Transforming the opportunity of a generation

LifeSkills: First year impact report
May 2014
Foreword

“One in eight young people are currently growing up in a home where neither parent works, and one in ten are not receiving any careers guidance, even when we know that young people who have skills training – such as CV writing or work experience – earn on average up to 18 per cent more than those without. That's why I'm incredibly proud of what LifeSkills has achieved in its first year, particularly when I hear of the 80 per cent that feel more confident interacting with others and the 75 per cent that know what they want to achieve in the next five years. I look forward to seeing LifeSkills continue to develop and grow.”

Karren Brady CBE
LifeSkills Ambassador,
and Chair of the LifeSkills Advisory Council
“Empowering the next generation to move successfully into work and become a part of the economy is vital to the future of the UK. We launched LifeSkills to bring together teachers, businesses, young people and others to make a significant impact to the challenge of youth employment in the UK. LifeSkills aims to give one million young people the skills they need to successfully move from education to the workplace by 2015. One year into this ambitious programme, we asked The Work Foundation to independently review its impact and are delighted to share their findings. Highlights include the transformative influence on increasing confidence of the young people participating, with over 80 per cent saying they felt more confident that they could succeed and 83 per cent now able to identify potential future jobs that match their skills. While this report shows the progress we’ve made, we’re committed to reaching our ambitious goal and to improving employability opportunities for young people.”

Ashok Vaswani
Chief Executive Officer, Barclays Personal and Corporate Banking

“There is ample quantitative and qualitative evidence that LifeSkills is delivering what it intends to accomplish and that it is doing so to a high level. There are positive changes to the behaviour of young people (shown in both self-reported changes in the survey and focus groups, as well as from teacher testimonials) and increases to their confidence, awareness, clarity, knowledge and abilities are well-documented. LifeSkills could – and ideally would – be an on-going part of the curriculum, supporting UK students in their school to work transitions. Students and teachers both hope that this is a programme that is here to stay.”

Will Hutton
Chair of the Big Innovation Centre at The Work Foundation
The LifeSkills Programme

Since the recession, Britain has had the sharpest rise in youth unemployment in the G8.

Today, over 850,000 young people are unemployed, with thousands of students in education unable to obtain real experience of the world of work.

Businesses are unable to find candidates with suitable training for their roles.

Changes to funding and responsibilities have significantly impacted the delivery of careers guidance in schools. Many teachers have been seeking additional help and tools for their students to build their employability skills.

If not addressed, these concerns could have serious, and potentially lasting, implications for society, the individuals themselves and for the UK’s economy.

LifeSkills was established to help each of these audiences and make a clear difference to the challenges they face.

Consisting of free, curriculum-linked resources and workshops for schools, online content so young people can access materials outside of the classroom, work experience opportunities, and advice for businesses on how to take on an apprentice or trainee, the programme has benefitted close to 410,000 young people aged 11-19 in its first year.

The Work Foundation’s independent evaluation found that LifeSkills has made a significant difference to the schools it is used in, with teachers commenting it is versatile enough to be implemented all year round and tailored to the parts students most need. It has also built the confidence of young participants, both making them feel more positive about future career aspirations, and as such more open to learning how they can get there.

“Overall, the LifeSkills programme appears to be giving young people a sense of hope, enthusiasm and optimism for the future and its possibilities. Young people are seeing a rise in personal confidence and self-esteem after engaging with LifeSkills, which is having positive knock-on effects on the more immediate outcomes of day-to-day behaviour across all three skill sets.”

The Work Foundation

1 http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2119176/education_and_skills_survey_2013.pdf
Achievements in numbers

Young people reported that the programme had made them better or much better at:

- **87%** Handling new situations and new people confidently
- **75%** Understanding what they wanted to achieve in the next five years
- **82%** Understanding the types of sectors and industries that they would like to work in
- **83%** Having awareness of the range of jobs available that match their interests
- **83%** Having the ability to convey their strengths to others
- **74%** Understanding when they can afford something or when they should wait to buy it

Widening access to work experience and apprenticeships:

- **1,499** Businesses signed up
- **9,441** Work experience opportunities offered
- **166** Number of apprentice starts

Delivering LifeSkills:

- **6,619** Teachers registered on the programme: representing 51 per cent of all UK secondary schools and thousands of other institutions such as FE Colleges, charities and youth groups
- **11,882** Volunteers registered to run sessions
- **510** Volunteer led workshop sessions run
- **192** Volunteer led workshops booked for the rest of 2014 and into 2015
- **17,930** Young people reached by our charity partners

Young people engaged:

- **409,666**
  - **364,512** In the classroom and volunteer workshops
  - **45,154** Online

barclayslifeskills.com
LifeSkills in the classroom

Teachers can access free, non-branded resources and Barclays volunteer workshops that include a mix of practical job-hunting and interpersonal skills across three different areas:

- **People Skills**: including self-awareness and self-confidence
- **Work Skills**: write a CV, personal presentation and contacting employers
- **Money Skills**: essential financial education such as budgeting and money management

Resources have been written by teachers and each deliver key skills which align to both relevant curricula and employers’ needs.

**Independently endorsed**

LifeSkills is the first education programme ever to be endorsed by City & Guilds. This provides an independent quality mark on the resources that have been developed.

Chris Jones, Chief Executive at City & Guilds, said:

“At City & Guilds, we’re all about jobs and there has been so much evidence showing how young people aren’t ready for the world of work. It’s vital we act now to change this so we can equip both young people and businesses with the skills they need for future success. That’s why we’ve partnered with Barclays to endorse the LifeSkills programme. We truly believe that LifeSkills can make a huge difference to young people as they progress in their careers.”

**LifeSkills in the classroom statistics:**

- **41,892** Young people reached through volunteer led workshops
- **5,142** Registered schools and other educational institutions
- **322,620** Young people taught LifeSkills by a teacher

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Teacher stories

“The session was well delivered, the range of activities were appropriate for the age group and sessions were varied for the different level of learners. All volunteers were providing valuable information...Students enjoyed the session and gained a lot of knowledge from the speakers. They were given opportunities to ask any questions and everyone had opportunity to get involved in the activities. The speakers shared good practise and tips that the students will use in future interviews.”

“I’m very happy to say strongly that it’s making a difference to my students. It’s nice to be seeing a world class organisation, Barclays, saying that what they want are people with these skills. I can say to my students, look at what they’re investing in. This is significant if Barclays is saying this is important. And that kudos helps [students to sit up and take notice].”

[Since the LifeSkills programme], the students are a little bit more open [to being optimistic about the future]. LifeSkills plays a strong part in that. The framework, the outcomes, the focus, enables them to see building blocks going into place, which means that so much of what we’re doing has so much more traction. So, when you ask, is it because of LifeSkills [that students are more optimistic], it plays a very big part. What we’re doing would be so much more difficult without programmes like LifeSkills in place. I would attribute a very large part [of their openness to optimism] to it.”

Muzammil Ali
Teacher at Halesowen School (speaking to The Work Foundation)

“The [volunteer led] sessions were wonderfully run, interesting and extremely useful. We ask our students for feedback and the Barclays LifeSkills session received 95 per cent satisfaction with the session, with 64 per cent giving it the highest rating...”

Jane Angell
Teacher at Woking College
A career teacher’s story

“LifeSkills volunteers have come into school to deliver numerous workshops to my students – including work skills and money skills activities. The co-ordination and organisation of workshops was fantastic – so quick and easy, and volunteers were great and very knowledgeable. Lesson plans are fantastic, and carefully tailored for different age groups. I can’t believe that this programme is free – I recommend other teachers to get involved.”

Anne Morley
Careers Mentor,
The Sir Robert Woodard Academy
LifeSkills impact on young people

Quotes from young people

“[I learned] how to work around people if there’s a personality clash and if you don’t like the person—how to work around it and get on.”

“I didn’t know what a mortgage is and now I know how you can get one.”

“I thought all I could do was be a hairdresser. But now I think maybe I can do something else.”

“[I’ve learned] how to evaluate myself—not to put myself down about all the things you can’t do, but to instead know the skills you have and to know how to use them more, to put them [to use] into jobs. I’ve learned not to be as critical of myself.”

“[I didn’t know if I] needed to wear a suit to all job interviews, even in construction, but now I do.”

Older respondents reported greater improvements across the majority of skills domains compared to younger respondents.
LifeSkills in action: Mohammed’s story

Mohammed’s dream is to pursue a career in banking. But, growing up in Bradford and knowing how competitive the industry is, he didn’t believe that this was an option for him.

That’s why, when he heard about LifeSkills in a school assembly, he was instantly interested to learn more. He felt LifeSkills was different to other extra-curricular support he’d heard about because it provided direct help in developing the skills that businesses looked for as well as access to work experience.

Mohammed has also been matched to work experience in a local Barclays branch during his summer break.

“It’s difficult to know what skills you’ll need when you leave school. I have friends in university that are struggling to get work experience but we’re always told that without it we might not be able to get work. That’s why I was interested in getting involved in LifeSkills. I’ve learnt lots of new skills, but it’s also given me an easy way to set up work experience and look at things from a slightly different angle.”

Mohammed
Programme delivery essentials: engaging experts

To ensure that the programme is making a difference in more deprived or challenged communities, LifeSkills has partnered with expert charities Free the Children and The Transformation Trust to deliver school sessions, and will be working with another two charity partners in the summer to cover areas of Scotland and Wales.

We aim to reach over 80,000 young people, in 330 institutions across the UK in this way by summer 2015, with sessions delivered so far to over 18,000 young people.

Through its work with charity partners, LifeSkills also supports Barclays global commitment of ‘5 Million Young Futures’ which will enhance the enterprise, employability and financial skills of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

“Barclays and Free The Children are passionate about ensuring all young people, regardless of their background, are able to reach their full potential and successfully transition from education to employment. Free The Children is proud to deliver the LifeSkills programme in 115 schools across Lancashire, Tyneside, Merseyside and Glasgow to ensure that all students are equipped with the necessary skills to succeed. We bring money, people and work skills to life with free interactive workshops and inspirational talks in schools. Designed to engage all abilities of student, Free The Children inspire young people to take control of their own futures, create their own opportunities and nurture the skills they need to get that all important first job.”

Joseph Gridley
Free the Children UK
Programme delivery essentials: lessons learnt

The Work Foundation identified six essential ways to successfully deliver the programme. These are helping to shape our future programme design:

- **Small groups**: Across all schools, the use of small groups (either in student teamwork, or in student groups led by an adult) was essential to the learning and reinforcement of information. This was particularly important for more reserved and reticent students, as well as for learning and practicing work related skills, such as how to perform well in an interview.

- **Activities and a high-level of interaction**: Activities that keep students engaged are very popular and successful in helping with information recall.

- **Review & repetition**: It is not enough for young people to see or hear the information once. Delivering material in different ways including in class and online is best for both outcomes and impacts.

- **Practice with an external professional**: Barclays volunteers working with students is very important. Many of the students and teachers felt the advice and guidance held greater significance coming from someone from the “real working world” outside of school. The teachers working in deprived areas also felt that this contact was significant because many of their students “do not have strong adult role models in their lives”.

- **LifeSkills website use**: The website was praised by teachers and students for its ease of use and its contents, in particular the CV and cover letter writing sections.

Students and teachers expressed confidence-building as making a big difference to behavioural changes and in helping to achieve positive effects across other areas of learning.
“Employers consistently say that they are concerned that young people often lack the right skills when they apply for a job, so it is great that Barclays has taken the initiative with its LifeSkills programme.”

Matthew Hancock MP
Skills Minister
Opportunities at the heart of LifeSkills

Research from the Education and Employers Taskforce (March 2013) demonstrates that the more interactions a young person has with a business, the more likely they are to move into employment. LifeSkills aims to support businesses to offer both work experience and apprenticeships, increasing the number of opportunities available for young people to understand the world of work.

The Work Foundation Report found that teachers want a varied mix of work experience opportunities available for their students from as wide a range of employers as possible.

Some 1500 businesses have signed up to offer young people work experience, apprenticeship or traineeship opportunities via LifeSkills, including ISS, Hilton Hotels and KPMG and small and medium sized businesses up and down the country.

Richard Sykes, CEO, ISS UK & Ireland commented:

“ISS is delighted to be associated with the launch of the LifeSkills programme. As the fourth largest private employer in the world, it’s important that we support such initiatives. The growing facilities management sector is bucking the economic trend and can make a real difference in helping to get UK PLC back on its feet. As a company we’re passionate about helping young people to bridge the gap between education and the workplace.”

“There might be jobs you want to do, but your personality won’t fit it, so you won’t be as happy in it.”

Young person interviewed

“I’m really happy with my apprentice and the college… He’s keen, always here on time and willing to learn… I’ll see how this one goes, but I’d love to take on more apprentices in future.”

Steve Dewe
Small Business Owner

“I think work experience is one of the most important things a school can do. The students meet people who provide clear mentoring advice which they bring back into school with them. The more the gap between school and work can be closed, the better it is for both parties.”

Chris Dunne
Retired Headteacher at Langdon Park School and LifeSkills Advisory Council member

2 http://www.educationandemployers.org/research/taskforce-publications/its-who-you-meet/
Collaboration of the programme

The issues of youth employability are too many and too large for Barclays to tackle alone. That is why LifeSkills is designed to enable young people, businesses and education providers to find solutions together.

This isn’t the end of the journey. The Work Foundation Report and feedback from young people and teachers will continue to shape and develop the programme and ensure it meets its objective to reach over one million young people by the end of 2015, and other future goals.

LifeSkills External Advisory Council

The success of LifeSkills depends to a large extent on how well the programme is able to unite different stakeholder groups. To ensure that the programme is both informed and led by the needs of these groups, the LifeSkills Advisory Council was created. Meeting bi-annually, the Council brings together key influencers in education and business to identify and examine the issues young people face when moving from education into employment, and crucially, to make recommendations for improvements within the LifeSkills programme and beyond.

A broad range of viewpoints leads to effective discussions on the best way to develop and deliver activity. Representatives from the CBI, FSB, Education and Employers Taskforce and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers sit alongside businesses and charities. In 2014 young people will also be recruited to take part in the Council.

Key Council recommendations that have been delivered so far include; the programme providing external recognition for young people participating in LifeSkills through a City & Guilds endorsement; the extension of the programme to FE colleges; and the development of materials to promote the work of participating schools and businesses in Barclays branches, which will be delivered later in 2014.
Report cites text from the LifeSkills, created with Barclays Evaluation
Tiffany Tsang, Lizzie Crowley, Nye Cominetti, Katy Jones and Ben Reid
The Work Foundation
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For more information or to tell us how you’ve used LifeSkills:
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