Employment prospects and successful transitions to adulthood: the case of deaf young people
(work in progress)

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Post-school Transitions of People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- One-year project commissioned by the National Deaf Children’s Society

- Aim - to investigate the post-school transition process of deaf young people in Scotland

- Methods:
  - An analysis of policy and legislation
  - An analysis of official statistics
  - In-depth interviews with thirty young people aged 18-24
Context of the research

- Recent economic crisis
- Scottish Government’s efforts to reform post-school transitions policy
- UK Government’s reform of the welfare system
- Equality legislation
Employment rates of working-age disabled people in the UK

SOURCE: SAYCE (2011) BASED ON THE LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 2010 QUARTER 4
Barriers to employment

Punch, Hyde and Creed, 2004:

- lower levels of educational attainment
- attitudinal and environmental barriers
- lower levels of career maturity and decision-making competency

Lack of support and inability to make informed decisions
School leavers’ attainment

SOURCE: ATTAINMENT AND LEAVER DESTINATIONS, SUPPLEMENTARY DATA. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (2013)

Note. This figure shows a selection of all qualifications; therefore reported percentages do not add up to 100.
Destinations of graduates

Barriers to finding and staying in employment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Non-graduates</th>
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<td>Lack of accessibility in applying for work</td>
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<td>Discrimination</td>
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<td>Lack of work experience</td>
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<td>Lack of support in employment</td>
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Lack of accessibility

- Telephone job interviews
- Having to ask for job details over the phone
- Group interviews
- Career fairs
- Group exercises
- Networking lunches
Discrimination

- All deaf jobseekers feared discrimination.

- Non-graduates were more likely to encounter potential employers who held overly negative views of deafness.

- Some non-graduates found that they were more likely to be offered interviews when they did not disclose their deafness in the application forms.
Work experience

- Many graduates had started working with their current employer when they were still at university.

- Non-graduate jobseekers had less work experience than graduates.

- James, 23, car mechanic, jobseeker

  ‘I have made over 200 job applications. Nothing at all.’
Social networks

- Graduates were more likely to find employment through parents, friends and acquaintances

- Non-graduates used more conventional jobseeking methods (i.e., the JobCentre)
  - Few were referred to Disability Employment Advisors
  - Some of those who had Disability Employment Advisors did not find them helpful

‘The DEA is not supportive at all. She just writes reports.’
Support in employment

- Graduates were more knowledgeable about support options in employment.
- Non-graduates were generally less informed about support.
Lack of deaf awareness

- Both graduates and non-graduates encountered difficulties at work because their employers and co-workers were not aware of the communication needs of people who are hard-of-hearing.
Summary

- Both graduate and non-graduate jobseekers encountered some degree of inaccessibility in the application process.
- Both groups feared discrimination – but non-graduates encountered more instances of overt discrimination.
- Both groups encountered attitudinal barriers.
- Non-graduate jobseekers had less work experience.
- Non-graduate jobseekers were less likely to find jobs through parents or friends.
- Non-graduates had less support in employment and training.
Implications

- More career guidance
- Better access to information about support in employment
- More work experience opportunities
- More positive social attitudes towards deafness
Thank you for listening!
If you are interested in further information about the project you can find it at:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/education/rke/centres-groups/creid/projects/postsch-trans-young-hi