.

Community programmes in Great Britain

Although many work-readiness programmes for young people and young adults exist in Great Britain, few have been evaluated. Here we describe one provided by the educational charity Demos, who evaluated the programme using a quantitative survey and interviews (Grist and Cheetham, 2011). This was a 44-week long volunteering

programme for 16–24 year olds called *VTalent Year*. Young adults were allocated a placement supervisor, who worked with them to create a volunteering proposal that they could carry out in a host organisation (such as running training sessions in the sports science department of a Further Education college). While they were carrying out their proposal, they were also encouraged to do other types of work experience that became available in the host organisation, such as reception duties. In this way, young adults could 'take advantage of opportunities as well as create them' (Grist & Cheetham, 2011, p. 68). As long as they spent a minimum of 44 weeks on the programme and complied with its requirements, the young adults received an allowance commensurate with the UK unemployment benefit.

National programmes in Scotland

Although Scotland can offer young adults all the programmes run by the UK Government, it also has its own schemes to support young adults' work-readiness, run in collaboration with the Scottish Government. These include a work experience programme called *Community Jobs Scotland* (CJS), run by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO). There, the Scottish Government pays a minimum of £5,000 for each young adult to work in a charitable organisation for at least 25 hours per week for 6 months, and young adults are paid the national minimum wage (Kidner, 2015). Another scheme is the *Inspiring Scotland 14:19 Fund*[7], which funds a range of charity work for supporting NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) 14–19 year-olds to find suitable education or work. An example is the Tullochan charity's Futures programme[8] for NEET young adults in West Dunbartonshire. Over an 8-week course of 15 hours per week, the young adults developed an action plan with an adviser, identified barriers to employment, received education in employability and job-specific skills, developed and delivered a community project and went on outdoor residential trips.

Community programmes in Scotland

A Scottish programme (Skyblue, 2015) was designed around the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. Funded by British Petroleum (BP) at a cost of £500,000, the Glasgow 2014 BP Young Leaders programme ran between July 2013 and January 2015. The programme was managed by the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust and Inspiring Scotland, and was delivered by Aberdeen Foyer, Action for Children and several charities in the Shetland Islands. Young adults with multiple barriers to employment including low levels of education, mental health issues, a lack of work experience, and families with low incomes and a history of unemployment were recruited for the programme. The programme comprised typical work-readiness enhancement activities including action plans, careers and job-search education. It also linked participants with accredited short courses in basic employability skills including first aid, food hygiene, health and safety, construction, numeracy and literacy, and encouraged them to volunteer in their local communities. The training built up to a volunteer role at the Commonwealth Games, where young adults gained work experience in

hospitality or by working with UNICEF during the Games. They were also mentored by Games' athletes before and during their volunteering.

National programmes in Wales

Like Scotland, Wales offers its young adults the UK national provision and its own tailor made programmes.[9] The Welsh Government run careers services, and Careers Wales advertise vacancies on the *Job Growth Wales*[10] programme, where employers offer job opportunities to NEET 16–24 year-olds. Young adults receive at least the national minimum wage, and their salaries are paid for the first 6-months by the Welsh Government and the European Social Fund. Young adults are also eligible for two short term work-readiness programmes (Welsh Government, 2016). *Learning for Work* is a 24-week part-time course including basic skills and confidence building, work experience and volunteering for the community and charitable organisations. Its counterpart, *Routeways* runs for 10 days full time, and provides employability training, some job-specific training, and a job interview if one is available. Although many community work-readiness support programmes exist in Wales, like other researchers (O'Toole, 2011), we were unable to find published evaluations of these.

National programmes in Northern Ireland

Although Northern Ireland is a part of the UK, the SBWAs, Work Experience and Work Programme do not run there and the Northern Ireland Executive are responsible for national work-readiness programmes. The Executive's Department for Employment and Learning[11] offer a range of work-readiness programmes for 18–24 year-olds, in line with the UK's implementation of the European Commission's Youth Guarantee. The primary programme for 18–24 year-olds is the *Youth Employment Scheme* (YES), which consists of 2–8 week work experience placements. Candidates must have signed on for unemployment benefits, and have not been on those benefits for longer than 9 months, to be eligible. On the programme, young adults are assigned an adviser who helps them with their job-search skills, CVs and interviewing. Travel costs are paid but there is no additional welfare payment for participation. Once young adults have been claiming unemployment benefits for 9 months or more, they are required to go on the *Steps 2 Success* programme, Northern Ireland's main employability support programme for adults. Participation is mandatory otherwise their benefits may be cut. There, young adults work with case workers who help them develop a personal progression plan, and provide them with suitable job-specific training and employability skills programmes and work experience placements. We were unable to find any published evaluations of these programmes, or of other local employability support programmes in Northern Ireland.

Discussion on programme designs

Of the 18 programmes reviewed above (Table 3), the majority (89%) offered some form of work experience. This was generally unpaid although two programmes subsidised employers so that young adults could receive the minimum wage. The work

experience placements ranged from 2 weeks to 6 months. We explore participants' reactions to their work-experience in the next section, to give some indication of the quality of these experiences and their impact on work-readiness. Generally, there was little detail on specific jobs in the programme evaluations. As documented by Coleman et al. (2014) for the UK's Work Programme, and by Simmons and Thompson (2011a,b) for the E2E programme, common jobs were routine and/or manual. For example, of the 1,118 young adults surveyed in the Work Programme (Coleman et al., 2014), 43% worked in jobs with a service element, 40% organised stocks and goods, 25% were involved in administrative/clerical tasks and 22% in cleaning.

Another common component was generic skills training (67%), i.e. building basic skills for employability. However, the training generally took a work-first approach (Meager et al., 2014), focusing on developing the necessary skills to find a job, including CV writing, job search and interviewing, so that young adults could move quickly into employment. The training also included short courses to build industry generic skills such as knowledge of safety, first aid and IT. Shorter term programmes tended to provide this generic employability skills training as part of an induction period preceding work experience, whereas longer term programmes tended to enrol young adults on employability skills programmes offered by external providers.

Most of the programmes (67%) also provided a key adult for the participants, who could be a careers guidance practitioner, a course organiser or instructor, or a personal mentor. In the UK programmes, this person was an adviser working either for Connexions or Jobcentre Plus, who had an allocated time with each young adult, and was responsible for drawing up an action plan with them and organising services to meet minimum provision guidelines for that programme. By requiring young people to be mentored in their efforts to find work, those programmes may have helped young people develop their career competencies. However, mentors could often be overburdened by caseload and have little knowledge of the programme goals, as was evident for the Work Programme (Newton et al., 2011, in interview) and feel pressured to have participants exit the programme by specific deadlines (Thompson, 2010, in interview), thereby impacting the quality of their mentoring and ability to help young people realise their career goals.

On several programmes, young people had work-placement mentors. On the ENERTI and BITCI Youth Guarantee programmes, mentors were central members of the education and counselling teams who ran the programmes, and mentored young people through their work placements and afterwards during a follow-up period. The provision of workplace mentors may have helped young people develop a range of work-readiness competencies including generic skills, job-specific skills and career motivation. We examine this in more detail in the next section.

There were far fewer programmes that built job-specific skills to assist with career development (50%), or spent time dismantling barriers to employment that were outside of the typical work-readiness competency domains, such as problems with substance use, accommodation shortages and caregiving responsibilities. A lack of support in these areas represents a lack of programme investment in human capital, as having barriers to employment, and few qualifications and occupational skills presents a major challenge to young people both in terms of finding work and developing their employment potential over time.

Participants' appraisals of programme designs

In this section, we summarise the views of the young adult participants, mentors/ teachers and stakeholders on the different elements of programme designs outlined in Table 3. Those views are drawn from 14 evaluations of nine of the programmes (Table 4). The majority of evaluations (*n* = 11) did not gather longitudinal data, that is, they did not evaluate the change in participants' perceptions and work-readiness across time. Rather, they gathered data after the programme had ended, or at different times during the programme. There was a mixture of qualitative, quantitative and concurrent mixed methods research styles, providing numerical and linguistic data (Symonds & Gorard, 2010). The evaluations were either published as single reports that combined the views of young adults, mentors/teachers/advisers, employers and programme organisers; or as multiple reports that each focused on the views of one of those groups.

Only the evaluations of the E2E programme were published in the peer-reviewed literature (*n* = 4), whereas the other 10 evaluations were made available on Government or charity websites. This presents accessibility and visibility issues, as there is no guarantee that the publications will be available in the longer term. More peer-reviewed literature is important for building sustainability and credibility in this field, so that future research can build on easily accessible data from previous studies, and challenge, critique, adapt or replicate the theoretical and conceptual foundations contained therein, which more typically feature in peer-reviewed articles. There is also a lack of attention to the construct of work-readiness and assessment of it, in the non-peer-reviewed publications as we demonstrate in this review. Given the level of human and financial investment typically associated with youth work-readiness programmes, we would encourage a broader range of dissemination strategies in this field, to include the scholarly literature, which should serve to further conceptualise developments in this area.

Perceptions of generic skills training

Young adults involved in generic job-search training, such as CV preparation, job-search skills and interviewing, reported across programmes that this type of training was very effective for helping them move closer towards employment (Newton et al., 2011, in interview; Meager et al., 2014: 32% of 4,700 at Wave 1, 27% of 1,800 at Wave 2; Fleming, 2015: 90% of 29). Indeed, job-search training was rated as the most useful aspect of the UK's Work Programme, especially by younger adults with less education and work experience (Meager et al., 2014). However, one drawback of job-search training was that some participants on the Work Programme felt pressured by this approach to apply for jobs they were not interested in, and would have preferred to spend more time developing their job-specific skills and dismantling other barriers to employment (Newton et al., 2011, in interview), as is consistent with our observation of many programmes taking a work-first rather than a human capital approach.

Teachers on the E2E programme had longer to help young adults develop their generic skills, such as those at an FE college who delivered a mixture of generic skills

Table 4. Programme evaluations

Programme	Evaluation	Programme participants	Evaluation method	Evaluation participants
BITCI Youth Guarantee	Fleming, 2015	29	Quantitative	28 young adults
			Qualitative	11 young adults
BP Young Leaders	Skyblue, 2015	58	Quantitative	Young adults 50 Wave 1 24 Waves 1–4
E2E (S2S)	Russell et al., 2010, 2011; Simmons & Thompson, 2011a,b	21,600 in 2009	Qualitative	51 young adults
	Thompson, 2010		NA	15 teachers
ENERTI	McGinn & Sen, 2009	169	Quantitative	116 young adults and adults
JobBridge	Doorley, 2015	Around 8,000	Quantitative	84 young adults
			Qualitative	7 young adults
SBWA & work experience	Coleman et al., 2013	Approximately 100,000 per year	Quantitative	3,000 employers
	Coleman, McGinigal & Hingley, 2014		Quantitative	Young adults 1,118 work experience 459 SWBA
	Thomas & Jordan, 2013		Qualitative	5 case studies of around 10 Jobcentre Plus staff
VTalent Year	Grist & Cheetham, 2011	Not stated	Quantitative	Young adults 41 Wave 1 32 Wave 2 24 both waves
			Qualitative	32 young adults
Work Programme	Meager et al., 2014	Over 444,000	Quantitative	Young adults and adults 4,700 Wave 1 1,800 Wave 2
	Newton et al., 2011	Over 444,000	Qualitative	94 young adults and adults 63 Jobcentre Plus staff 148 providers

Notes: Where participant numbers given in the main text differ to those in this table, this indicates responses from a sub-group of participants, for example 6-month follow-up employment data, or a question answered by some, not all.

and vocational training. They observed that teaching young adults with barriers to employment could sometimes be very challenging, as those young adults were often not academically motivated, had problems concentrating in lessons, had low levels of literacy and did not take up opportunities to use the FE college library or IT resources (Thompson, 2010). This finding serves to highlight the importance of designing work-readiness programmes in mind of individual needs, especially for unemployed young adults who are such a diverse group. It also indicates the challenges in helping

young people develop agency, within developmental contexts such as educational and social disadvantage.

Some teachers also reported concerns that if the E2E programme became more qualifications driven, then this would dissuade young adults who did not want to return to an environment like school from attending (Russell et al., 2011). This is in line with the notion that young people move away from educational experience in young adulthood, to avoid experiencing negative emotions and academic failures similar to those they experienced in school (Symonds et al., 2016). Conversely, instructors who were interviewed on the ENERTI programme reported that obtaining generic skills qualifications (such as in health and safety) was very important to participants (McGinn & Sen, 2009). The different age group of programme participants (18 and older in ENERTI, and 15–18 year-olds in E2E) may have explained this discrepancy, as more E2E participants had been at school recently.

Perceptions of job-specific training

Some participants on the Work Programme had time to develop their job-specific skills by taking vocational education courses, and they reported that this helped them develop their career goals and aspirations, although in some cases participants had to take up more routine jobs in order to pay for more expensive vocational training (Newton et al., 2011, in interview). On the ENERTI programme in Ireland, participants took short 'skills sampling' vocational courses before their work placement. There, many participants interviewed reported preferring a greater variety in courses (for example, not just woodwork), and more courses tailored to their individual interests such as tutoring in business and management skills, to help them get an office job (McGinn & Sen, 2009). However, instructors on ENERTI viewed the content of the job-specific skills modules as being less important than the way in which these were delivered (McGinn & Sen, 2009). For example, when teaching woodwork to participants, they incorporated activities to help participants develop their generic competencies in team work and time management. This presents a mismatch between instructors' and participants' views, where participants did not appear to understand the intended generic benefits of what they were doing.

Perceptions of work experience

Most young adults involved in programmes with a work experience component, were positive about this experience (82% on the Work Experience Programme, Coleman et al., 2014; 57% on JobBridge, Doorley, 2015). Those who were positive about their experience felt that they were treated like a regular and valued member of staff (80% of 1,053), and that the placement gave them the opportunity to learn many new skills (81% of 1,053) (Coleman et al., 2014). However, many young adults across programmes did not have such a good experience. Some felt that they were treated differently to other staff (Doorley, 2015, 22%; Fleming, 2015, focus group interview), disliked doing routine tasks such as cleaning and filing (Russell et al., 2011; Doorley, 2015, in interview), and a few on JobBridge were even informed by company staff that they had no rights unlike regular employees (Doorley, 2015, in interview). Also on

JobBridge, although 56% of the 84 young adults experienced concerns or difficulties during their internship, 26% of them did not raise these concerns with their mentors (Doorley, 2015). Some young adults on the BITCI programme felt demotivated by not having a job available at the end of the placement (Fleming, 2015), while across the Work Experience, JobBridge and E2E programmes, a large minority of young adults disliked having to work for free (Russell et al., 2011, in interview; Coleman et al., 2014, 35% of 1,053; Doorley, 2015, 44% of 88).

On the Work Placement, SWBA and E2E programmes, where Jobcentre Plus and Connexions advisers helped to organise work placements, advisers reported similar issues. There, some advisers observed employers advertising placements as a means to recruit free workers during busy periods such as Christmas, and saw their young adult charges doing menial work on those placements (Thomas & Jordan, 2013). On the E2E programmes, advisers could find it very difficult to organise work placements, owing to a lack of interest from employers in working with younger adults who were facing barriers to employment (Russell et al., 2011). Advisers were also concerned about the lack of placements compared with young adults who needed them on the SWBA programme, reporting that in some districts there were one or two work placements for 20 candidates, which could be very demotivating for the young adults (Thomas & Jordan, 2013).

Where employers' views were solicited, many employers reported initial concerns about the quality of participants, but were generally satisfied with the participants' attitudes and skills after they began working (85% surveyed regarding the SWBAs and 82% regarding the Work Experience Programme, Coleman et al., 2013). A significant minority of employers also shared the views of participants and mentors, that the ability to recruit free or low cost workers was their main incentive for offering a work placement (25% on the SBWAs and 21% on the Work Experience Programme, Coleman et al., 2013). However, around half the employers surveyed reported joining the schemes in order to give unemployed young adults a chance (Coleman et al., 2013). Both employers and Jobcentre Plus advisers reported that it was easier to offer work placements on the Work Experience Programme, because unlike the SBWAs there was no education component to organise, and no need to wait for the participants to finish training before they started their work placement (Coleman et al., 2013; Thomas & Jordan, 2013).

Perceptions of mentoring

Across programmes, young adults were positive about having a mentor (McGinn & Sen, 2009, 85% of 116; Meager et al., 2014; Doorley, 2015; Fleming, 2015; Russell et al., 2011, interview responses), a term that we apply to a range of roles including careers' adviser, instructor and work experience mentor. On E2E, evaluation researchers noted that mentorship, or a lack thereof, was an important reason for engaging with, or disengaging from the programme. Quantitative support for these observations comes from Ireland's JobBridge programme, where more participants who were assigned mentors reported that they completed their internship (72%) versus those who were not assigned a mentor (46%) (Doorley, 2015).

An important aspect of mentoring was helping young adults identify their barriers to employment. On the ENERTI programme, this was done via the HARP interview, which some participants liked as they felt that the mentors were really trying to understand them (McGinn & Sen, 2009). On the Work Programme (Newton et al., 2011), interviewed participants reported that mentors helped them identify personal barriers such as health problems, addiction problems and a lack of skills and qualifications, and offered advice on external barriers that were outside of the participants' control, for example, the labour market. Participants who found work after the programme attributed this in part to barrier identification and removal, whereas those who did not find work reported that their mentors did not identify or address their barriers.

Work Programme mentors also supported young adults with their barriers to employment by drawing up and maintaining action plans with them. Participants on the Work Programme reported that this activity was most useful when the plans were regularly updated, well structured with action steps and timelines, and reflected their personal interests and experiences (Newton et al., 2011, in interview). Participants also found the post-programme mentoring extremely useful. On ENERTI (McGinn & Sen, 2009), one person's mentor helped him apply for college and for college tuition funding. Another said his mentor was responsible for his success in gaining a place on a 6-month Autocad course, which later helped him get a job in his desired for industry. Mentors were also helpful for resolving problems that arose on Job-Bridge internships (Doorley, 2015, 49% of 88) although the extent to which they helped varied across mentors.

Turning to the mentors' perceptions, the provision of one-to-one mentoring time was reported across programmes as important for helping mentors identify young adults' barriers to employment. This helped mentors tailor their provision for the young adults (McGinn & Sen, 2009, in interview; Newton et al., 2011, in interview) and refer them to appropriate external support services (Russell et al., 2010, in interview; Newton et al., 2011, in interview; Thomas & Jordan, 2013). Knowledge of young adults' barriers was also an empowering aspect of working life, giving mentors information with which to fight the young adult's corner, helping them develop working relationships with different services (Russell et al., 2010), and giving them a sense of meaning and purpose in their jobs when they helped the young adults overcome their personal barriers (Thompson, 2010). However, advisers on the Work Programme reported that developing closer relationships necessary for identifying barriers could be hampered by having large caseloads, needing to prioritise participants who were readier to move into employment, having a lack of training in identifying barriers and by the severity and complexity of the barriers themselves (Newton et al., 2011, in interview).

Mentoring was also seen as an important aspect of the programmes by programme organisers and employers. The team who ran the ENERTI training programme, who organised work placements, and who mentored participants across this provision were described as 'unique, committed individuals' (McGinn & Sen, 2009, p. 53) who had been chosen because of their ability to manage complex programme demands and their dedication to helping people with multiple barriers to employment. Employers on the ENERTI programme also spoke highly of the mentors, one

reporting that he would not have taken on a challenging participant without the mentor's support (McGinn & Sen, 2009).

Perceptions of financial incentives and sanctions

In several evaluations, participants discussed the importance of financial issues. Participants could be drawn to programmes because of financial incentives (Grist & Cheetham, 2011, in interview; Doorley, 2015, 16% of 88) and spoke of the value of having their transportation and lunch costs covered (Fleming, 2015, in interview). Still, two young adults on JobBridge reported that they could only afford to attend their work placement because they were living with their parents (Doorley, 2015, in interview). In the Work Programme (Newton et al., 2011, in interview), where non-attendance was sanctioned, participants reported understanding the reasons for this. However, the sanctions could make them feel threatened and pressured to get a job or take certain jobs when they were not yet ready. They also reported that sanctions were often unnecessary, because they already felt motivated to stay on the programme and find work.

Advisers on the Work Programme also reported the complex and time consuming nature of applying sanctions, as these had to be checked off by different staff and teams and were sometimes incorrectly applied to voluntary participants, when they were only meant for mandated participants (Newton et al., 2011, in interview). Some Work Programme advisers also felt that sanctioning was counterproductive for participants with multiple and significant barriers to employment (Newton et al., 2011, in interview).

Overall programme satisfaction

Despite having a variety of experiences on the programmes, participants were generally positive about the programmes. This was true for the BITCI Youth Guarantee pilot programme (Fleming, 2015), E2E (Russell et al., 2011), ENERTI (where 76% surveyed were satisfied with the programme, McGinn & Sen, 2009) and the SBWAs (where 87% surveyed reported an overall positive experience, Coleman et al., 2014). At the most basic level, as one participant on E2E reported, 'It keeps me out of trouble and out of bed . . .' (Russell et al., 2011, p. 493). More dramatically, programme participation could be a life changing event, such as for the ENERTI participant who wholly attributed his success in further education and eventual full time employment to his participation in the programme (McGinn & Sen, 2009).

Across programmes, organisers and employers stated appreciating the opportunities the programmes gave them to enact social and corporate responsibility by giving unemployed young adults work placements, training and mentoring them, and creating more inclusive work environments (Fleming, 2015; Skyblue, 2015). Also through their involvement programme organisers and employers gained networking opportunities with other organisations, promoted their work and were able to position themselves favourably for future funding and programme development (e.g. Skyblue, 2015). Organisers and employers also noted the benefits of programme involvement for engaging staff and developing staff pride, and for enabling staff to develop

mentoring skills (Fleming, 2015). Organisers spoke of the importance of designing programmes in accordance with community interests and needs (Cowman, 2014), and of having flexible delivery arrangements for larger scale programmes, so that they could be delivered in ways that were sensitive to participant, organisation and community cultures (Thomas & Jordan, 2013).

Programme impacts on work-readiness

In this section we bring together qualitative and quantitative data on how the programmes impacted participants' work-readiness. The data are sourced from the 14 evaluations listed in Table 4. As discussed, only three of those were longitudinal and therefore only a handful of data exists that confirms an actual change in perceptions of work-readiness. Also, none of the evaluations assessed generic or job-specific skills through methods other than self-report and therefore we have no data on whether skills such as numeracy, literacy, interviewing techniques, communication skills or any vocational skills actually improved as a result of the programmes. All that we can report are participants' views on whether their skills in those areas were enhanced, so the evidence is primarily anecdotal. We have grouped the findings into the 6 domains of work-readiness identified earlier; *basic skills*, *higher-order thinking skills*, *interpersonal and teamwork skills*, *personal characteristics and attitude* (Jones, 1996; Lowden et al., 2011; O'Neil et al., 2014), *job-specific skills* (Clark et al., 2013) and *career motivation* (Lam et al., 1991; Rose et al., 2010). At the end of the section, we have included additional quantitative research on work-readiness programmes, in order to indicate the employment, education and training outcomes that can be related to these types of programmes.

Basic skills

Twenty-four young adults in the BP Young Leaders' programme were surveyed four times over a 1.5-year period, by the independent research company Skyblue (2015). Those participants reported a steady increase in their numeracy, financial and IT skills across the four time points. On ENERTI (McGinn & Sen, 2009), the 116 participants reported developing skills in literacy (31%), numeracy (37%), job searching (85%) and interview techniques (82%). General reports of learning new skills were also noted by participants in Jobbridge (Doorley, 2015, 71% of 63) and E2E (Russell et al., 2011, in interview).

Job-specific skills

The evaluations gathered minimal data on job-specific skills. This was despite 50% of the programmes having a vocational training component, demonstrating a silence in the literature. Young adults on E2E and ENERTI (McGinn & Sen, 2009, 3% of 98) reported obtaining new vocational qualifications, whereas participants on JobBridge and the Work Experience Programme reported obtaining job-specific skills while on their work placements (Coleman et al., 2014, 74% of 1,053; Doorley, 2015, in interview). However, the evaluations contained few details about what those skills were, or

how the young adults developed them, telling us little about teaching and learning. More often, the young adults mentioned those skills in relation to improvement in their personal confidence and attitudes to working, as we describe later.

Higher-order thinking skills

Of the 14 evaluations, none reported on the development of critical and creative thinking skills, despite the documented importance of this aspect of work-readiness to employers (O'Neil et al., 2014). Only the Skyblue (2015) evaluation measured change in young adults' problem solving, although this item was only a proxy of critical thinking, and was more indicative of a behavioural pattern (item wording: *I can cope well when things go wrong and can overcome problems*). Across the 24 young adult participants, their agreement with this statement increased across Waves 1–3 then decreased at Wave 4. Also in the Skyblue (2015) evaluation, one mentor observed that his young adult participant developed better time management skills (suggesting better self-regulation). Generally, there was minimal information in programme evaluations on critical and creative thinking skills being targeted by programme design or developed because of participation.

Interpersonal and teamwork skills

In contrast, there was information in many evaluations on interpersonal and teamwork skills development. There, young adults often reported an increase in these competencies, perhaps as this was a common focus of quantitative evaluations and was also brought up by the young adults in qualitative interviews. In the Skyblue (2015) evaluation, this aspect of work-readiness was rated on average by the 24 young adults involved in the longitudinal evaluation, as being the most improved across the programme period. Participants in the BITCI Youth Guarantee programme (Fleming, 2015), the Work Experience Programme and the SBWAs (Coleman et al., 2014, 80% of 1,053) also reported being better able to communicate with others and work in a team as a result of their participation. Generally, these improvements were related to the work-experience components of the programmes.

Personal characteristics and attitude

Despite the centrality of the above skill sets to work-readiness, the majority of data presented by the evaluations on change in work-readiness, regarded young adults' confidence. An increase in confidence was reported by many young adults on the following programmes: ENERTI (McGinn & Sen, 2009, 82% of 116), E2E (Russell et al., 2011), BP Young Leaders (96% of participants in Skyblue, 2015, with a 24% increase across participants), BITCI Youth Guarantee (Fleming, 2015, 71% of 7), Work Experience and SBWAs (Coleman et al., 2014, 76% of 1,053), VTalent Year (Grist & Cheetham, 2011, in interview), and by advisers who observed it in their mentees: on E2E (Russell et al., 2011), the Work Experience Programme and SBWAs (Thomas & Jordan, 2013). However, the evaluations gave little data on why the young adults' confidence had improved, other than loose connections to the

young adults' experiences of training, mentoring (McGinn & Sen, 2009; Thomas & Jordan, 2013) and the work placements (Coleman et al., 2014).

It is possible that the programmes increased young adults' confidence through two mechanisms: first, by the daily interactions with their mentors, advisers, other participants, employers, work colleagues, and education, training and work activities, which may have given young adults many opportunities to feel more confident through a string of small successes and experiences of positive feedback. Second, simply being involved in a programme designed to improve one's life, may have given young adults more hope for the future (Grist & Cheetham, 2011: average increase in measured hope across 24 participants) and an increased focus on their personal strengths: inspiring confidence in their ability to move away from unemployment. This presents a major mechanism of enhancing young people's agency, as by feeling more confident and capable, young people may have the courage to try new experiences and apply themselves with more dedication to employment and educational tasks (Bandura, 2001).

Career motivation

Another common area of change was young adults' career motivation. Many young adults reported increased motivation to find a job, enrol in education or start their own business on the BITCI Youth Guarantee programme (Fleming, 2015), the Work Experience Programme and SBWAs (Coleman et al., 2014), the Work Programme (Newton et al., 2011, in interview), the BP Young Leaders' programme (Skyblue, 2015) and the VTalent Year (Grist & Cheetham, 2011). They related their increase in motivation to having their barriers to employment removed or ameliorated (94% of participants in Skyblue, 2015), feeling more attractive to employers and being continually supported and motivated by their advisers (Newton et al., 2011, in interview). Only participants on the Work Programme reported feeling demotivated by the threat of sanctions (Newton et al., 2011, in interview). As for personal characteristics and attitude, feeling more motivated towards finding a job may have helped the young people accomplish this task, or make steps towards it such as enrol in training and further education, thereby impacting their ability to actively steer their life course.

Employment, education, and training outcomes

Many of the evaluations gathered data on the number of young adults who moved into employment, education or training during a relatively recent period (3–9 months) after participating in the programme. We report these numbers below. However, it is important to bear in mind that these numbers refer to only those young adults participating in the evaluations, and so are likely to be positively biased. Another issue with interpreting the outcomes is that there were no control groups studied for any of the reviewed programmes.

The percentage of participants in education or training at 6–9 months was fairly varied across programmes, with this being 52% (30 of 58) on the BP Young Leaders programme (Skyblue, 2015), 38% (39 of 98) on ENERTI (McGinn & Sen, 2009),

17% on the BITCI Youth Guarantee (5 of 29) (Fleming, 2015) and 13% (8 of 64) on JobBridge (Doorley, 2015). Of those programmes, JobBridge had the strongest focus on employment, as it was a work-placement with no training component nor specific links to education opportunities. This might explain why participants on JobBridge had the lowest uptake of education pathways. The BITCI Youth Guarantee programme was a fairly short programme focusing on employability skills (taking a 'work-first' approach), which might have steered participants towards employment rather than education and training. ENERTI had a job-specific training component that gave participants opportunities to earn basic qualifications such as a workplace safety certificate, which could have encouraged participants to strive for further educational experiences after the programme, explaining the higher uptake of education compared to JobBridge and the BITCI Youth Guarantee. Finally, the BP Young Leaders specifically sought to build participants' confidence and motivation to change their lives through mentoring and a work placement at the Olympic Games. Through 'opening spaces' for participants in terms of their confidence and world view, BP Young Leaders might have helped their participants form higher career aspirations that could have prompted their pathways into education.

In comparison, the numbers who moved into employment were relatively similar across programmes: SBWA, 45% of 459 (Coleman et al., 2014); JobBridge, 41% of 64 (Doorley, 2015); BITCI Youth Guarantee, 38% of 29 (Fleming, 2015); ENERTI, 38% of 116 (McGinn & Sen, 2009); BP Young Leaders, 36% of 58 (Skyblue, 2015); and the Work Experience Programme, 36% of 1,118 (Coleman et al., 2014). On the Work Programme, the percentage of participants in employment was much lower than the other programmes at 6 months (18% of 4,715), but rose to a comparable percentage (33% of 1,880) at 18 months (Meager et al., 2014), perhaps owing to the mixed age of those participants. Across programmes as discussed earlier, participants felt an increase in motivation to work, which could therefore be a common mechanism of the increased employability documented here. Of the programme evaluations, only Coleman et al. (2014) used multivariate statistical analyses to rigorously examine the factors, which predicted increased employability. There, they found that participants more likely to be in work were female, had higher qualifications, caring responsibilities and lived in more affluent areas; whereas those who were older, male and had poorer employment records were less likely to be in work.

Separate to the evaluations, a large-scale outcome analysis was conducted by McGuiness et al. (2014) who used data from Ireland's Live Register (a list of people signing on for unemployment benefits), and from FÁS to identify a target group of 636 people in Ireland who had signed on for unemployment benefits, then attended some form of work-readiness training. They compared these people with a control group who had not attended a training programme and had a similar mixture of background factors including gender, socioeconomic status and prior educational level. They found that more people exited the Live Register if they attended work-readiness training and that this effect was more pronounced for shorter programmes (3–18 weeks) versus longer ones (especially those longer than 55 weeks). The only exception was for high-level vocational skills training, where more people exited the Live Register if their programmes lasted for longer.

In McGuiness et al.'s (2014) analysis, the programmes that were most strongly associated with leaving unemployment were those that taught basic job searching skills (e.g. CV, job search and interviewing), or high-level vocational skills. Then there was a decreasing magnitude of effect for medium- and low-level vocational skills programmes, and the weakest effect was for generic skills programmes that taught basic work-readiness skills such as health and safety, first aid and driving. These findings fit with observations by the E2E evaluation team that high profile forms of vocational training such as apprenticeships, and training in engineering and teaching, allow participants to become highly specialised and network to their advantage with others in their field, enhancing opportunities for employment, whereas basic skills training prepares unemployed young adults only for entry-level and temporary work, furthering their disadvantage (Simmons, 2009). The findings, however, are also surprising, in documenting the effectiveness, at least in the short term, of programmes using a 'work-first' (Meager et al., 2014) approach where participants are trained in job-search skills. Unfortunately, the programme evaluations gave little detail on the nature of the link between job-search training and employment, highlighting the need for more research in this area.

Discussion

Here we summarise our main findings, by discussing how the reviewed programmes might have offered young people opportunities to develop their work-readiness competencies in young adulthood, in relation to life-course theory (Elder, 1998). This is described in terms of four principles: historical time and place, the timing of lives, linked lives and agency. We explore each with regards to the programme designs and impact on work-readiness competencies, which as we have discussed earlier are taken to be basic skills, higher-order thinking skills, interpersonal and teamwork skills, personal characteristics and attitude, job-specific skills and career motivation (Jones, 1996; Rose et al., 2010; Jackson, 2010; Clark et al., 2013; O'Neil et al., 2014).

Historical time and place

This review focuses on youth unemployment schemes at a particularly significant juncture during which the young people's developmental paths are embedded in and impacted by events and conditions relating to the historical and geographical context (Elder et al., 2004) in Ireland and the UK. There is evidence that geopolitical events and the boom to bust economic cycle altered and shaped the young people's interactions with these schemes and programmes. Through the above review, we can observe that the programme designs and intendant outcomes of moving quickly into employment, are rooted in socio-historical and cultural ideological context. The rise of temporary and low-paid jobs for young people (Marshall & Butler, 2015) is matched by reduced employment opportunities (Chadderton & Colley, 2012), and high levels of youth unemployment across the UK and Ireland (OECD, 2015). This makes it particularly attractive and relevant for governments and other organisations to deliver work-readiness programmes for unemployed young people.

However, this creates somewhat of a no-win situation, where young people on work-readiness programmes are expected to work towards employment and in some cases, can be punished by financial sanctions for not doing so, yet arguably are working towards a wall of reduced opportunity, giving them little social power in a highly-politicised context (Chadderton & Colley, 2012). As documented in this review, this can pressurise young people into taking jobs they do not want and do not feel ready for. Often these jobs require little or no formal training and have more routine and manual foci, such as jobs in retail and warehousing (Maguire, 2010). The tentative evidence from the programmes reviewed here suggest that the young people were interested in beginning a career and willing to engage in further training and education (with high participation rates recorded), but the data highlight that few continued towards educational opportunities, with a majority entering low-paid and part-time employment.

In contrast to the youth labour and training imperatives of the 1970s and 1980s, young people now operate in an 'open' labour market (Maguire, 2010) and arguably are objects rather than subjects of their own futures in a patriarchal 'big brother' approach to work-readiness programme design and implementation. Rainbird (2000) highlights societal, structural and enforcement issues relating to the popular partnership approach in the open labour market, and governmental agendas to support work-place learning opportunities in a lifelong learning agenda. The design of work-readiness programmes needs to be rethought in a society where subcontracting and other mechanisms of market rationality are actively deskilling sectors of the workforce (Rainbird et al., 2011).

The timing of lives

The work-readiness programmes are delivered to young people who are in a period of 'STW transition' (Marshall & Butler, 2015), which is a term used to represent the years between school leaving and moving into a specific career or finding stable employment. In using this term, we acknowledge that there is no clear indicator for when the STW transition ends, and that the term represents a pathway rather than the transfer between two activities per se. During the STW transition, young people are developing their career identities and interests, linking those to ideas about employment, and striving to put those goals into action by negotiating opportunities and barriers in their lives (Lent et al., 1999). For many young people, this may be a highly plastic period for identity and skills development, which the work-readiness programmes may impact. The timing of the transition in young adulthood also brings other pressing issues, such as the need for financial independence and relationships with significant others (Marshall & Butler, 2015) that may influence young adults' programme participation and outcomes.

The timing of the work-readiness programmes *within* the STW transition is an interesting issue that has rarely been discussed. The STW transition can be peppered with different jobs, courses, and spells of unemployment (Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2016). Much can happen to young adults in the years immediately following school completion, making this a time of 'ups and downs, back and forth, exhilarating leaps forward, crushing falls backward, and everything in between' (Marshall & Butler,

2015, p. 330). This makes it difficult to generalise about the effectiveness of the work-readiness programmes, as the preceding experiences and career development pathways of individual young adult participants may be extremely varied. More research on the antecedents of work-readiness programme participation experiences and outcomes is needed. Elder's (1985) understanding of the connections between transitions (life change or event), trajectories (long-term pathways) and interdependencies between different spheres of life such as education, work and family (Hahn, 2016) offers rich ground for research into the timing of work-readiness interventions for young people and their potential to disrupt normative social timetables by occurring too early or too late (Hagestad & Neugarten, 1985; Van Gundy et al., 2016).

Linked lives

Elder (1998) also reminds us that our lives are lived interdependently, impacting our development throughout the life course. Indeed, the provision of work-readiness programmes represents a connection between national and regional organisations such as the government and youth services, programme mentors and employers, and individual young people. As discussed with respect to historical time and place, and the timing of lives, programme providers have a significant impact on young people's lives and life courses, as they offer (and in some cases force them to take up) opportunities to move towards employment. These providers also impact young people's lives through their control of programme design and delivery, namely the components discussed in this review that can impact work-readiness.

   From the programme evaluations, we can observe the great importance of career and work-place mentors on the young adult's programme engagement and outcomes. When mentoring was of high quality, young adults reported mentors identifying and helping them overcome their career barriers, giving them confidence in their ability to forge a career pathway and find work, and helping them understand the complexity of the work environment and develop the necessary skills for success in their work-placements. In this manner, mentors had a strong impact on the development of young people's work-readiness.

   However, there was almost complete silence in the programme evaluations (and online information on designs) about the roles of local communities, families and significant others such as romantic partners, in helping the young people develop their work-readiness competencies. For example, there was no discussion on whether the work-readiness programmes helped the young people develop broader social networks within and outside of their local communities that can help facilitate employment opportunities (Maguire, 2010).

   Only the E2E evaluation reflected on family involvement. There, researchers noted that some parents could be reluctant to engage in their child's participation as they thought the programme was for troubled teens, or would set their child up for failure (Russell et al., 2011); whereas other parents were very supportive of their child's participation (Thompson, 2010). Also, some E2E participants were encouraged to engage in the programme, by aspiring to the higher levels of education and employment held by siblings and friends (Thompson, 2010). Despite the positive parental attitudes described, Thompson (2010) noted that programme advisers were reluctant

to involve parents, as they felt that parents of NEET youth would be unsupportive and obstructive, and that parental involvement was generally inappropriate for this age group.

There is certainly more research needed here, as studies outside of the field of work-readiness and associated training programmes continue to document the close connections between parental involvement and young people's career development. For example, parents can act as role models for career aspirations and choices (Wiese & Freund, 2011), are often the first people their children turn to for careers advice (Witko et al., 2005) and when involved in interventions have positively influenced their children's decisions to take certain career pathways (Harackiewicz et al., 2012).

Agency

As Elder (1994) describes, individuals construct their life course through their choices and actions within the opportunities and constraints of the three principles discussed above. Schoon and Lyons-Amos (2017) have extended Elder's broader references to agency, to a model of agency as psychological volition that shapes and is shaped by social structures, building on Bandura's (2001) social cognitive theory. At the STW transition, young people use their agency to 'carve their pathways to adulthood based on the resources and opportunities available to them' (Schoon & Lyons-Amos, 2016, p. 10), for example by using their goals of finding work to motivate their job searching activities. Below we discuss how the reviewed programmes both helped and hindered young people in this task of carving out their own space.

In general, the programmes appeared to help young people develop their capacity for agency by helping them find employment and develop work-readiness competencies. Many young people mentioned that being on the programmes impacted their career motivation and hopes for the future, through the mentoring process and simply by participating in an employability intervention in general. Theoretically, enhanced career motivation may have helped them find employment that was well fitted to them, for example, by helping them develop their ideas of what they valued in work, and understanding of a job that suits their skills and interests (Sortheix et al., 2013).

The work-experience component of the programmes, when young adults well received it, was also closely linked to the development of work-readiness competencies including interpersonal and teamwork skills, basic skills and job-specific skills. It may have had further undocumented benefits including impacting personal characteristics and attitude, and higher-order thinking skills. Successfully navigating a work placement also gave many young people increased confidence in their ability to manage work and be effective employees. These benefits may also have stemmed from finding a job as an outcome of programme participation, possibly through the mechanism of enhanced generic-skills training in CV writing, job searching and being interviewed. Being on work placements that offered a wage, or finding employment may also have given young people greater agency in their lives, by helping them be more self-sufficient and pay for the resources they required for personal development, for example, paying for driving lessons and buying a car (Maguire, 2010).

However, several components of the work-readiness programmes may also have presented barriers to agency both in the short term and longer term in the life course.

For some programmes, financial sanctions for non-attendance were reported to demotivate participants. These financial sanctions and the requirement to finish programmes within a time window may have channelled some young people into jobs they did not want nor were ready for, possibly putting them on a pathway of low-paid employment that was not a good fit with their skills and interests. Not being paid for work experience also presented a barrier for some young people, who may have made significant sacrifices just to maintain their participation.

The work-readiness programmes also appeared to miss several opportunities for enhancing young people's agency. Only a very few young adults described their programme mentors identifying and helping them remove their barriers to employment, such as drug and alcohol addiction and homelessness. By not addressing these barriers, the chance to help young people move out of challenging circumstances may have been lost and the impact of programmes may have been diminished.

Another lost opportunity for agency development was the lack of focus on high quality vocational education. Although programme mentors may have helped young people think about their career pathways, if there was a bias towards steering young people towards employment in response to programme objectives, this may have prevented young people from planning their careers in a manner that would help them flourish emotionally, personally, socially and economically in the longer term. This has implications for the replication of the working classes (Simmons & Thompson, 2011) and the development of psychological wellbeing across the life course (Schoon et al., 2003).

A final lost opportunity was the chance to purposefully impact young adults' higher-order thinking skills. Being able to make better decisions, solve problems and apply critical and creative thinking, can be at the forefront of agency in the STW transition as young people are faced with a deluge of opportunities and barriers to navigate their career development around (Lent et al., 1999). Higher-order thinking skills are also consistently on employers' lists of desired work-readiness competencies (O'Neil et al., 2014), and are seen as critical for success in occupational and education settings (Camara, 2013). Although young adults may have developed those competencies on the programmes through interactions with mentors, generic skills training and work experience, there was no documented focus on these in the programme designs or evaluations, other than Skyblue (2015).

Conclusions

This review set out to discuss major work-readiness programmes in Ireland and the UK, in relation to Elder's (1998) life-course theory that connects individual development across the life course to socio-historical barriers and opportunities, networks of lives, transition periods and agency. The review is set against a backdrop of work-readiness competencies and examines these in relation to programme designs and outcomes, detailing the connections between programme structures and participants' experiences.

In our discussion on life-course theory, we made four main observations. First, we noted how political and economic influence on programme designs and objectives could shape individual outcomes, both positively and negatively. Second, we argued

that the timing of programmes within young adulthood and during the rollercoaster experience of the STW transition needed more detailed investigation to build the body of knowledge on work-readiness programmes. Third, we discussed the critical role of programme mentors for helping young people develop work-readiness competencies and agency, and the lack of programme involvement of communities, families and significant others. Fourth, we showcased how the programmes could help young people develop agency in young adulthood, prospectively leading to cumulative agency across the life course through carefully managed career pathways. However, the programmes also demonstrated barriers to agency and missed opportunities for developing agency particularly in the work-readiness domains of vocational (job-specific) education and higher-order thinking skills.

In conducting the review, we were struck by the lack of theoretical underpinning and evidence-based decision-making in programme designs. It appeared to us that the programme designers had taken a 'what do we think works', rather than a 'what do we know works' approach. Furthermore, too many programme evaluations reviewed here and elsewhere, have paid scant attention to work-readiness competencies (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2013), demonstrating a lack of awareness of how programme experiences can lead to employment and education outcomes, and a lack of focus on human capital.

These issues may have arisen owing to who was conducting the evaluations and why. Most evaluations were commissioned by the training programme organisers and funders, and focused more on programme satisfaction, value for money and employment outcomes than on human capital. This trend is easy to spot when comparing Government sponsored evaluations, for example, of the UK's Work Programme, with evaluations by academics and organisations oriented towards positive youth development, such as the evaluations of the VTalent Year for the Demos charity and of Job-Bridge for the National Youth Council of Ireland.

The lack of focus on work-readiness competencies, human capital and agency development, may also have stemmed from most of the evaluations escaping rigorous peer review and being published instead as open access reports. This would have negated the requirement for them to link their findings to the literature, meaning that the perspectives on work-readiness and evidence stemming from high quality programme evaluations were easily able to be ignored. This also raises concerns about some evaluations' choice and quality of methods, and degree of objectivity. For example, there were no control groups studied by any of the programme evaluations reviewed. here.

In conclusion, although the literature on work-readiness is rapidly amassing, there is scarce research on how unemployed young adults' work-readiness competencies are developed by national and community training programmes, despite the growing need for this evidence base to inform the design of new and more successful programmes to help prevent widespread youth unemployment in Europe (OECD, 2015). In response, this review of programmes from Ireland and the UK has retrofitted their design components and documented outcomes into the framework of work-readiness competencies and in doing so has uncovered specific benefits of programme participation but also gaps in programme provision, that can impact young adults' development at the STW transition and throughout their life course.

NOTES

[1] See https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-78/pdf/STATUTE-78-Pg508.pdf
[2] See https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobfamily/Pages/default.aspx
[3] See http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/youth-development-internship.aspx
[4] See https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/JobBridge.aspx
[5] See http://equalireland.ie/
[6] See https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-contract-16-and-17-year-olds
[7] See http://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/our-funds/1419-fund
[8] See http://www.tullochan.org/Supporters/our-projects/tullochan-futures
[9] See http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/?lang=en
[10] See http://www.careerswales.com/en/jobs-and-training/job-seeking/vacancy-search/what-is-jobs-growth-wales/
[11] See https://www.delni.gov.uk/

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