

# Bridging the Gap

Supporting young people's transitions  
into good work

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## Background to the research

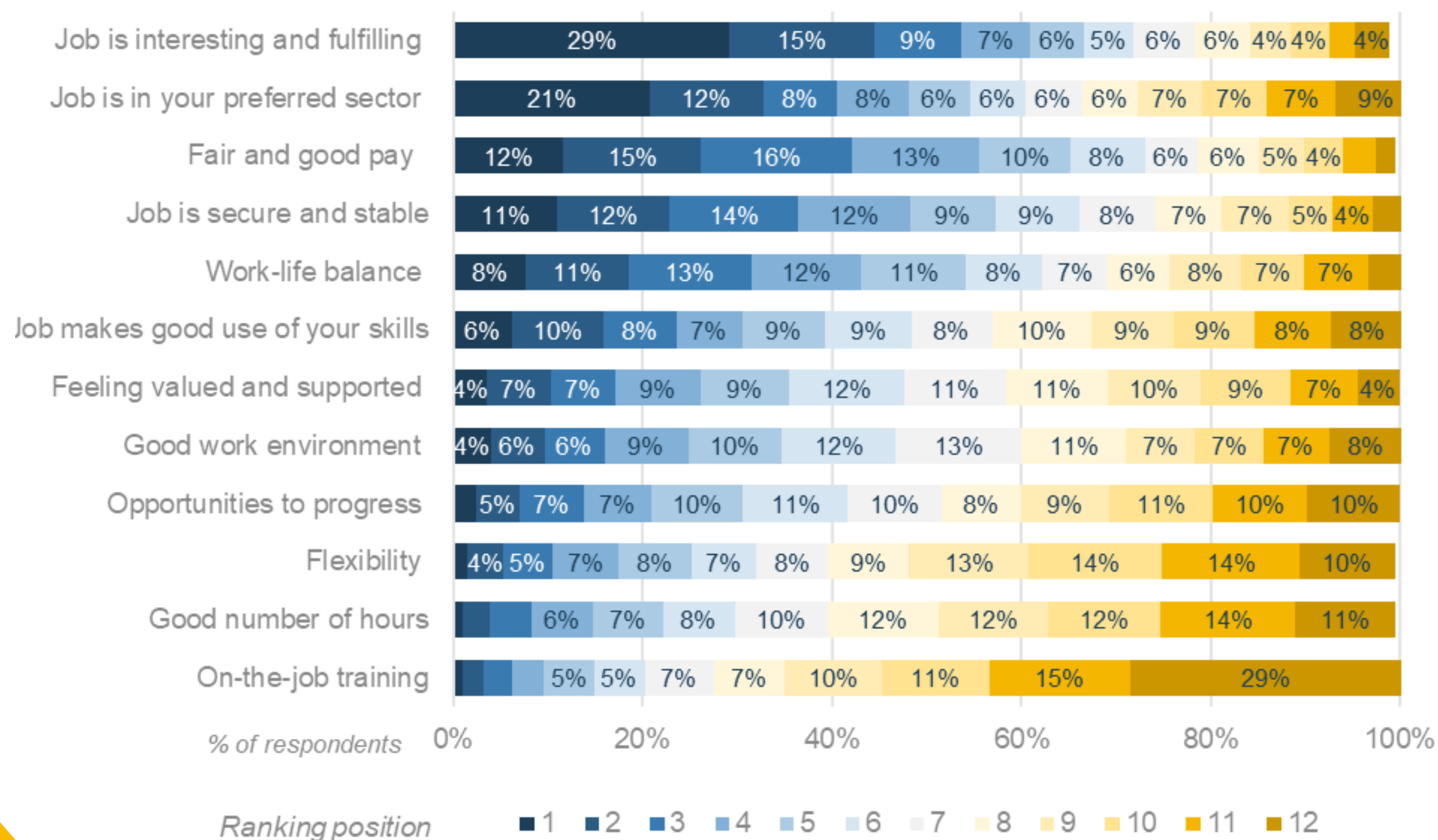
- Part of the Health Foundation's 'Young people future health inquiry'
- Focused on young people's and employers' views and experiences of good quality work and policy asks.
- Mixed methods research across the four UK nations - survey of 1,275 young people and 70 consultations (2021), and survey of 1,000 employers and 40 consultations (2022)





# Young people's views of good work

When defining good quality work, young people prioritise a job which is interesting and fulfilling, is in their preferred sector, and pays fairly



But when talking about the realities of work...

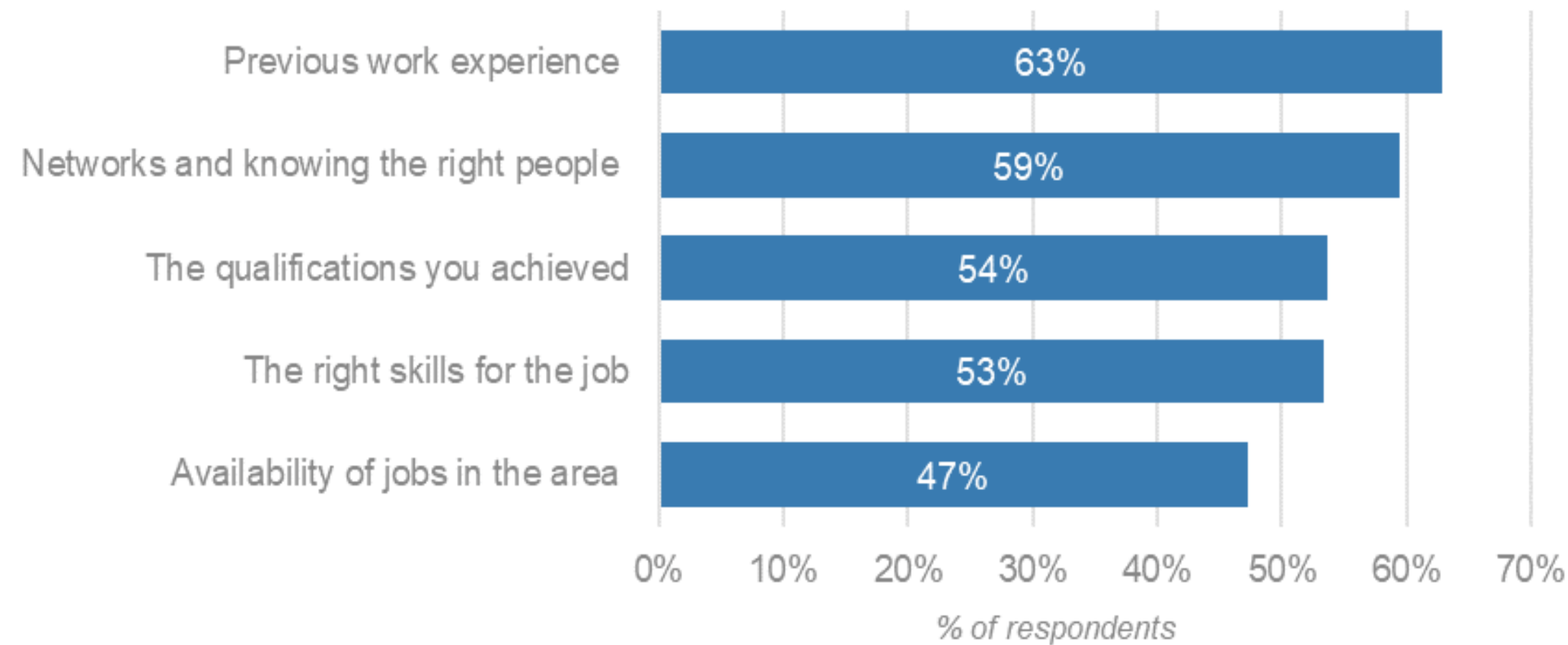
If I needed to, a job's a job. I am in a very *privileged* position where I find my work meaningful and aligned with my values

I was in a desperate position where I really needed work. I went into that job with mindset that I just need to take it regardless of the quality

The jobs available to us are not great, not rewarding. But the type of work we tend to do, you don't do it to feel rewarded, it's just a financial matter

# Factors influencing access to good work

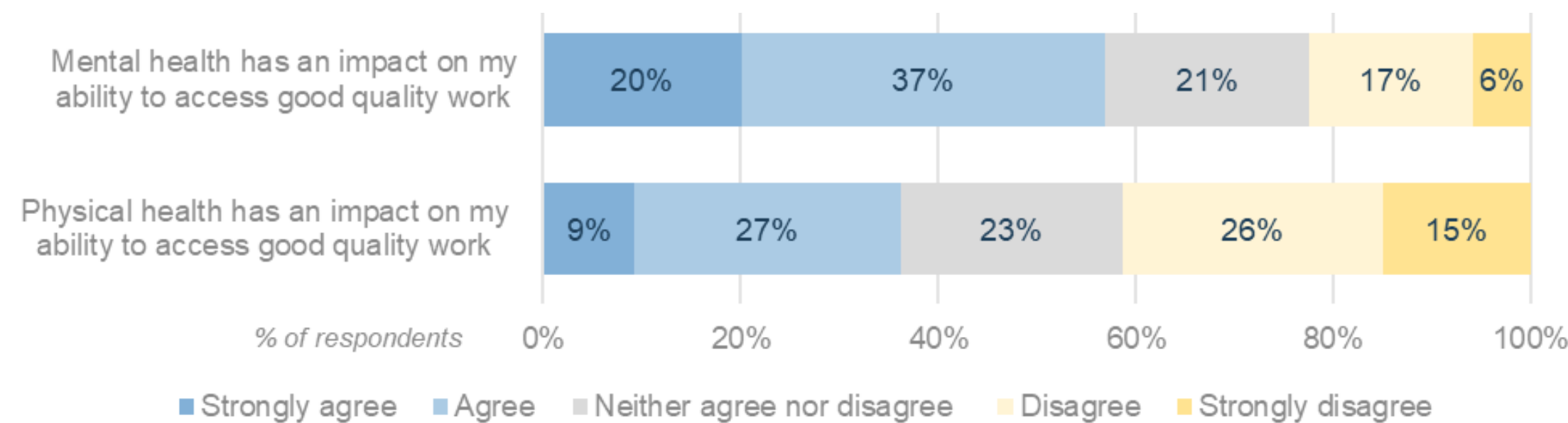
The five most important factors that influence access to good work are:



I applied to seven different places and got nowhere with it. Was only through a family friend with industry connections that I was able to do any work experience

Living in a poor rural village, the [fast food chain] is the only real option here, the nearest big town is one hour by bus. It costs money and takes lots of time

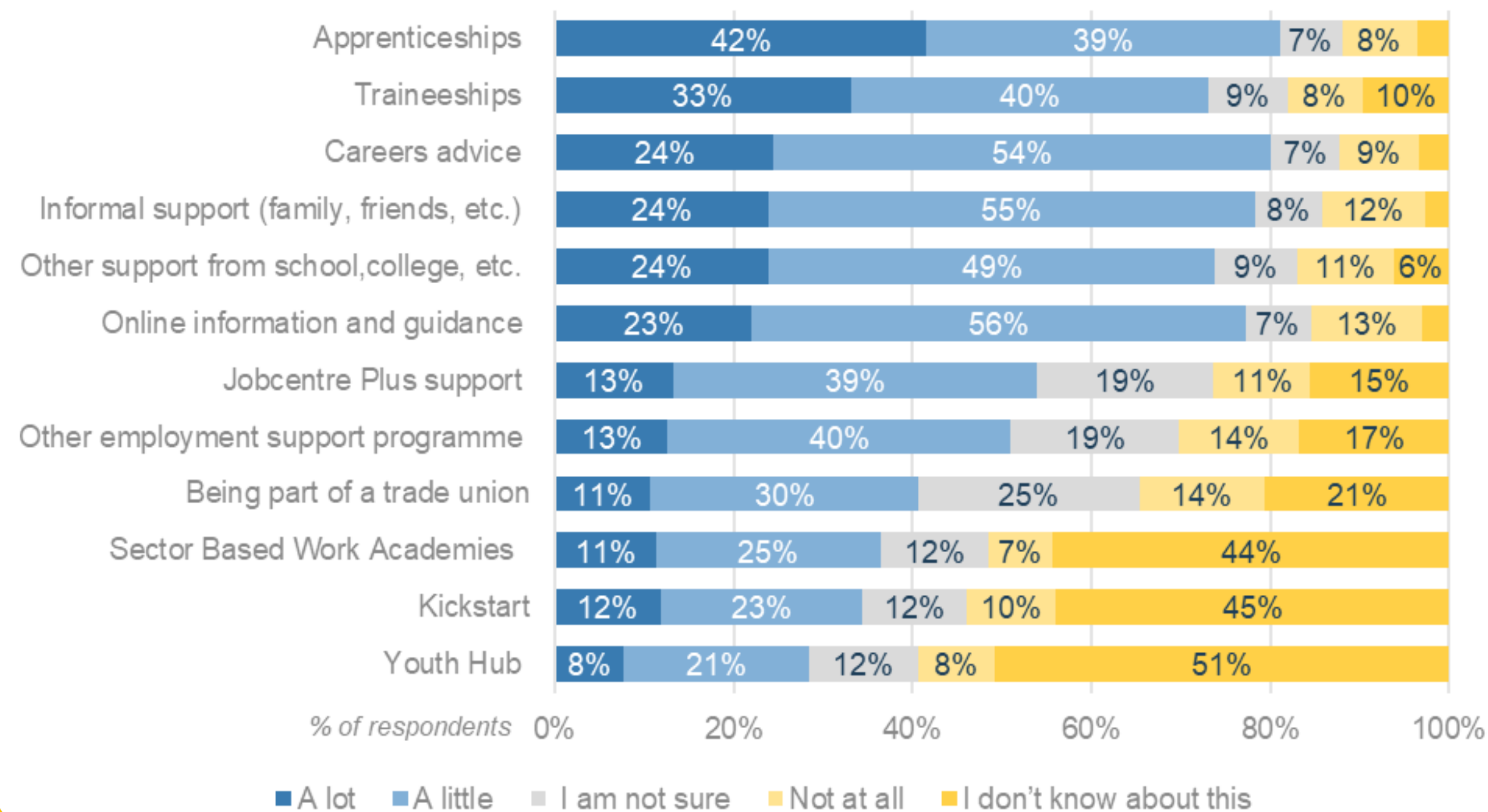
And health plays a major role...



Health conditions can be a big barrier, a lot of employers are not supportive of that. They say they don't discriminate, but they do

# Young people's access to support

The support which is most useful to help access to good work is:



But the support that young people get is not always useful...

I can't remember there being a single workshop that was 'if you don't want to go to university, these are your options'. I had to do the first year of my degree and waste it before discovering apprenticeships

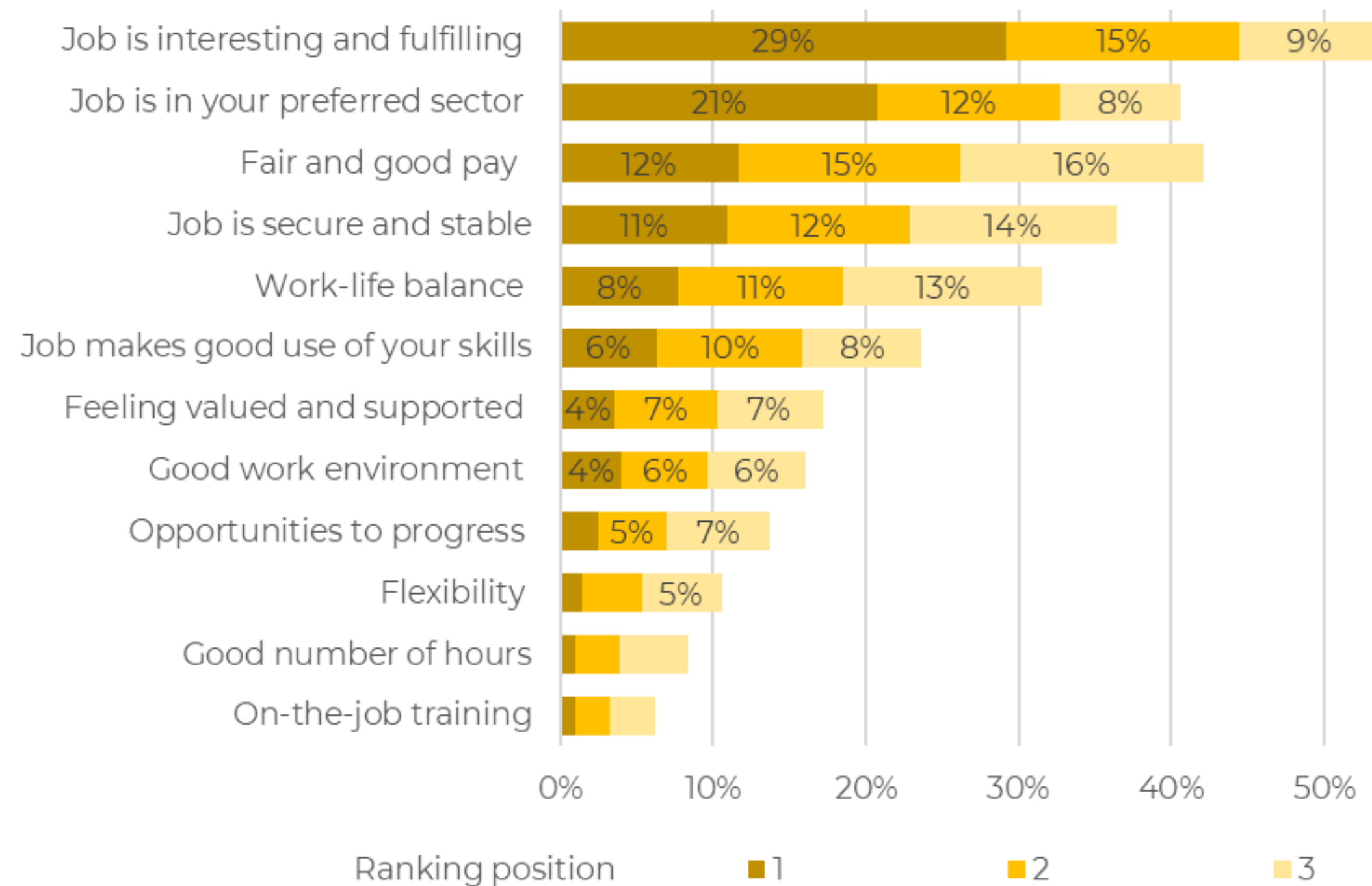
They would ask what I was interested in and I would say maths and they would try and push me down medicine and pharmacy instead

I haven't learnt much from careers people, much more from my own friends and family. At school it was kind of a sort yourself situation

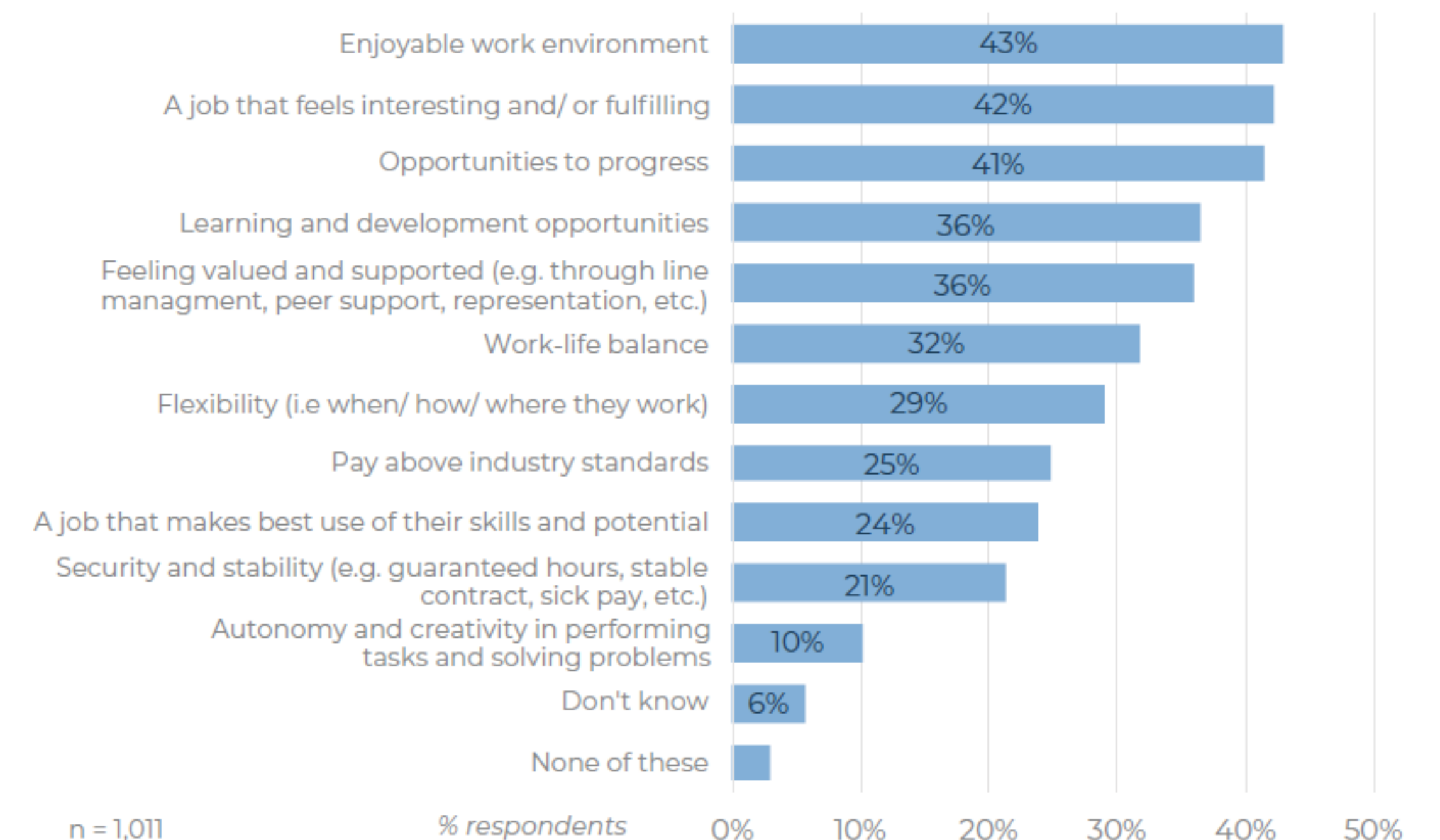


# Employers' views of good work

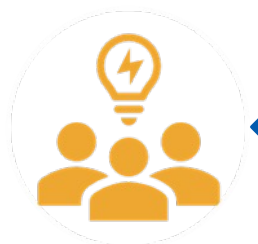
A job which is interesting and fulfilling, is in their preferred sector, and pays fairly are top factors of good work for young people



Only a fourth of employers think pay is key to what young people look for in good work and only a fifth think security is key.



# Employers' offering of good work



Meaningful work

*"Whatever they're doing, they understand that it fulfils a purpose and a need and therefore they are a valuable sort of cog in an overall sort of chain."*

Director, Healthcare, Scotland



Training and development

*"[Funding training and qualifications] is a risk for the company that is very loss-making if they resign, if they improve their profile they might get a better package elsewhere."*

Analyst, Financial Services, England



Workplace environment



Health and wellbeing

*"Being remote and distributed - they report they want more socials, they want to connect to the team, socialise out of work. We struggle with it. It's also hard to bridge gap because we hire a lot of older people with families."*

HR Manager, Information and Communication, England



Voice and recognition



Autonomy and creativity

*"Mental health has become a really big issue and is prevalent all the time, our organisation has put lots of investment in MH first aid. Held lots of MH awareness months and drop ins."*

Head of Customer Service, Charity, England



# Employers' views of barriers faced by young people

Employers think key barriers preventing young people from accessing good work are relevant skills (42%), work experience (36%), and confidence (34%)



*"The challenge is there are so many of them and so little opportunities – I know in general we look for people with experience. If I get 250 applications, I'll prioritise those with experience, it's preferable over having to train from the ground up. They need to make their application stand out. Because we have such a saturated environment, where we have so many applications for that one role."*

Project manager, Healthcare, England

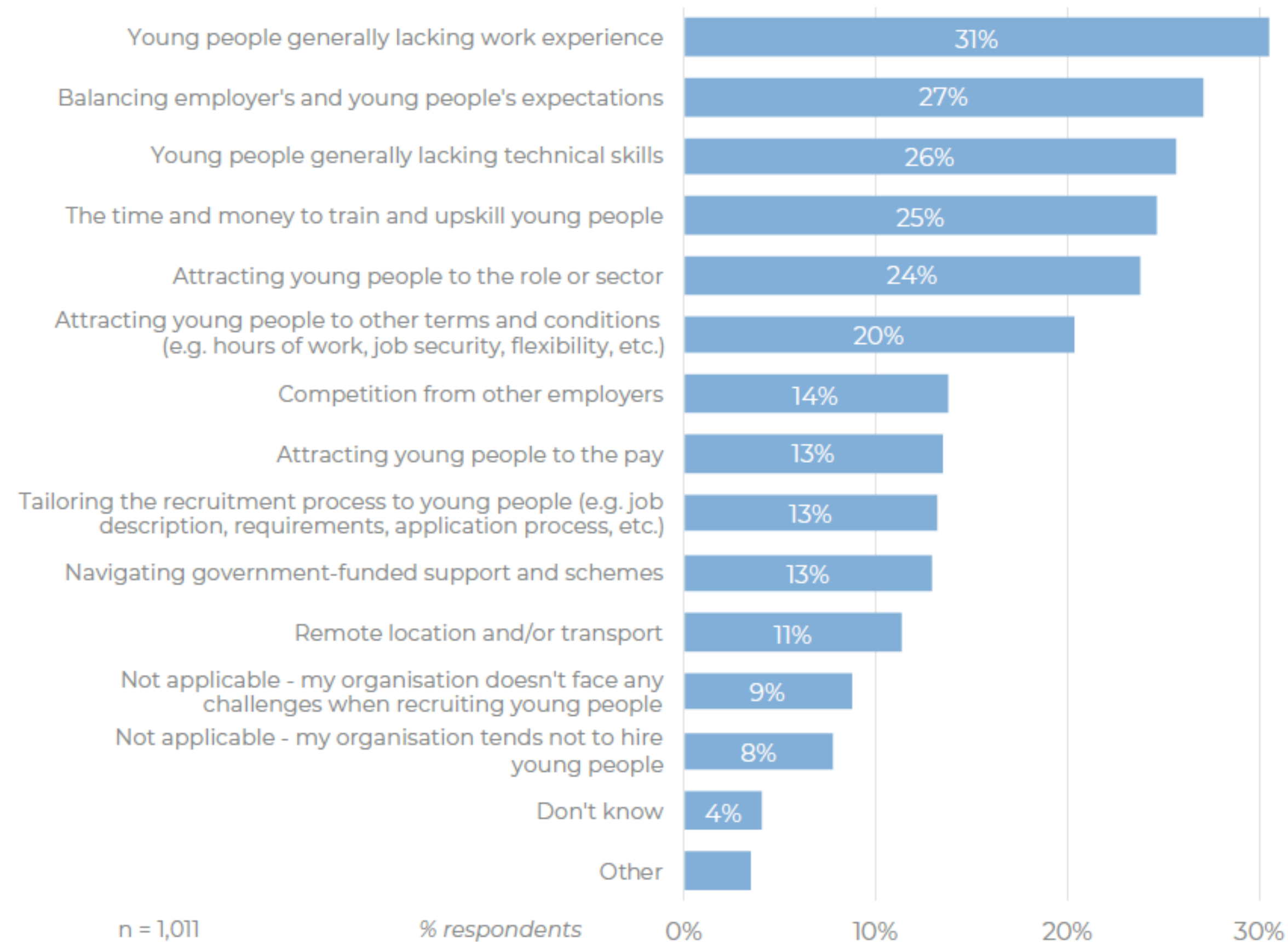
*"Companies don't want to take a gamble at times – when recruiting, I was looking at CVs and was happy to look at those without a job, but I don't think companies are willing to give young people a chance. When you look at a job advert you need experience for anything, even entry level role. You get quite downtrodden by the fact you need experience – you can't get experience if someone doesn't give you a chance."*

Team Leader, Financial Services, Wales



# Challenges in recruitment

Three in ten employers (31%) say young people's lack of work experience is a key struggle they face when recruiting



*"If someone applied from Plymouth then we would absolutely consider them but there is an inherent bias because we have met a bunch of people at the 'Ivy League design schools' before they've even applied because we've been in their lecture halls and end of year shows."*

Design Manager, Consultancy, England

*"I spent two years working for a premier league football club, they used to have 4,000 staff on match day, 3,000 were young people from the local area and they were very difficult to work with... If you asked me, were there great people in there? It was probably one in 10. It was probably down to their background, what were their parents like, their schooling, their teachers. But they were difficult ones."*

Hospitality Manager, HE, England

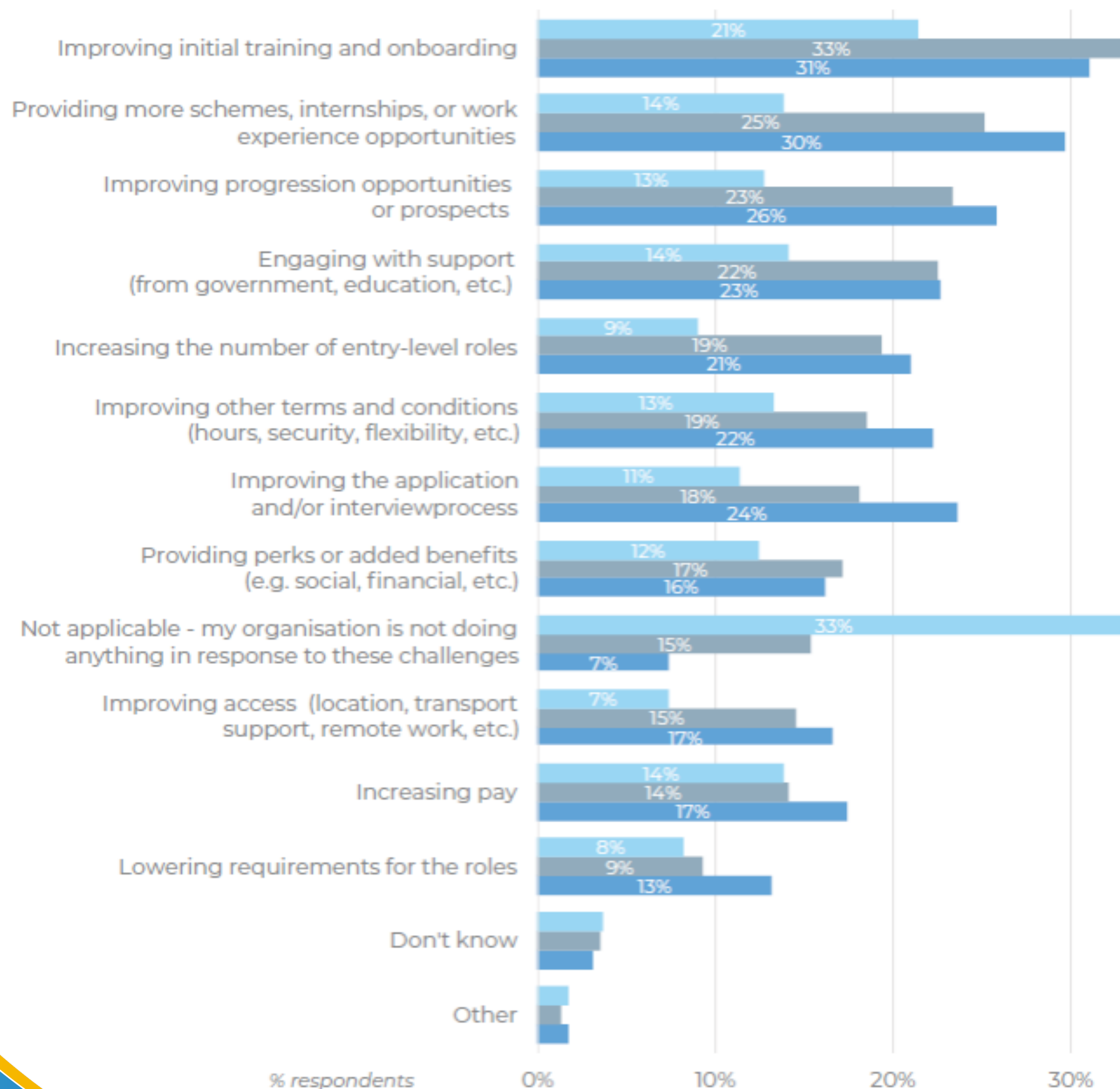
*"They're asking for a lot of money even when they graduated a year or two ago, they want top dollar – they're really pushing on salary which is hard to justify to higher managers."*

Senior Recruiting Partner, Information and Communication, England



# Responses to challenges in recruitment

Employers in small organisations are more likely to not be doing anything to address recruitment challenges (33%) compared to those in medium (15%) and large organisations (7%)



*"We have panel and we keep it diverse. I am a lot for recruiting young talents – but other colleagues quite adamant that they want people with a lot of experience, and it's about changing the mindset around those old school views."*

Project manager, Healthcare, England

*"I would love to work more closely with universities and schools – how we can increase social mobility and diversity as well and people from under-represented backgrounds can see themselves working in our organisations. I would like to see more mentorship schemes – have mentees come together and share experiences."*

Operations Manager, Information and Communication, England

*"Internally we have to do unconscious bias training, we anonymise applications, to create more fair process."*

Operations Manager, Information and communication, England



# Experience of managing young employees



Eagerness to work and learn

*"They require a lot of support where they've not previously worked in a corporate environment – even writing a professional email, you have to teach them about the etiquette of emails. Exposing them to hierarchy, knowing your place is important."*

Project Manager, Healthcare, England



Needing support to adjust to work

*"But young people itch to get ahead, without sometimes understanding the day to day – you've got to understand the basics, build solid foundations to build credibility for whatever else you want to do. People who go way ahead and look for more challenge. Attrition higher if not apprentice – because they want to be promoted and want more money."*

Management Consultant, Financial Services, Scotland



Managing expectations

*"As an employer it's a bit difficult [dealing with mental health issues] – it makes things more difficult for us - how do we cater for this? I'm not a day care. But everything they bring up is very valid, the world of work needs to shift to them. They make a lot of sense but at the same time there's a lot of dealing with emotions. It's difficult – we're relatively lean on resources and we're on growth mode so do not have as many resources."*

Senior Recruiting Partner, Information and Communication, England



Health and Wellbeing



# Good practice when managing young people



Additional support

*"When people come in, they're not really prepared for the world of work. Most of them have university degrees. But that doesn't prepare you to come in the workplace. There's lot of handholding."*

Senior Recruiting Partner, Information and communication, England



Regular communication

*"Biggest enabler is line managers having regular one to ones with the individuals – help individuals avert going down a spiral."*

Head of Organisational Resilience, Healthcare, England



Supporting development

*"Something that worked well – giving them creativity and freedom around using tools, using social media, for marketing. Leading on projects in their areas of interest – these are things we have no knowledge on, they can lead on it and can come back and teach us. I'm learning while you're learning great two-way street."*

Operations Manager, Information and communication, England



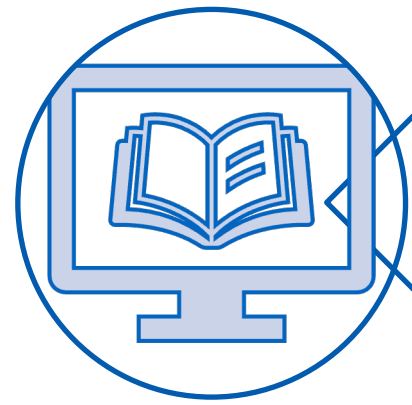
Young managers

*"There's not that much to get out of bed for at the moment for a lot of young people, a lot of prospects are quite bleak with the environment, the financial crisis and austerity, and there's been a little bit of exposure of terrible working practices, but it still goes on. But we are being told that we're lazy and been told that we can't be bothered. And I just think that's such an inaccurate representation of what we're like."*

24-year-old Deputy Restaurant Manager, Hospitality, Wales

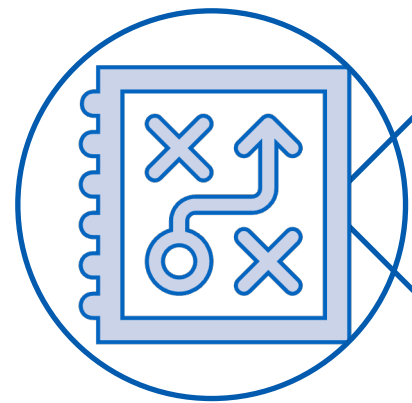


# Future-proofing young people's jobs



## Establishing substantial and coherent support measures.

- Introducing a youth allowance for 18-24 year olds who need financial help while they gain skills, alongside a Youth Guarantee providing a coherent post-16 offer, and intermediate labour markets for long-term unemployed and/or disadvantaged young people,



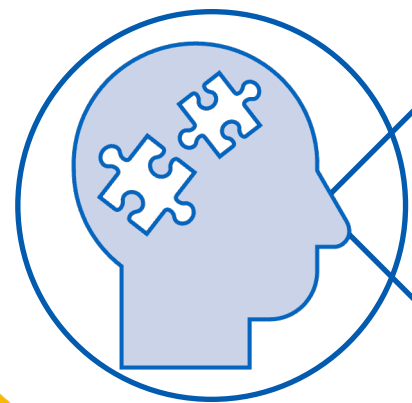
## Rethinking journeys from education to work.

- Investing in enhanced forms of transitions support, and building systematic education-business engagement, promoting a culture shift among employers and making 'best practice' central to recruitment.



## Scaling-up investment in place-based approaches.

- Supporting local businesses to employ young people, supporting young people to enter local businesses and investing in local transport and digital infrastructure.



## Improving mental health support and literacy.

- Supporting young people to build confidence and resilience, supporting employers to develop mental health literacy, developing robust support pathways and normalising mental health.





# Bridging the gap with employers



## Promoting a shift in mindset and practice among employers

Incentivising employers to hire young people

Building better pathways from education to work

Strengthening the role of intermediary organisations



## Addressing discrepancies in culture, perceptions, and expectations

Improving standards of pay for young people

Strengthening young people's voice in the workplace

Supporting youth-friendly business cultures.



## Supporting employers to implement good practice

Learning from good practice

Supporting inclusive practices

Investing in health and wellbeing support.



## Scaling up support for small organisations

Supporting small organisations to access support

Establishing local 'Employer Hubs'

Reforming financial support for small organisations.



# Key resources

