

Young men on the margins of work

An overview report

Pamela Meadows

The **Joseph Rowntree Foundation** has supported this project as part of its programme of research and innovative development projects, which it hopes will be of value to policy makers and practitioners. The facts presented and views expressed in this report are, however, those of the author and not necessarily those of the Foundation.

© Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2001

All rights reserved

Published for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation by YPS

ISBN 1 84263 022 9

Work and Opportunity Series No. 23

Cover design by Adkins Design

Prepared and printed by:

York Publishing Services Ltd

64 Hallfield Road

Laythorpe

York YO31 7ZQ

Tel: 01904 431213; Fax: 01904 430868; Website: www.yps-publishing.co.uk

Contents

Acknowledgements	Page iv
Summary	v
1 Introduction	1
2 Young men's initial entry to employment	4
3 The transition to economic independence	8
4 Education	11
5 Unemployment and early labour market failure	17
6 The importance of family support	22
7 Lack of knowledge of the world of work	27
8 Work incentives	28
9 Young men on the margins	29
10 Conclusions	32
Notes	34
References	35

Acknowledgements

My first debt is to the researchers whose work is reviewed in this report. An overview of this kind can never do full justice to their findings, and I would urge interested readers to discover the detail in the original sources. Many of the researchers came together at a workshop in London in November 1999, and the ideas that they shared with each other there were also very helpful in clarifying the key issues.

I would also like to thank Dominic Hurley, Pat Kneen, John Low and Paul Ormerod for helpful comments on the draft. They have helped to sharpen up some of the points and have added additional context. They are not responsible for any errors, either of fact or of interpretation.

Summary

This book is a review of the findings from a series of research projects funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which look at young men's experience in the labour market during the 1990s. The projects took place against a background in the mid-1990s which indicated that the labour market had undergone changes in industrial and occupational structures that appeared to work to the disadvantage of young men. Employers seemed to be concentrating their recruitment on women and those over the age of 25. This was leaving young men increasingly isolated from mainstream society. In particular, they did not seem to be in a position to take on family responsibilities. In retrospect these fears seem to have been overdone. Although the economy has experienced structural change, most young men have managed to find a place in the workforce.

Education has come to play a more important part in labour market outcomes. Those with qualifications are less likely to become unemployed. Qualifications also have an important influence on the type of job someone does and on their level of earnings. The higher the level of the qualification, the stronger the effect. Education clearly pays. Moreover, it pays for everyone. For example, although young men from some (but not all) minority ethnic groups earn less than young white men, those who have qualifications earn more than those who do not. More significantly, there are now few routes into skilled and well-paid work available to young men without qualifications. This is in marked contrast with the past.

An examination of the pattern of educational outcomes over the past 15 years shows that although young men have shown some

improvements in their standards of attainment, young women's improvements have been greater, and the gap between the two is still growing. The reasons for this are not fully understood, but the research reviewed here reveals that some young men feel their schooldays were a wasted opportunity. They were caught up in social groups where the norm was not to strive for academic success. It is an important challenge for our schools to try and change these patterns of behaviour. One possibility might be to encourage the young men with regrets to share their views and experiences with boys still at school.

The pattern of young people's entry into the labour market has become more complex. Instead of a single transition from school to work, a variety of routes has emerged including various combinations of education, full- or part-time work, training, unemployment and other forms of inactivity. The use of friends, relatives and social contacts as a means of getting jobs remains very important to young people and is attractive to employers. However, this works to the disadvantage of those who are outside these networks, because their parents and friends are unemployed, because they have lost contact with their family or because they have a bad reputation or criminal record.

It is harder for young people to maintain a separate household than it was during the 1970s. The relative earnings of those under 25 have fallen and it is no longer possible for most young men to be sole breadwinners. Conversely, there is evidence that young people who have support (financial, emotional, resources or advice) from their families, or from other adults who take on a quasi-parental role, have better labour market prospects than those who are

similarly qualified who do not. They are less likely to be unemployed and if they become unemployed they get back to work more quickly. Young people who live alone have markedly worse labour market prospects than those who live with their families. At present there are no policies that encourage families to maintain support for their young adult children, and several (for example, non-dependant deductions from housing benefit) which work against it. However, those who are not living at home may not have the option of living with their parents. They may have been in local authority care, have been abused or have otherwise become estranged from their parents. Thus, even with greater official encouragement, it may not be a realistic option for many young people.

Although most young men are succeeding in making the transition to adult life, a minority are ill prepared for the world of work. They do not understand what people do at work, how to dress or how to interact with other people. Some do not understand the need to accept orders. While schools, colleges and careers advisers are educating most young people for adult life, they are failing to do so for a minority. But this failure has wider repercussions. It influences the perceptions of employers about the suitability of all young people, not just the individuals concerned. This in turn leads them to prefer workers who have previous experience, which puts young labour market entrants at a disadvantage.

Young people who are failing to integrate into work successfully, fall into two groups. The first consists of those who drift between unemployment and short-term jobs, who may need better-targeted advice and support in

planning their careers and gaining qualifications. The second group consists of those who have overlapping disadvantages, and who are at risk of social exclusion, if they are not already effectively excluded. This last group tend to have more than one of the following problems:

- no qualifications
- poor basic skills
- a history of truancy while at school
- poor interpersonal skills
- housing problems
- physical or mental health problems
- misuse of alcohol or drugs
- no family or other social support networks
- a history of offending behaviour.

Since the research reviewed here was undertaken, the Social Exclusion Unit has recognised the importance of many of these issues in the report of its Policy Action Team 12, *Young People*. The evidence cited in this report, taken together with that reviewed here, suggests that young men with complex and multiple disadvantages constitute between 5 and 10 per cent of the age group. They are thus a small, but not insignificant minority.

Existing sources of help or support available to these young men, including the New Deal, have tended not to address their full range of problems. Although they are only a minority, they represent a major challenge. A route into employment will be an important way for them to become more closely integrated into the

mainstream of society. But if they are to be able to keep their jobs, they will need help in addressing some of their other problems at the same time.

The geographical coverage of the studies varied. Some covered the whole of Great Britain. Others looked at small areas in rural Scotland. However, with a small number of exceptions, the research findings were common to different kinds of area. There were no features of the

Scottish labour market which were not present in England. There were few features of rural labour markets which were not also found in towns. The main exception was the more limited range of job opportunities available in rural areas, which restricts the choices for everyone, not just young people, and greater emphasis in rural areas on access to transport – something which in urban areas tends to be taken for granted.

1 Introduction

This book consists of an overview of research findings related to young men in the labour market funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. They were mainly funded under the Foundation's research programme on Work and Opportunity, but some other projects which touched on the same issues have been included.

In the mid-1990s there were signs that the labour market had undergone a profound shift. The recession had produced a marked increase in male unemployment, particularly among those over 50 and those under 25. Women's unemployment had also risen, but to a much lesser extent. Women appeared to be the main beneficiaries of a number of trends: they were an increasing proportion of those qualified to enter management and professional jobs, especially the male-dominated professions such as the law, accountancy and medicine. There had also been a continued expansion of relatively low level jobs in the service sector of a kind which had traditionally recruited women: work in retailing, hotels and catering and care of the elderly. Many of these jobs, providing services to individual consumers at particular times of the day or week, were, of their very nature, likely to be part-time.

For men, especially those who were heads of household, these jobs did not provide a route out of unemployment. They did not pay enough to support a family, but they disqualified their occupants from eligibility for income-related benefits. They also required a profound shift in views about the kind of work that might be thought to be suitable for different people to do. For men accustomed to working in mining, heavy manufacturing or construction, the move to the service sector was felt by observers to represent a threat to their self-image. The

conventional wisdom was that men would not do women's jobs.

Young men leaving full-time education seemed to be confronted with markedly worse prospects than their parents or older siblings, but they also seemed to be facing greater challenges than their female peers. Well-educated young women were providing serious competition for what were previously male jobs. Manufacturing, mining, construction and the armed services – all traditionally sources of work for young men whose main asset was their physical prowess rather than their educational qualifications – were all in relative, if not always absolute, decline.

New entrants to the labour market always do less well than incumbents at times of rising unemployment. Employers' first response to a slowdown in demand is to use natural wastage: in other words they do not recruit to replace people who leave through retirement or resignation. This has an adverse impact on those who have not yet obtained a job, although it obviously works to the advantage of those who are already employed. In addition, where employers have to resort to redundancies, they often pursue a strategy of last-in-first-out, so that the youngest employees with the shortest service tend to be the first to go. But they are not the only ones who lose their jobs. In some organisations redundancies of experienced workers occur. This means that the young new labour market entrants are competing for the limited number of jobs available with older people with work experience. Other things being equal, employers will tend to recruit the more experienced candidates in preference to those with little or no work experience. Again, young people are at a disadvantage.

In addition to these standard cyclical problems, during the 1990s a new feature seemed to be emerging: where employers were recruiting young people, they seemed to prefer to recruit young women rather than young men. Jobs in the 1990s increasingly required social and inter-personal skills, which tend to be better developed in young women, who mature earlier than young men do. This meant that in jobs where young women and men have both traditionally been recruited – clerical work and retailing, for example – there were signs of a shift in these jobs towards a greater proportion of young women.

Against this background, a growing gap was also emerging between the educational attainments of girls and boys. Girls had always outperformed boys at the eleven plus, but at age 16 and beyond boys had traditionally done better. By the 1990s, not only had girls overtaken boys at the age of 16, but the gap between the two was widening. This pattern then spread to A-levels as well. The fact of relative male underachievement at school was established, but the cause was unclear. One possible explanation put forward was that the boys had become demoralised in the face of competition for jobs from girls and from older, more experienced workers. As we shall see later, this explanation ignored the fact that boys' performance was also improving: it was just not improving as rapidly as that of girls. The gap did not reflect deteriorating absolute performance on the part of boys.

The studies on which this book draws took place against this background. They were seeking to investigate whether, and if so in what way, the labour market had turned against young men. They were designed to look at

competition from other groups, at young men's attitudes towards work, and to the relationship between educational achievements and labour market outcomes. Some of them had a different central objective, but nevertheless contain a good deal of useful information about young men's labour market experience.

The concern with the labour market prospects of young men in particular comes from a number of sources. Young men have traditionally been responsible for most criminal activity, and there have been suggestions that unemployment among this group is associated with an increase in offending behaviour. Typically UK studies have found that young people are two to three times as likely to commit offences when not engaged in work, education or training than when they are. However, this does not imply that the direction of causality is only one way, since young men with criminal records find it more difficult than others to get regular employment.

However, even without this evidence, there are legitimate social concerns about the prospect of having young men with little or no income and with time on their hands. There are also issues of equity: some young men seemed to be heading for exclusion from the general social and economic life of their communities because of an accident of the timing of when they reached school leaving age. Those five years older had had a reasonable start in life, but the current generation of young men seemed to be denied many of life's chances. There were fears in some quarters that there were risks of young men becoming an underclass: disengaged from the life of the community and engaged in criminal or anti-social behaviour.

A second source of concern was the inability

of young men with poor job prospects to take on family responsibilities – and indeed the unwillingness of young women to regard them as suitable long-term partners. The combined effects of the benefit system and the labour market seemed to be providing incentives to young women who became pregnant not to set up home with their babies' fathers.

The government's New Deal programme was developed against the same general background as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's research programme. One of the five key pledges of the government's election manifesto was to provide places on the New Deal for 250,000 young people who had been unemployed for six months or more. The studies drawn on in this review mainly started before the New Deal began, although some of them finished after it had started. They do not, therefore, provide any direct evidence for the success of the New Deal. Nevertheless, they provide a useful background to our understanding of the environment in which it was operating, and of the kind of young people it was dealing with.

As these studies show, there was some misunderstanding of the realities confronting young men. In the first place, well-educated young men were still being successful in the labour market – indeed, contrary to some of the received wisdom, they were being more successful than young women. Second, many unemployed young men were not wholly excluded from the world of work. Most had had jobs – some had had many jobs. Employers did not regard them as unemployable, but young men did not regard the jobs on offer as the basis for a long-term career. This group with sporadic work histories was larger in areas where jobs

were scarcer, but existed everywhere. Moreover, by the time of the election in May 1997, the number of young people in the New Deal client group was smaller than the number the new government was pledged to help, as the strength of the cyclical recovery ensured that most young people were able to get jobs.

However, the studies did show the kind of challenges that would eventually confront those responsible for the operation of the New Deal. They identified a group of unemployed young men who were at a significant disadvantage and who had multiple or complex problems with their family relationships, health, housing or skills. Public and voluntary agencies tend to be organised to tackle one set of problems, and are often ill equipped to deal with others. The solutions which might help young people with intermittent work histories may not be appropriate for the severely disadvantaged group, and vice versa.

The individual studies on which this book draws had different purposes, were done by researchers from a variety of disciplines and used different methodologies. They covered different time periods, and ranged from large-scale econometric analysis to small essentially anthropological studies which allowed the young people's own voices to come through. This book emphasises the common threads. It does not seek to be a comprehensive summary. Each study has its own significant findings which are important in its own terms, but which might be ignored in this overview because they do not relate to our central theme. The focus is on young men on the margins of work. It does not fully describe the experiences of the majority of young men who made a smooth transition from the education system into employment.

2 Young men's initial entry to employment

Initial entry to the labour market has become a more complex process for young people. Up until the 1970s the majority of young people left school as soon as they were eligible to do so and moved straight into full-time permanent employment. Any initial experience of unemployment tended to be transitory. A minority stayed in full-time education to study for A-levels. Some of these left school at 18, and the remainder (between 10 and 15 per cent of the age group) went on to higher education.

Over the past 20 years there have been changes in the nature of the British economic base. These changes have eliminated those jobs which used to offer stable, reasonably well-paid full-time employment to young men who were offering employers physical strength rather than academic qualifications. Their lack of qualifications did not imply a lack of ability. Rather, qualifications were simply not relevant to them, so they did not seek to obtain them.

The apprenticeship system used to provide for young men with ability but without academic qualifications, the opportunity to learn vocational skills to a reasonably advanced level. Apprenticeships have now become scarcer and they are also increasingly open only to those who have done well at school. The new jobs in the service sector tend to be of the kind that have traditionally largely been done by women. These jobs rely on communication skills, flexibility and ability to empathise – characteristics which are not always prevalent in young men whose social life is often noisy and conducted in large groups. Moreover, many of these jobs are part-time.

For young men who fail to do well at school, there are no longer alternative routes to stable, well-paid skilled jobs. Although in the past

educational achievements were potentially useful to young men, they are now essential. Good jobs have qualifications as entry requirements. Sometimes employers seeking people for less skilled jobs such as shop work prefer people with qualifications.

The nature of young people's pathways from school to work has changed. In 1975, 62 per cent of 16-year-olds went straight into work. By 1992, which was the worst year for young people to enter the labour market, only 9 per cent did so. The number of people aged under 25 who were active in the labour market fell by a third from 6.3 million to 4.4 million over the same period. Part of this fall was demographic: the number of young people in the population fell. But much of it was due to changing patterns of behaviour. A higher proportion of young people began to stay in full-time education, both at school and at further education colleges. By the late 1990s three-quarters of young people were staying in full-time education beyond the age of 16. Moreover, they were taking a far wider variety of courses than the traditional A-levels. Many of them sought to combine full-time study with part-time employment. Young women were more likely than young men to remain in full-time education. Part of the reason for this is that the remaining traineeships leading to skilled manual jobs, which are particularly attractive to young men, still tend to recruit at age 16 or 17. But it also reflects the fact that girls' achievements at GCSE have improved at a faster rate than those of boys (Dolton *et al.*, 1999; Stafford *et al.*, 1999). (This issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.)

In addition the process of transition itself became more complex. Researchers analysing the Youth Cohort Studies over a ten year period

found that, in order to account for the routes followed by four out of five young people over the two-year period between the ages of 16 and 19, they needed to define 17 different combinations of education, training, employment, unemployment and doing something else. More than one in ten young people had experienced five or more different states. Thirty per cent of young people remained in full-time education throughout, but no other pattern had more than 7 per cent of the total. Moreover, none of the 17 most common transitions identified included both training and full-time education beyond the age of 16. Young people taking part in training schemes were drawn only from those who had left school at the minimum leaving age. Conversely, young people who took part in full-time education beyond the age of 16, either staying on or returning following a spell of employment or unemployment, did not take part in training schemes at all as a route into work (Dolton *et al.*, 1999).

Young people who enter the labour market find it a more challenging place than previous generations did. The economic position of successive cohorts of young men has deteriorated. Young people under the age of 25 are more likely to be unemployed than older groups. Moreover, the likelihood of unemployment has grown with each successive generation. Unemployment has become an increasingly common feature of initial labour market entry, especially for young men. Men born between 1942 and 1946 had an 8 per cent probability of being unemployed at some point before the age of 25. However, for those born between 1967 and 1971 the probability had risen to 40 per cent (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

For those who do become unemployed, the time they spent unemployed has also increased markedly. Those born between 1942 and 1946 who became unemployed remained so for an average of 3.6 months. Among those born between 1967 and 1971, not only were their chances of being unemployed five times greater, if they did become unemployed the average amount of time they remained out of work had increased to 42 months. Young women were less likely than young men to become unemployed. Moreover, those young women who did become unemployed tended to find new jobs more quickly than young men did (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

In the context of a competitive economic environment, employers have become wary about recruitment. This has had a disproportionate effect on new entrants to the labour market. As the latest recruits they are also more at risk of redundancy where the last-in-first-out rule is applied. There has also been a change in the nature of young people's first jobs. The current generation of young men are less likely than their predecessors were to be members of a trade union or a pension scheme. But these features of the labour market are not unique to young men. They reflect some of the important changes in the nature of the employment relationship that have taken place in the past 20 years. The current generation of young men are also less likely to be employed on a permanent contract than previous generations. Among those born between 1942 and 1946, only 2 per cent had temporary or seasonal jobs as their first jobs. Among those born between 1957 and 1961 this had risen to 9 per cent, and among those born between 1971 and 1976 it was 21 per cent (Cartmel and

Furlong, 2000; Speak, 1998; Stafford *et al.*, 1999). Evidence from other studies shows that whereas young people in the 1970s typically had around two jobs in their first three years in the labour market, by the 1990s they had typically had four (Gregg and Wadsworth, 1996; OECD, 1997).

There are also marked differences in the employment rates of young men from different ethnic groups. Among those aged between 18 and 24 during the 1990s, four out of five white men had full-time jobs, 2 per cent had part-time jobs and 5 per cent were students. Among young men of Caribbean origin, only just over half had full-time jobs, while 3 per cent had part-time work. Around one in ten were students. Among those of Indian origin, two thirds had jobs but 15 per cent were studying (Berthoud, 1999).

A recurring theme in the research has been the finding that social networks remain one of the most important means of finding a job for young people (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000; Fletcher *et al.*, 1998; Lloyd, 1999; Pavis *et al.*, 2000). This was equally true in both urban and rural areas and both England and Scotland, even though the researchers concerned sometimes believed that the finding was specific to the geographical area they were concerned with. It was important for young people from the well-educated mainstream and for those with no qualifications who were closer to the margins. Many employers prefer simply to let it be known that they are looking for staff, or rely on local knowledge of seasonal hiring patterns. In the economy as a whole over a third of jobs are filled through informal methods. This compares with a fifth that are filled through newspaper advertisements and one in ten through jobcentres (Fletcher *et al.*, 1998).

Young men with few or no qualifications rarely found work through formal methods of job search and generally did not find them helpful (Lloyd, 1999; Pavis *et al.*, 2000). By contrast, informal methods worked in a variety of ways. There were traditional introductions by fathers, uncles, brothers and family friends, who essentially take the role of sponsor to the young person, and provide some guarantee of his worth to the employer. This has always been an important route into work for young men and it remains surprisingly strong. Sponsorship arrangements were found in both inner city and rural areas, although some careers officers who had experience of both suggested that it affected their roles more strongly in rural areas (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000; Lloyd, 1999; Pavis *et al.*, 2000). Potential employees in urban areas generally have a wider choice of employers and therefore it seems likely that they are less reliant on personal contacts to get some sort of job, although introductions are likely to help in terms of getting better jobs. In rural areas where there are a limited number of employers operating in a local labour market, the number of jobs of any kind available to those without introductions is likely to be limited.

From the point of view of the employer, the grapevine is seen as less risky than recruiting in the open market, because it includes an element of social control. As one employer put it:

If the person recommends his son or nephew, there's some sort of responsibility for them. (Manufacturer, urban fringe area, Scotland) (Pavis et al., 2000)

But wider social circles also played an important part in the job finding process. Without going so far as to take responsibility for

an introduction, friends and acquaintances provided unemployed young men with information about job opportunities at their own places of work, or others that they knew of.

My mate's dad works for Vickers, he got him a job in the stores when someone left. Said he'd try to get something for me too like.

(Young single father, Newcastle) (Speak, 1998)

In remoter areas more distant relatives and friends provided information about job opportunities. In inner city areas casual encounters could also prove fruitful. One young man described how he found out about his current job with a security company by getting to know about it through having a fight in the street:

I had a fight with some lads nearby, and you know how it goes, you become mates and they knew the boss of this security firm.

(19-year-old, London) (Lloyd, 1999)

The importance of personal networks in finding work means that friends and relatives who have jobs are clearly an asset to young people. However, such networks have their

disadvantages too. In small rural communities young people cannot make a fresh start and find it difficult to get jobs at all if they (or even other members of their family) have developed a bad reputation. Those who are new to an area with relatively few connections can find it difficult to get access to information about job vacancies (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000; Pavis *et al.*, 2000; Rugg and Jones, 1999). Those who have lost contact with their families are also at a disadvantage. Urban labour markets do not seem to display these features as strongly as those in rural areas, which suggests that the tendency of those who have become estranged from their families to move to large cities may be the right one. A particular problem group, however, are ex-offenders. They tend to have segregated social networks where their partners, other relatives, friends and neighbours are all mainly unemployed. Some may also have strong links into criminal rather than legitimate networks. Where they do know people who have jobs, the latter may understandably be reluctant to take on the responsibility of acting as sponsor to someone who has a criminal record.

3 The transition to economic independence

Economic independence, defined as the ability to set up home independently of one's parents, either with a partner or alone, is not always an option open to young people under the age of 25. In reality, the transition from youth to adult status is gradual. Some people, through choice, through chance or through family circumstances are essentially independent adults before they reach the age of 18. Others remain dependent into their 20s. This is most obviously true in the case of those who go into higher education, who the law assumes remain supported financially by their parents. But it is also true of those who take some time to become fully integrated into the adult labour market. The average age at which young people leave home is 22 (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000). Some achieve a precarious independence, only to fall back on family support while they re-establish themselves. Others find that the processes of transition to adulthood have become more complex. Like the process of initial entry into the labour market it is no longer a single step which launches an individual onto a new path. Rather it may involve moves into and out of apparent independence. Since leaving home is no longer associated with marriage, some of those whose relationship with a partner breaks down, or others who have lived on their own or with friends, return for a while to their parents' homes, where they can survive on low paid work and either save money or pay off debts (Dolton *et al.*, 1999; Pavis *et al.*, 2000; Rugg and Jones, 1999; Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

One particularly interesting finding of the research is the gender difference. The proportion of young women who had achieved financial independence by the age of 23 did not change markedly between the 1980s and the

1990s. In the early 1980s around 55 per cent of young women were able to be financially independent of their parents. Some were in fact still living at home, and others with a partner, but their income was sufficient to enable them to set up home on their own. By the early 1990s the proportion was much the same: between 51 and 57 per cent had the potential to be financially independent (again depending on the definition used). However, the picture was different for 23-year-old men. In 1981 over three-quarters were financially independent, while by 1993 this had fallen to between 59 and 64 per cent, depending on the definition used. Nevertheless, their chances of being financially independent were still better than young women's. An important part of the explanation lies in earnings. In 1995 young men aged between 18 and 20 who had jobs earned less than half the male average (47.7 per cent). Those aged between 21 and 24 earned 70 per cent of the average (Dolton *et al.*, 1999; Speak *et al.*, 1997; Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

Part of the explanation for this is that young people are generally over-represented in low paid work. Moreover, young women earn less than young men do, which explains why their chances of achieving financial independence are lower than men's. Some of this difference in earnings is due to differences in hours. One study found that more than half the young men included worked more than 40 hours a week, while the same was true of only a quarter of the young women. As a result young men were earning an average of £114 a week and young women an average of £92. Women have made some, albeit incomplete, progress towards equality in the labour market. But they may also be more prepared than men to take on less

attractive jobs, and in the process this may lead to downward pressure on the wage levels in those jobs (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

As the relative incomes of young men in the 1990s were lower than those of previous generations, it is increasingly unrealistic for many to aspire to the kind of wages that would enable a sole breadwinner to support a household. Moreover, young women's improved prospects of sustaining themselves in the longer term (even if not immediately) without a male breadwinner mean that men have become less important as financial providers. Young men's lack of access to breadwinner wages has had an impact on what it means to be a man. In modern societies the symbols of manhood are not the axe or the spear. They are financial independence, spending power and the ability to support a family. Some young men have managed to meet the challenge of a slower process of transition to these symbols better than others. Some are struggling with the apparent changes in the nature of masculinity (Lloyd, 1999; Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

Not only does young people's labour market position have an impact on their chances of establishing themselves as independent adults, but the reverse also applies. Young people who marry or form partnerships early, and especially those who have children, either with or without a partner, often find that their labour market opportunities are limited (Rugg and Jones, 1999). Young people in this position lose their ability to experiment with different forms of independent lifestyles while retaining the option to return to their parental home. They also find their employment options limited by their lack of access to childcare. Although this primarily affects young parents who live with their children, one study found that young, non-

resident single fathers were also constrained in their labour market choices by their commitment to playing an active role in their children's lives (Speak, 1998).

For young women, having children has a marked adverse effect on their ability both to take paid employment and to earn reasonable amounts. However, their choices are complicated by the social status attached to the responsibilities of motherhood. Being a mother is generally regarded as a more important job than many of the unskilled jobs which might otherwise be available. Moreover, there is a close correlation between single lone parenthood (as opposed to becoming a lone parent through divorce or separation) and lack of qualifications. However, part of the explanation for this is that unqualified women are more likely than those with qualifications are to have babies at any age (Berthoud, 1999; Pavis *et al.*, 2000; Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

For those who are not employed, changes in the benefit system during the past 15 years have reduced the ability of young people to live in independent households. In 1988 those aged 16 and 17 were removed from eligibility for income support in their own right unless there were exceptional circumstances (for example, they were leaving local authority care or were otherwise at risk). Other subsequent changes have resulted in young adults under the age of 25 receiving lower rates of income support than older people. Housing benefit rules have been changed so that people under the age of 25, unless they have children, are now only eligible to claim the equivalent of the cost of a rented room in shared accommodation, rather than a whole flat.

It is not clear what the longer-term outcomes will be in terms of young people's ability to form separate households. The traditional pattern in Britain until the 1960s was for most young people to live with their parents until they married. A minority left home to work, but they generally either had accommodation with the job or lived in lodgings (a type of accommodation that has essentially disappeared, but has traditionally been an important source of employment for women throughout the centuries). Only a very small number of young people lived alone or with friends in self-contained accommodation, and most of those who did had left home to go into higher education.

Between around 1970 and the late 1980s, young people were more likely to leave home and live independently, partly because they were better paid than in the past and were able to afford the rent. Although today's young

people are generally better paid in real terms than their predecessors were in the 1970s, they seem to have different priorities. In particular, they attach higher priority to running a car and having a social life than they do to living independently. (However, the evidence of the studies reviewed here about the importance of access to private transport as a factor in getting and keeping a job, may mean that a car has become essential for many.)¹ Thus, although some are remaining with their parents through necessity – they could not support an independent household – others are doing so by choice in order to improve their living standards. It may be that we are seeing the emergence of a pattern which is common in much of the rest of Europe, where young people remain in their parents' home through their 20s, and only leave once they are well-established in work and have some savings.

4 Education

The research reviewed here points overwhelmingly to the central place that education plays in determining labour market prospects. It does this by influencing what happens to an individual immediately on entering the labour market, and the progress they make subsequently. It is strongly associated with the probability of becoming unemployed, and with the time subsequently taken to get back to work. It determines occupational and earnings outcomes.

For young men the paramount importance of education is relatively new. Until the 1980s they were generally able to secure skilled jobs in manufacturing or construction which paid reasonable amounts without any qualifications. The school curriculum used to prepare young people for the gendered labour market with different roles and occupations for men and women. Women's jobs required domestic skills (chambermaid, care work), people skills (receptionist) or small fingers (some kinds of manufacturing). Men's jobs required brains and brawn. It was only during the 1980s that employers began to require young men seeking apprenticeships to have GCE or GCSE qualifications. Now, employers increasingly see academic achievement as an indicator of both ability and application.

This presents a challenge to traditional behaviour patterns among adolescent males. Those who are not doing well in school may reject all it has to offer and turn to truancy and misbehaviour. Young men tend to socialise in groups, and the leadership of those groups is still determined by social prowess rather than academic achievement. Peer pressure is always difficult to resist. If the peer pressure originates with those whose norms have become markedly

anti-social, these norms tend to reinforce bad behaviour, and it can be exceptionally difficult for young men to return to the mainstream. Poor school performance is a good predictor of delinquency. Around half of all male prisoners have no educational or vocational qualifications of any kind. There is also some evidence that around half of all offenders have serious literacy problems, although other evidence suggests the problem might be smaller. Half of all truants commit criminal offences but only a quarter of non-truants. Three-quarters of excluded pupils offend, compared with only a third of those who are not excluded. One in five of those sentenced by the youth court have a statement of special educational needs compared with only 2–3 per cent of all secondary school pupils (Fletcher *et al.*, 1998; Lloyd, 1999; Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

There are clear interrelationships between educational and other forms of disadvantage. The Social Exclusion Unit found that three-quarters of young people looked after by local authorities achieve no GCSE passes, compared with 6 per cent of the population as a whole. Half the young people under 18 starting custodial sentences have previously been in care. A quarter of young male prisoners were previously homeless (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000).

Many of the young men included in a study of those on the margins of work regretted that they had played about and wasted their time at school. These were young men who, although they had not fully settled into the labour market, were nevertheless not socially excluded. They were genuinely on the margins in that they had a chance of becoming fully integrated and they also had a chance of becoming wholly detached. They were remarkably clear sighted.

Looking back they now saw school as a missed opportunity. They admitted that they had lacked confidence at their studies and so to secure their status they had socialised with a bad crowd. While at school they had associated academic achievement with effeminacy. Now in their late teens and early 20s they recognised it was essential for access to good jobs. Many young homeless people had also not had good experiences at school (Lloyd, 1999; Randall and Brown, 1999).

During the 1980s the nature of the examinations taken by young people at the age of 16 was changed. The new examinations, GCSEs, brought together into a single system the two kinds of qualifications which had previously been available to young people: GCE O-levels (O Grades in Scotland) which were aimed primarily at those who were intending to proceed to A-level studies and higher education or to clerical work, and CSEs which offered young people with less academic ambitions the opportunity to demonstrate what they had been able to achieve at school.

The system had disadvantages. For example, schools could decide only to enter pupils for CSEs. O-levels were awarded on the basis of traditional unseen examinations taken at the end of the course. The GCSE offered the opportunity to both groups to gain the same qualification (albeit graded on a six-point scale). It also included more coursework which pupils prepare during the year, rather than just a single examination at the end. Perhaps most importantly of all, it involved a change in the way in which grades were assigned. With O-levels, the proportion of pupils achieving a particular grade was assumed to follow a fixed distribution. This meant that if an unusually

high or low proportion of people achieved top or bottom grades, the grade boundary marks would be altered by the examiners. With GCSEs the system is similar to that used in driving tests or music examinations. Anyone achieving a predetermined standard gets a predetermined grade.

The change in the examination system coincided with a marked increase in the measured levels of achievement of 16-year-old pupils, especially girls. The proportion of girls and boys who obtained five good GCSEs before 1987 was around 26 per cent, with girls around one percentage point ahead of boys. By the mid-1990s the gap was nine percentage points. Nearly 50 per cent of girls and 41 per cent of boys were achieving this level (Dolton *et al.*, 1999). Moreover, the outcomes have continued to diverge. In 1999, 53 per cent of girls and 43 per cent of boys managed this level of achievement (DfEE, 1999).

Even with the general improvement in standards which has taken place over the past 15 years, there is still a strong relationship between social class and educational achievements. Research analysing the Youth Cohort Study found that young people had better GCSE results if:

- one or both of their parents had a degree
- they lived in owner occupied rather than tenanted housing
- one of their parents had a professional or skilled job
- they attended a grammar or independent school
- they were of Asian ethnic origin

- they were either an only child or had only one brother or sister (Dolton *et al.*, 1999).

Each of these features has an effect independently of the others, although they are often associated. Thus, a young person of Asian origin attending an independent school, whose father is an accountant, has a very high probability of doing well at GCSE. (In general the Youth Cohort Study shows consistently worse outcomes for young people of Bangladeshi or Pakistani origin compared with those of Indian origin. However, in this analysis, which takes account of parental occupation and employment status, the well-known differences in the economic and social position of the parents of the two groups are likely to account for a large part of the overall difference in outcomes.) Conversely, a young person of white ethnic origin with three siblings, living in social housing, has a poor chance of doing well.

The effect of some of these features on a smaller scale, however, can be seen in the study of young men on the margins of work. This was a group that was specially selected by the fact that members were not established in the labour market. However, even among this group, almost all those with two working parents had five or more GCSE passes (Lloyd, 1999).

After the introduction of GCSEs, the adverse effect of coming from a large family was reduced, and the achievements of young people of black¹ ethnic origin improved. However, after GCSE the achievements of some groups fell. Those whose parents had degrees, whose fathers were in work and who lived in owner occupied housing achieved lower grades on average after the introduction of GCSEs than their predecessors in similar circumstances had under the O-level regime.

Achievement at GCSE (or lack of it) is the first point at which young people's routes into the labour market and to adult life begin to diverge. Those who do well at GCSE tend to remain in full-time education. Those who do badly tend not to. Thus in the mid-1990s, for every young man aged 18 to 24 with at least four A to C grade passes at GCSE who was working, 13 were in full-time education (Stafford *et al.*, 1999). Nevertheless, GCSE achievements were not the only factor associated with staying on. They were reinforced by some social class effects: having a parent who had a professional or skilled job and having a parent with a degree made it more likely that a young person would remain in full-time education. Those who had a positive attitude towards school were more likely to continue in education than those who thought school was a waste of time. Similarly, those who had played truant were more likely to leave education at the age of 16 (Dolton *et al.*, 1999; Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

However, researchers found that there were some other features which were slightly more unexpected. Living in an owner occupied house had an effect irrespective of parents' occupation or educational qualifications. In other words, a young person whose parents had low levels of qualifications and had semi-skilled or unskilled jobs was more likely to stay in full-time education if the family owned their home than a young person with an identical family background who lived in rented housing. Young people from minority ethnic groups were more likely to stay in education than young white people. Those from smaller families were more likely to stay on than those from larger families. Those living in areas of high unemployment

were more likely to stay on than similar young people who lived in areas where unemployment was lower (Dolton *et al.*, 1999).

Those who left full-time education at 16, both girls and boys, were likely to:

- come from households where the parents had unskilled jobs
- be a member of a large family
- live with a lone parent
- live in a rented home
- have attended a comprehensive school without a sixth form
- have a history of persistent truancy
- be of white ethnic origin (Dolton *et al.*, 1999).

Young people's progression in the labour market after initial entry, whether at age 16 or in their early 20s, is strongly related to the qualifications they have achieved. Unemployment rates vary markedly by qualification level. For example, around 30 per cent of young people aged 18–24 with no qualifications were unemployed, compared with 15 per cent of young men and 10 per cent of young women with GCSEs. Researchers have estimated that for each GCSE pass at grade C or above, the probability of a young man being unemployed falls by around 29 per cent. Thus someone with eight passes at grades A to C is 15 times less likely to be unemployed than someone with no qualifications (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

If we consider unemployment by ethnic origin during the 1990s, we find that although the average unemployment rates of Caribbean

men were twice as high as those of white men, unqualified men from both groups were six times more likely to be unemployed than graduates. For young men of Indian origin the gradient was less steep: graduates were half as likely to be unemployed as those with no qualifications (Berthoud, 1999).

However, although qualifications make it less likely someone will become unemployed, the evidence is mixed about whether it improves the speed at which someone will get a new job if they have lost one. The national study of unemployed young people found the effect was very small for men. Average durations were three to four months for all qualification levels (Stafford *et al.*, 1999). However, a study in Scotland did find that for young men, qualifications protected against prolonged unemployment, and the higher the qualification the better the protection (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000). For women the picture is slightly different. Having no qualifications at all increases the duration of unemployment to around ten months, compared to two to three months for those with any sort of qualifications (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

Even without taking account of differences in qualifications, young people's progress after the age of 16 is influenced by their decision either to stay in education or to enter the labour market. Those who either remain in education whatever their GCSE results, or who find work quickly, tend to be in much better positions three years later than those who experience unemployment or participation in government training schemes during their first months after leaving school. There are clear indicators that adverse outcomes are self-reinforcing: those who do badly at school tend to leave at the first

available opportunity, but are unlikely to get a job straight away. But not having a job is also self-reinforcing. The probability of being outside either education or employment in any single month is strongly associated with having been in the same position in the previous month, irrespective of any other positive or negative characteristics (Dolton *et al.*, 1999).

There are, however, other factors at work as well. For example, at the risk of stating the obvious, in areas of high local unemployment, young people's outcomes are likely to be worse than those of equivalent young people in more prosperous areas. Those who have GCSE Mathematics and English do better than those who have passes in other subject areas, as well as those with no passes at all. Those young people who had had a part-time job while at school had better labour market outcomes than those who had not. The reasons for this are not clear. They may have been taken on full-time by the employer for whom they had been working. Many retailers, for example, are keen to offer full-time jobs to young people who have proved themselves with the company as part-timers. Or the fact of having had a part-time job gives them some work experience to offer to other employers. One of the recurrent themes in these research projects was the problem confronting young people who had no work experience. (This is discussed more fully in Chapter 5.)

Living in owner occupied housing remained important, even after taking into account its association with GCSE grades and initial destinations at the age of 16. As the effect of parents' occupations and education levels has already been taken into account separately, owner occupation here is not, as it often is, just a proxy for social class. The researchers suggest

that the effect may be due to a sense of psychological well-being and motivation (Dolton *et al.*, 1999).

One unexpected finding was that if all other factors are held constant, having a mother who has a professional job at the time when a young person reaches the end of compulsory education tends to produce worse labour market outcomes than if she has any other sort of job. There is no such effect for father's job. One possibility is that mothers who have very demanding jobs, and therefore less time available for their children, may not be providing as much support as other mothers. Chapter 6 suggests that family support is a key component of labour market success (Dolton *et al.*, 1999).

The type of jobs which young people end up doing is much more strongly influenced by their level of education than it is by their ethnic origin. The only exception to this is for people of African origin, who have above average levels of qualifications, but very poor labour market outcomes in terms of unemployment, job level and earnings. With this important caveat in mind, the general picture is that around 70 per cent of young men with degrees had management or professional jobs. So did a quarter of those with GCSE or A-level qualifications (although only a fifth of young men of Caribbean origin with these qualifications did). Around one in eight of those with A-level or GCSE qualifications had semi-skilled or unskilled manual jobs, irrespective of ethnic origin (Berthoud, 1999).

There are also clear relationships between qualifications and earnings. Although those with A-level qualifications earn no more than those with GCSEs, on average each additional year of education beyond the age of 15 adds 8

per cent to the earnings of white men, 9 per cent to the earnings of Caribbean men, 5 per cent to those of Indian origin and 11 per cent to the earnings of those of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin. In other words, all ethnic groups (except Africans, who seem to experience exceptional disadvantages) benefit from additional years of education. Thus, although men of Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin earn less on average than people of white or Indian origin, they still earn more if they are better educated than if they have few or no qualifications (Berthoud, 1999).

The question of whether employers value educational qualifications for their content or for the signals they send about someone's ability and commitment is one which is unresolved either by this research, or by an extensive literature. However, the evidence from these studies is inescapable: without educational qualifications, young people, and more particularly young men, find it hard to get and keep good jobs. Moreover, the better the qualifications, the better the outcomes.

5 Unemployment and early labour market failure

Young men are more likely to be unemployed than either older men or young women. Three different kinds of unemployment can be observed among young men. First there is initial unemployment on first entering the labour market after leaving full-time education. This need not be a cause of serious concern. The process of matching new recruits to jobs is not instantaneous. Even for basic entry level jobs that draw on young people it can take around a month between a job becoming vacant and the new employee starting work (Brown *et al.*, 2001). Young people tend to arrive on the labour market together in the summer (they also used to arrive at Easter in England and Wales and Christmas in Scotland), so it may take a while for them to become established in jobs, especially when recruitment is slowed down. Typically, unemployment rates among male school leavers are around twice those of men in their 20s. This pattern holds for all ethnic groups except Indians, where the markedly higher differential might be due to the high rate of staying on in full-time education, which could mean that minimum age leavers are an unusually disadvantaged group (Berthoud, 1999).

This experience of initial unemployment happens both to well-qualified young people leaving higher education as well as to those who leave school at the minimum leaving age with no qualifications, so it does not necessarily indicate longer-term disadvantage. It is an important part of the explanation why unemployment among young people is higher than it is among older age groups. However, it does not explain why young women should be less likely to be unemployed than young men. The evidence from the studies reviewed here

suggests that young people who have been in higher education who experience initial unemployment (or under employment) tend to be settled into jobs at an appropriate level after a few years (Berthoud, 1999; Pavis *et al.*, 2000). However, as discussed below, some of those who are unemployed on initial entry go on to become longer-term unemployed.

The second form of unemployment takes place among young people who are between jobs. Young people are much more likely than older people to leave their employer. There are several reasons for this. They are, as discussed above, more likely than those in older age groups to be on temporary contracts, which leaves them vulnerable to unemployment when the contract ends. The second explanation is that because they are inexperienced, their productivity may be below the level an employer finds acceptable, leading to them being dismissed for underperformance. The third is that young people have always found the most appropriate job for them by trying out a number of different jobs until they find one that suits them. They are therefore more likely to leave voluntarily because they do not like a job than older people are. In many cases the ensuing spell of unemployment is relatively short and leads to the young person getting another job in due course. But again there is no particular reason why young men should be more prone to job changing than young women.

The final form of unemployment among young people is more worrying. It is longer term and is associated with labour market disadvantage. This may be geographical: a young person who might be employed in an area of lower overall unemployment may nevertheless be at a disadvantage in a more

rural area or one with a high level of unemployment. Or it may reflect the fact that the individual has one (or more probably more than one) serious disadvantage. For example, each year 100,000 people (mainly young men) leave prison, 90 per cent of whom go straight into unemployment. They account for between 2 and 3 per cent of the unemployment inflow each month (Fletcher *et al.*, 1998). Similarly it is estimated that between 80 and 90 per cent of single homeless people are unemployed (Randall and Brown, 1999).

However, it is important to remember that not all those who have disadvantages are unemployed. For example, although unemployment is much more common among those with no qualifications than among those who have some qualifications, the majority of those with no qualifications do have jobs. Thus around half of young men with no qualifications had full-time jobs in the mid-1990s. The same was true of one in five young women, a further tenth of whom had part-time jobs (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

It is possible that no individual disadvantage on its own would be likely to lead to long-term unemployment, but that in combination they can make it difficult to find work even in areas of high labour demand. One of the main challenges for researchers, and for policy makers, is to identify to which of these three groups an unemployed young person belongs. The sort of help those in the first three groups need is very different from the needs of those in the fourth.

In addition to open unemployment, there is also evidence from these studies that taking part in a government training scheme was effectively the same as being unemployed in terms of

subsequent labour market outcomes. There is no evidence that it improved a young person's subsequent employment chances. Rather, it seemed to give them a way of spending their time while they are unemployed. Some young people had had a series of placements on training schemes without any apparent improvement in their prospects or motivation (Fletcher *et al.*, 1998; Pavis *et al.*, 2000; Randall and Brown, 1999). Young men who had taken part in a government training scheme had longer spells of subsequent unemployment than those who had not (Stafford *et al.*, 2000).

However, we have already seen that those on such schemes were disproportionately drawn from those who had left school at age 16 with few or no qualifications, so that they were already at a high risk of unemployment (Dolton *et al.*, 1999). For example, young men whose mothers had no qualifications were almost 12 times as likely to be on a government training scheme than those whose mothers had some qualifications (Stafford *et al.*, 1999). Moreover, it does need to be remembered that all these studies predate the New Deal for Young People.

There have been some suggestions from the United States, where labour market programmes are evaluated using random assignment methods, that employers regard having taken part in a training programme as an indication of personal or labour market disadvantage. Thus, even though participants may develop valuable skills while on a scheme, this may not be enough to outweigh the negative labelling effect. The evaluation methodology used for UK government programmes does not generally allow such conclusions to be drawn, but this may be part of the explanation for the findings of these studies.

Among those aged 16 who were neither still in full-time education nor in employment (i.e. they were unemployed, inactive or on a government training scheme) there was an over-representation of young people who had other disadvantages. Those who were white, who had unskilled parents, and who came from a large family or lived in rented accommodation were more likely to be unemployed than those who did not have these characteristics. Similarly, those who had done badly in their examinations at age 16, who thought that school had been a waste of time, who had persistently played truant, and who had not had a part-time job while at school were more likely than other young people to be neither in education nor in work. Two external factors also had an impact. Not surprisingly, those who lived in areas of high unemployment were more likely to be unemployed than those who lived in more prosperous areas. But perhaps more surprisingly, those who lived in local authority areas with lower levels of expenditure per pupil were more likely to be unemployed than those whose authorities had spent more on their education. This effect was after taking into account the qualifications the young people had actually achieved (Dolton *et al.*, 1999). This suggests that at least part of the additional resources may have been put into broader non-examination areas of education such as sport, music or drama, and that these activities may have had a positive impact on subsequent employment.

Other evidence suggests that members of all minority ethnic groups are more likely than young white people are to remain in full-time education beyond the age of 16. However, young men of Caribbean origin who do enter

the labour market have a very high probability of being unemployed at the age of 16. After taking account of differences in qualifications, the evidence suggests that just under one in five white men who were in the labour market at the age of 16 were unemployed, compared with nearly half (46 per cent) of young Caribbean men. By the age of 21, some of them had been integrated into employment, and others will have had some work experience. However, again considering only young men who had left school at the age of 16, five years later, 14 per cent of young white men and 38 per cent of young Caribbean men were unemployed.

These figures illustrate a consistent pattern of unemployment by ethnicity. The average unemployment rate for white men in their early 20s in the 1980s was around 12 per cent. That for Indian men was very similar. Caribbean and Pakistani and Bangladeshi men's rates were twice as high, while those for African men were nearly three times as high (34 per cent). In some ways it is this last figure which is the most striking, as Africans on average have the highest qualification levels of all ethnic groups. Some of these differences are accounted for by geography. Minority ethnic groups tend to be concentrated in large conurbations, especially in the inner city areas, and these areas have been disproportionately hit by unemployment over the past 15 years (Berthoud, 1999).

If we look at people aged between 18 and 24 who were unemployed, we find that it was relatively rare for them to have come from stable employment. Only around one in five unemployed young men had had a previous steady job. A similar proportion had been unemployed before and one in five had a history of moving in and out of jobs. The

remainder had never had a job (some of them would only recently have left full-time education), of whom 4 per cent had never worked for health reasons (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

Young men were more likely to experience unemployment if they were single and not living with a parent or relative,¹ had no vocational qualifications themselves and had mothers with no qualifications. Other factors which were associated with higher unemployment were health problems and not having a driving licence. While four out of five young men with jobs had a driving licence, only half of unemployed men did. Similarly, whereas among the population as a whole, 4 per cent of young men and 2 per cent of young women had an activity limiting health problem in 1995–96, one in five unemployed young men and women had a health problem. The most common problems were with hands, legs, arms or breathing (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

Young women were not only less likely to become unemployed than young men (10 per cent of young women in one of the studies were unemployed compared with 16 per cent of the young men). Once they became unemployed they tended to leave more quickly. Half had left within six months, compared with a third of men. Those young women who were unemployed were much less likely to have had an unstable work history (only 6 per cent) or previous experience of unemployment (only 7 per cent). A quarter had never been unemployed before and a quarter had never worked. Around one in ten had spent most of their working lives undertaking domestic responsibilities. Older unemployed people were much more likely to have come from a steady job and much less likely to have been in and out

of work than the younger people were (Stafford *et al.*, 1999). However, the evidence does not suggest that many unemployed young people are wholly detached from the labour force. In fact, the reverse seems to be true and their commitment to work seems to be strong.

Overall, therefore, the population of unemployed young people aged 18 to 24 seems to comprise four groups: those who are recent education leavers who are not yet integrated into work; those who have experience of a steady job; those who have had experience of a series of short-term jobs; and those who have little or no work experience and are long-term unemployed. Those who had been unemployed when they were first interviewed and were also unemployed between 16 and 22 months later (either because they had been unemployed continuously or because they had started another spell) tended to have weaker links with the labour market and were likely to be drawn from the last group. Half the young women and 38 per cent of the young men who had failed to get a job between the two interview dates had spent most or all of their working lives to date in unemployment (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

If we consider the reverse perspective, that is those who were initially unemployed but who went on to get a new job, we find that unemployed young men with previous work experience were more than twice as likely to have obtained a new job than those without. The importance of previous experience is likely to be the result of employer preferences for someone who has already displayed a willingness and aptitude for work. Experience also gives access to a network of people who have jobs (Stafford *et al.*, 1999). Young people in rural areas in Scotland where jobs were

relatively scarce felt that their lack of previous experience was a particular handicap (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000). However, it is likely that this was due to relatively low demand for workers rather than necessarily being anything particularly Scottish or rural. In general, employers prefer to hire people with previous experience of the type of work concerned, or failing that, some other previous experience. Inexperienced people are always at a disadvantage in the jobs queue. Ex-offenders find that lack of recent work experience adds to their other disadvantages (Fletcher *et al.*, 1998).

Besides previous experience there were other factors associated with leaving unemployment for young men. Those with vocational qualifications were 1.69 times more likely to get a job than those without. For young women the possession of academic qualifications was important. As 30 per cent of them went into clerical jobs and a similar proportion into

personal and protective service work, their qualifications might have been directly relevant to the kind of jobs they went on to do. Having a driving licence doubled the probability of leaving unemployment. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, but may be related to the backing of resources provided by the family. Those who lived with a parent or relative were more than twice as likely to get a new job than those who did not. These issues are discussed more fully in Chapter 6 (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

Those who had health problems were much less likely than other groups to leave unemployment. Around one in five unemployed young men in the late 1990s had a health problem, and among those that did the average spell of unemployment lasted around eight months, compared with three months for those with no health difficulties – there was no adverse effect on young women's unemployment durations (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

6 The importance of family support

As Chapter 5 has shown, social networks are one of the most important means by which young men find their first (and subsequent) jobs. The most accessible and obvious form of social network for most people is their immediate family. If family members do not have jobs themselves, this can place young people at a disadvantage in the process of integration into the labour market.

There is also evidence that the work status of parents is associated with the labour market outcomes of their young adult children. If at least one of their parents had a job when they were aged 16, 60 per cent of young men and young women were working in the mid-1990s. By contrast, if their father was not working when they were 16, only 40 per cent of young men and women were working when interviewed. The effect for mothers was not quite as strong. Among young men, 22 per cent of those who had a non-working parent were unemployed, compared with 13 per cent of those whose parents were working. Among young women the probability of looking after the family or home was only 10 per cent for those with a working parent, but was 21 per cent for those with a non-working mother and 33 per cent for those with a non-working father. One difficulty in interpreting these differences, which are large, is that there is close correlation between qualifications, social class and the likelihood of parental support (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

One possibility is that parental support and encouragement leads to better outcomes at school, which in turn leads to better labour market outcomes. It may therefore be past parental support rather than present which is important for young adults. Other evidence

suggests that it is the quality and nature of family (or other adult playing a family substitute role) support which matters for the social and economic integration of young people (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000). It may lead to better outcomes for young people to be living independently but on good terms with their parents, than to remain at home in a difficult relationship.

In addition, the findings of several of these studies take us a little further. Young people living with a parent or other relative had better labour market outcomes than those who lived alone. The evidence of the effect of living with a partner was more mixed, with some studies finding it associated with worse outcomes than living with parents, and others better (Berthoud, 1999; Cartmel and Furlong, 2000; Pavis *et al.*, 2000; Stafford *et al.*, 1999). Again, however, the processes might be more complex. Although some young people are living independently out of choice, others are doing so involuntarily. For example they may have had difficulties in their relationship with their parents (particularly with a step-parent), have become estranged from their family or have been looked after by the local authority so that they have no parental home to go to. The young people in the two groups may not really be comparable. Studies that did not involve direct comparisons nevertheless provide useful information about the adverse consequences of not being able to rely on family support. The study of ex-offenders discussed the disadvantage of offenders' frequent lack of access to family support (Fletcher *et al.*, 1998). The same was true of young homeless people (Randall and Brown, 1999). The study of young men on the margins of work stressed the importance of living with a

family member who had a job (Lloyd, 1999).

In the mid-1990s, two-thirds of young men and half of all young women lived with parents or other relatives. Around 18 per cent of men and 13 per cent of women were living alone. In addition around 8 per cent of young women were lone mothers living with their children (Stafford *et al.*, 1999). There is some evidence that the incidence of different living arrangements varies across different ethnic groups. For example, half of young white men aged 18 to 24 were living as a couple during the 1990s, while the same was true of only 28 per cent of Caribbean men. The rate was much higher for both men of Indian origin (68 per cent) and Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin (76 per cent).

Moreover, among those who were not living as a couple, the proportion who were living with their parents also varied. Among unattached young male graduates, 29 per cent of those of Caribbean origin and 24 per cent of those of white origin were living with their parents. Among those with lower qualifications the relative position was reversed. Half of all unattached young white men with A-level qualifications were living with their parents, while only 38 per cent of those of Caribbean origin were doing so. For those with GCSE qualifications the respective proportions were 52 per cent and 37 per cent, while for those with lower qualifications they were 60 per cent for young white men and 51 per cent for young Caribbeans. Only among unattached men with no qualifications did the proportions living with their parents start to converge again: 66 per cent for young white men and 61 per cent for young Caribbeans (Berthoud, 1999).

One of the few marked differences between

urban and rural areas concerns young people's living arrangements. Young men in rural areas generally lived at their parental home, irrespective of their level of qualifications, unless they had previously been in local authority care, or were estranged from their parents. However, one of the three studies reviewed here found that some of those with higher education qualifications were living independently. Some young graduates had deliberately returned to their parents' homes in spite of more restricted job opportunities in the area because it offered a way to pay off debt and keep their living costs down while they sought long-term employment in the national labour market. In urban areas some young people lived in shared accommodation or alone, as did some young women from rural areas (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000; Pavis *et al.*, 2000).

Two studies found that young men who lived with their parents or other relatives were less likely to be unemployed than other young men (Pavis *et al.*, 2000; Stafford *et al.*, 1999). One of the two found that 14 per cent of young men living with their parents were unemployed compared with 18 per cent of those who lived alone, 23 per cent of those living as a couple without children and 29 per cent of those living in a couple with children (Stafford *et al.*, 1999). However, the other study, which took account of the effect of education, age and location, found that couples without children had the lowest probability of being unemployed. Those who lived alone had an unemployment rate roughly twice that of those who lived as a couple, while those who lived with their parents fell somewhere in between the two. The ratio between the rates of those living as a couple and those living alone was roughly the same for all

ethnic groups, although young Caribbean men (and to a lesser extent young Pakistani and Bangladeshi men) had higher overall unemployment rates (Berthoud, 1999).

As well as apparently reducing the risk of unemployment, living with parents was associated with a faster return to work for those who did become unemployed. The study of young men who were unemployed found that they obtained jobs more quickly if they were living with a parent or other relative rather than on their own or with a spouse or partner. They were more than twice as likely to get work. The average duration of unemployment of those who lived with their parents was three months, whereas the average duration for those who lived alone or with a partner was six months (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

As the issue of parental support is one which has emerged from the studies, but was not originally a focus, the ways in which it has an effect are not entirely clear. There are several possible explanations:

- Parents can provide information about job opportunities that have not been advertised on the open market.
- Financial cross-subsidies might take place within the family. Where parents charge young people for board and lodging they tend not to charge a full share of heating and rent or mortgage costs, for example. This offers young people living at home access to a wider range of jobs, as they can afford to take those with lower wage levels. These jobs would not be a feasible option for those who have to cover accommodation costs. One study found that parents helped young people buy

clothes and also helped with travel costs (Pavis *et al.*, 2000).

- Parents can offer young people encouragement and advice in job search. They can provide transport to interviews. Once the young person has started work they can ensure that they get to work on time.
- They can provide help with transport to work.
- They can provide emotional support, advice and encouragement which helps to retain the motivation and self-belief of young people and hence the way in which they present themselves to employers.

There may be other ways in which they can help. For example, having a driving licence doubled young people's chances of leaving unemployment. The median unemployment spell was two months for those with driving licences, and eight for young women and four for young men without. While some young people might have been going into jobs which required them to drive, there are too few such jobs to account for the scale of the effect. Among young men, 80 per cent of those in full-time work, but only half the unemployed had driving licences. Among young women, 74 per cent of those in full-time work, but only 38 per cent of the unemployed did so (Stafford *et al.*, 1999).

In rural areas in particular there is evidence that employers are reluctant to hire workers who have to rely on public transport, even where a bus service exists, which is not often. The potential ability to access independent

transport might be a consideration, even if young people initially relied on lifts or buses (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000; Monk *et al.*, 1999; Pavis *et al.*, 2000; Rugg and Jones, 1999). The ability to access the family car for job search or interviews is also likely to be a factor. Public transport in many urban areas is increasingly unreliable, especially for those who work shifts. However, even though employers might give preference to those with their own transport, it is unlikely that candidates without access to cars would be turned down out of hand. However in rural areas this is what happens. Alternatively, employers might regard driving licences as a proxy indicator for competence and physical ability or they could indicate self-motivation. But, of course, acquiring a driving licence costs money, particularly for lessons. It is probable that many parents have subsidised their young adult children's learning to drive.

The study of young homeless people living in hostels gave some indications of what happens to young people who are living without parental or other family support. They were not well informed about the kind of job opportunities that were available because they were not tapped into a network of people who had jobs. Some young people had no experience of working adults as role models, so they were unsure about how to behave in a working environment. This research concluded that young people living in hostels who had previously been in local authority care were at a particular disadvantage, as they were unused to taking responsibility for themselves.¹ (Young people who have been in care are also unlikely to have educational qualifications, and likely to have been in prison or youth custody, both of which are strongly associated with labour

market disadvantage (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000).) Some hostels reinforced this by an absence of work culture. This took several forms:

- A lack of knowledge about the labour market on the part of hostel staff.
- A view among hostel staff that the available jobs were of poor quality.
- A view among hostel staff that the young people needed to sort out their other problems before they looked for work.
- Meal times which made it difficult for those with jobs to eat.
- Noisy social activities among residents late at night making it difficult for those with jobs to sleep.
- A conflict of interest between hostel managers, who preferred to have secure income from unemployed young people on housing benefit, and the young people themselves, who would benefit from getting work experience, but whose income under those circumstances might not be sufficient to cover both accommodation and support costs in a hostel setting.

The research suggests that key workers in hostels who stressed the need to engage with the labour market were able to help young people secure better outcomes than those who felt that the available work was too low paid, or that young people needed more help with sorting out their lives before seeking employment. The young people who tackled their housing and their labour market problems

simultaneously tended to have better outcomes than those who concentrated on their housing needs (Randall and Brown, 1999). In other words, it may not be unreasonable to surmise that hostels where staff provide more of the type of support that a parent or other family member would provide to an adult child living at home can secure better outcomes, both in terms of housing and in terms of work for their clients.

Given the importance of family support in securing a better start to working life for young people it is surprising that the policy environment does not provide more encouragement to parents. Housing benefit regulations assume that an adult child makes a financial contribution to rent of between £7 (on an income of up to £78) and £45 (on an income of £250 or more). This is waived for those who are on government training or are getting Income Support or Jobseekers Allowance. But it means that parents either have to ask their adult

children for their assumed contribution to the rent or incur financial losses by allowing them to continue to live at home.

One possible approach might be that like student loan repayments, the contribution could be waived until earnings reach a certain level. Similarly, a version of the Sure Start programme, which helps parents to manage and encourage the development of young children, could be adapted to try and reduce the extent of relationship breakdown between parents and their adolescent and young adult children (Stafford *et al.*, 1999). The Social Exclusion Unit report, which also saw merit in this approach, noted the lack of advice to parents on what sort of behaviour they might expect from adolescents and how to deal with them, by comparison with the advice available to parents of babies and very young children (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000).

7 Lack of knowledge of the world of work

There is evidence that a minority of young people have little understanding of the world of work, what is expected of them and how they should behave. Some young men did not like the fact that people told them what to do at work:

I can't be doing with being told what to do, me. I know it's me own fault but I just can't be doing with being bossed around ... stupid little things like ... five minutes late.

(Single father, Newcastle) (Speak, 1998)

More generally, there can be a conflict between the personal empowerment encouraged by projects working with disadvantaged groups such as young homeless people, and the realities of the workplace. Expectations can be unrealistic (Randall and Brown, 1999; Speak, 1998). Employers who have had to deal with young people either become inured to high turnover (Lloyd, 1999) or they become reluctant to hire young people. As one employer put it:

They just didn't have the correct work ethic or they were disruptive or whatever.

(Manufacturer, rural area) (Pavis *et al.*, 2000)

Some young men will have had no experience of having a parent with a job. This will be particularly likely for those living with a lone parent, as lone parents are also likely to be dependent on state benefits. A third of the young men in the study of those on the margins of work had no family member working at the

time when they were interviewed. Young people who have been in local authority care are also unlikely to have any close knowledge of people who have jobs. Ex-offenders tend to have little experience of employment and little knowledge of what employers expect (Fletcher *et al.*, 1999; Lloyd, 1999; Randall and Brown, 1999).

Misconceptions are common. As an 18-year-old man of Asian origin working part-time while studying at college put it:

I thought the workplace would be about 100 people sitting in the same room doing the same thing. I thought it would be like school but you get paid for it. (Lloyd, 1999)

Employers say they are looking for young people who are clean looking, appropriately dressed and smart in appearance. Some young people, especially but not only those with a history of homelessness, may have problems with personal hygiene and how to dress appropriately (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000; Lloyd, 1999; Randall and Brown, 1999).

It is not clear how widespread the lack of understanding of appropriate workplace behaviour is. However, employers who have been exposed to ill-prepared young people will probably be more wary about recruiting others. This in turn will reinforce the existing tendency to prefer people with previous experience, which adversely affects the choices open to all young people.

8 Work incentives

On the whole the financial incentives to work were strong for young men, especially those living with their parents. Their benefit entitlements are very small, and any job, even a very low paying one, will make them better off.

There are two groups where this does not apply. The first is young fathers, who become liable to pay maintenance to the Child Support Agency if they get jobs. However, the mothers of their children are no better off as the amounts are deducted from their benefit payments. While unemployed the young men tend to make informal contributions to their children – by buying clothes, for example. They also put time into looking after them, often enabling the mothers to go to work or to college. To compensate for both the time spent with their children and their informal financial contributions, a job has to be particularly attractive (Speak, 1998).

The second group whose incentive position is difficult are young people living in hostels. While they are unemployed, their rent, which

includes an element of support costs as well as purely accommodation charges, is met by housing benefit. However, once in work they become liable to pay their own costs, and their housing benefit entitlement is severely reduced. The result is that unless the hostels have schemes to subsidise the rent of those in work, it can be difficult for both the individual and the hostel to operate within the prevailing financial regime (Randall and Brown, 1999).

In policy terms this makes no sense at all. It is in the long-term interests of the hostels, the individuals, the taxpayer and the wider community that young people who are homeless can have a chance of being integrated into the mainstream. It is also clear that work is one of the most effective ways of achieving this. The underlying problem is the funding regime for hostels. It would make a great deal more sense if the support costs were funded separately from the rental costs so that they were not reliant on individuals' entitlement to housing benefit.

9 Young men on the margins

The evidence from the research is becoming increasingly clear. Young men who have done reasonably well at school, who have support from their families, who are well-motivated and presentable, can work as part of a team and relate well to other people, do not have much difficulty in getting good jobs with reasonable prospects. Those who have some but not all of these characteristics, for example they have no qualifications, but they do have family support, or they live in an area where the labour market is strong, also tend to be employed. Not all will necessarily have the kind of career jobs with prospects to which they aspire, but there are jobs in construction, retailing, hotels and manufacturing where young men are welcome. The evidence does not suggest that there is any exclusion from the world of work on a large scale.

Things are more difficult for young men from disadvantaged groups, but again this needs to be disentangled carefully. For example, there is clear evidence that young men of Caribbean origin are generally at a disadvantage in the labour market. However if they are well qualified and live in the south east of England with a partner, their job and earnings prospects are the same as those of white men in the same position. But, if they have poor qualifications and live alone in Tyne and Wear, particularly during a recession, they are less likely to have a job than a similar young man of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin. The extent of the polarisation within a single ethnic group is enormous (Berthoud, 1999). Although there are disadvantages attached to membership of some minority ethnic groups, the evidence suggests that part of the explanation for this is the differential incidence of other disadvantages.

Thus, for example, the project looking at young homeless people found that around half the people supported by the hostels in the study were of Caribbean or African origin.¹ Only a third were of white English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish origin (Randall and Brown, 1999). It has also been established that young men from ethnic minorities, especially those of Caribbean origin, are over-represented in the prison population. This means that they are more likely to suffer from the labour market disadvantages that have been identified as being particularly important for ex-offenders (Fletcher *et al.*, 1998).

It is apparent from the research reviewed here that there is a group of young men who experience overlapping disadvantages. Although one in three men has a criminal record (other than motoring) by the time they are 30, there is evidence that a history of offending behaviour is associated with labour market disadvantage. For example, 60 per cent of those under the supervision of the probation service were unemployed in 1997. Ex-offenders tend to have poor qualifications. Around half have failed to gain qualifications of any kind and many have serious literacy problems. Evidence from employers suggests that some will not take criminal records into account while others will treat different offences differently, depending on the nature of the business and the nature of the trust relationship required. However, overall ex-offenders have a lower probability of being hired than non-offenders with similar characteristics (Fletcher *et al.*, 1998).

Ex-offenders often lack self-confidence and assertiveness. They are unused to taking responsibility and solving problems, especially if they have been in prison. But these qualities are increasingly sought in entry-level jobs. We

have already seen that they tend to have limited access to networks of people who have jobs. In addition they suffer from a number of other adverse characteristics which are known to be associated with higher unemployment. Up to half have problems with drug and alcohol addiction. Possibly as many as one in five have mental health problems. In addition they lack recent work experience if they have been in prison, and often have housing problems (Fletcher *et al.*, 1998).

If we consider the young people living in hostels, a similar picture emerges. They also often have poor levels of education and qualifications. A significant minority have previously been in local authority care. Some have mental health and substance abuse problems. A quarter have been in prison. Some have unrealistic expectations about the kind of work they can expect to get. Others have low self-confidence and poor motivation. Homelessness *per se* is one of their problems, but it not the only one, and providing them with somewhere to live does not on its own transform their labour market prospects, although it is a start (Randall and Brown, 1999).

Young men who are detached from the wider civil society and do not have close social bonds experience difficulties in all aspects of their lives, not just in getting jobs. Those who are not studying, have no qualifications, live neither with their families nor with a partner, and have no job, are particularly likely to be alienated and suffer social exclusion. Moreover, whereas only 4 per cent of young white men and 6 per cent of young men of Indian origin come into this group, 17 per cent of young men of Caribbean origin do (Berthoud, 1999).

The young men in these most marginalised

groups are rarely job ready, and it is unlikely that the New Deal as it has operated hitherto can offer them the kind of intensive support that they need. The evidence from work with two disadvantaged groups (ex-offenders and young homeless people) is that before they can take part in mainstream skills training, participants need to develop basic personal skills: confidence building, money management, personal hygiene and presentation. They often need specialist help to deal with substance abuse and mental health problems, and greater co-ordination between specialist agencies would be helpful. They then need to learn how to search for jobs and how to be interviewed. Those who lack basic literacy and numeracy skills also need remedial help (Randall and Brown, 1999).

The most disadvantaged young people have generally had poor experiences at school. Many of them have also had experience of government training schemes – often more than one. Attendance at a course does not ensure engagement with it, and compulsion can only ensure attendance. Successful projects tend to concentrate on encouraging individuals to develop their own action plans which identify and build on their existing skills. Measurable progress, even if starting from a low level, is more likely to occur if the targets set are realistic and recognise people's starting points. Encouraging young men to engage with job-related training by means of outreach activity, work in small groups, and holding provision in places which are readily accessible have all been shown to help (Fletcher *et al.*, 1998; Randall and Brown, 1999).

However, as well as these very seriously disadvantaged groups there are other young men who are poised on the margins. They are

not well qualified and suffer from other disadvantages. They are alienated but not yet detached. They tend to have supportive families with whom they still live, which is one of the factors which distinguishes them from the most disadvantaged groups. It was these young men who were the focus of one of the studies reviewed here. Most of the young men in the study had no GCSEs, but had now come to realise the importance of qualifications. They had thought life after school would be much easier than life at school and had found it was much harder. Most had had several jobs, mainly in retailing and services, but some in manufacturing. They had found it hard to learn from what people told them, but had learned by experience. Many now wanted to make up for what they had missed out on at school and go to college to get qualifications (Lloyd, 1999).

What these two groups of young men – the marginalised and the potentially marginalised – have in common is the very poor quality of their experience at school. They have learned little and have operated in a social environment where academic achievement is for wimps. Many of them have at some stage missed out in developing important basic skills and nobody has noticed. They have compensated for their lack of academic achievement by playing truant on a regular basis, challenging teachers, disrupting lessons or simply messing about. As Chapter 4 shows, having played truant at school

is associated not only with poor qualifications, but also, independently, with poor subsequent labour market outcomes and offending behaviour. Someone with no GCSEs who has played truant is more likely to be unemployed than someone with the same lack of qualifications and a similar family background who has attended school regularly. Moreover, persistent truants do worse than those who truant occasionally (Dolton *et al.*, 1999; Fletcher *et al.*, 1998).

The potentially marginalised young men had found it difficult to relate to careers advice, particularly where it came from female careers advisers. They felt that the advice they got was based on stereotyped perceptions rather than any assessment of their own skills and aspirations (Lloyd, 1999). The change of emphasis offered by the government's Connexions initiative might be of help here.

One recurrent theme from the qualitative research was the ability of young men, even those from disadvantaged groups and high unemployment parts of the country, to do casual work for cash in hand (Cartmel and Furlong, 2000; Lloyd, 1999; Randall and Brown, 1999; Speak, 1998). This had positive effects: it provided them with ready access to money and reduced the risk of complete social exclusion. However, at the same time it reduced the incentive to obtain qualifications or join the mainstream.

10 Conclusions

The studies reviewed here cover most of the 1990s, and in some cases contain evidence from the 1980s as well. These historical data are useful in that they make it possible to disentangle different determinants of the labour market changes which have confronted young men. There have been changes in the industrial structure, which have worked mainly to the advantage of adult women. The overall unemployment level is important, both nationally and locally. Young people, because they are new entrants to the labour market, start off as outsiders, and because they lack work (and sometimes life) experience are subject to hyper-cyclical movements. When the overall labour market is depressed, young people's unemployment rates increase more rapidly than those of adults. When the labour market is strong, they fall more quickly too. The effect has been more marked for young men than for young women. Minority ethnic groups also tend to follow a hyper-cyclical pattern. The result is that young men from minority groups tend to have very large shifts in their unemployment rates, depending on the overall state of the labour market.

The strong performance of the labour market during the second half of the 1990s has meant that many of the problems confronting young men during the 1980s and the recession years of the early 1990s have diminished. It was not that nobody wanted to employ young men. It was more that there were other groups employers preferred to hire. Once the supply of those groups began to be exhausted, young men found themselves in jobs. However, there are still geographical disparities. In areas of high unemployment, young men continue to face disadvantages in trying to get work.

Young people's wages have fallen over the past 20 years relative to those of adults, and this has been to their advantage in finding jobs, but has made it more difficult for them to establish independent households at an early age. Many young people in the 1990s have reverted to more traditional patterns of living with their parents until they go to live with a partner.

Technological change has shifted the occupational structure of employment, so that there are fewer unskilled jobs requiring physical strength and more skilled jobs which require academic qualifications. Although academic attainments have been improving, these improvements have been more marked for young women than for young men. The labour market position of young men has become more closely influenced than it was in the past by how well they did at school and how much support they have from their families. These two factors are closely related. Young people's school achievements are influenced by their family backgrounds as well as by how hard they work and whether or not they play truant.

Most young men have managed to embrace these changes. They have stayed in education, got good qualifications followed by good jobs, and they are quite well paid. Others are coping successfully. They may not be well qualified, but they are employed most of the time and earn reasonable amounts. A third group are keeping their heads above water, but only just. They are drifting from one casual service sector job to another. They would like to make up for the time they wasted at school and get a better job, but the structures are not always there to enable them to do so.

Finally, there are the young men who are clearly failing. They lack basic skills as well as

qualifications. They have a history of truancy and exclusion from school. They often have poor health, low self-esteem and few social support networks. They include the homeless and those with offending backgrounds. Government and voluntary agencies tend to concentrate on one dimension of their lives (their health problems or their joblessness), but they are unlikely to be able to re-enter the mainstream without a more integrated approach.

It is difficult to estimate the scale of the problem, as this is a group which is particularly unlikely to be captured by surveys. The Social Exclusion Unit found that at least 4 per cent of each cohort have conduct disorders, around 2 per cent are permanently excluded from school,

and around 6 per cent were neither in education or training, nor in employment for at least six months between the ages of 16 and 18 (Social Exclusion Unit, 2000). Taking these figures together, along with the indications provided by the work of Berthoud and Stafford *et al.* using national surveys, it seems reasonable to conclude that young men with multiple and complex disadvantages probably make up between 5 and 10 per cent of the age group, or a third to a half of the unemployed. They represent the real challenge for the New Deal and for government policy more generally. However, unlike young men who are closer to the mainstream, it is unlikely that the strength of the labour market alone will be sufficient to integrate this group.

Notes

Chapter 3

- 1 Rugg and Jones (1999) find direct evidence of young people making an explicit trade-off between having a car and living independently, with the overwhelming majority attaching greater importance to the car.

Chapter 4

- 1 This was the term used in the original self-completion questionnaires for the Youth Cohort Study. It is likely to include the categories Black Caribbean, Black African and Black Other as defined in other surveys.

Chapter 5

- 1 The issue of the role of family support is considered in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6

- 1 However, it is arguable that because of the acknowledged inadequacies in the way local authorities have exercised their parental responsibilities for young people they have been looking after, these young people have had to take *more* responsibility for themselves than other young people of the same age who have had family support to rely on.

Chapter 9

- 1 The Social Exclusion Unit (2000) reports a similar figure.

References

- Berthoud, R. (1999) *Young Caribbean Men and the Labour Market*. York Publishing Services for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Brown, D., Dickens, R., Gregg, P., Machin, S. and Manning, A. (2001) *Everything under a Fiver: Recruitment and Retention in Lower Paying Labour Markets*. York Publishing Services for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Cartmel, F. and Furlong, A. (2000) *Youth Unemployment in Rural Areas*. York Publishing Services for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- DfEE (1999) *Statistical First Release 31/99, GCSE/ GNVQ and GCE A/AS/Advanced GNVQ Results for Young People in England, 1998/99 (early statistics)*. Department for Education and Employment
- Dolton, P., Makepeace, G., Hutton, S. and Audas, R. (1999) *Making the Grade*. York Publishing Services for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Fletcher, D.R., Woodhill, D. and Herrington, A. (1998) *Building Bridges into Employment and Training for Ex-offenders*. York Publishing Services for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Gregg, P. and Wadsworth, J. (1996) 'Feeling insecure?', *Employment Audit*, No. 2, Autumn
- Lloyd, T. (1999) *Young Men, the Job Market and Gendered Work*. York Publishing Services for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Monk, S., Dunn, J., Fitzgerald, M. and Hodge, I. (1999) *Finding Work in Rural Areas*. York Publishing Services for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- OECD (1997) *Employment Outlook*. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- Pavis, S., Platt, S. and Hubbard, G. (2000) *Young People in Rural Scotland*. York Publishing Services for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Randall, G. and Brown, S. (1999) *Ending Exclusion*. York Publishing Services for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Rugg, J. and Jones, A. (1999) *Getting a Job, Finding a Home: Rural Youth Transitions*. Policy Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Social Exclusion Unit (2000) *Report of Policy Action Team 12: Young People*. Social Exclusion Unit
- Speak, S. (1998) *The Employment Situation of Young Single Parents from Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods*. Working Paper no. 67. Department of Town and Country Planning, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne
- Stafford, B., Heaver, C., Ashworth, K., Bates, C., Walker, R., McKay, S. and Trickey, H. (1999) *Work and Young Men*. York Publishing Services for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Titles available in the *Work and Opportunity* series:

Making work pay: Lone mothers, employment and well-being

Alex Bryson, Reuben Ford and Michael White

This study tracks a sample of lone mothers over five years to find out what works in moving them off benefit, and what really makes a difference in easing hardship.

£11.95

Bridges from benefit to work: A review

Karen Gardiner

An innovative study of 42 welfare-to-work initiatives, assessing which give best value for money, how many people they help, and what the level of take-up is.

£11.95

Combining work and welfare

Jane Millar, Steven Webb and Martin Kemp

An exploration of key questions surrounding in-work benefits, and the likely impact of the national minimum wage.

£11.95

Lone mothers moving in and out of benefits

Michael Noble, George Smith and Sin Yi Cheung

This study analyses how and why lone mothers move between income support and in-work benefits, and considers current and future policy directions.

£11.95

Pathways through unemployment: The effects of a flexible labour market

Michael White and John Forth

A study of the effects and long-term consequences of flexible forms of work – particularly the part-time, self-employed and temporary jobs often taken up by unemployed people.

£11.95

Local responses to long-term unemployment

Mike Campbell with Ian Sanderson and Fiona Walton

A review of research to date on how to reconnect the long-term unemployed to the labour market.

£12.95

Company recruitment policies: Implications for production workers

Stanley Siebert

This study explores whether increased regulation of the labour market has an impact on hiring standards, screening out less qualified workers and so reducing their job opportunities.

£12.95

Young men, the job market and gendered work

Trefor Lloyd

A study of whether young men are being adequately prepared for the contemporary workplace, and whether their, or others', gender assumptions are affecting their opportunities.

£10.95

Back to work: Local action on unemployment

Ian Sanderson with Fiona Walton and Mike Campbell

This report complements *Local responses to long-term unemployment* (above), presenting detailed case-study research into what local action is effective in getting people into work.

£13.95

Ending exclusion: Employment and training schemes for homeless young people

Geoffrey Randall and Susan Brown

An evaluation of the particular difficulties in finding work faced by this group, and an assessment of the impact of a range of projects designed to assist them.

£13.95

Job insecurity and work intensification: Flexibility and the changing boundaries of work

Brendan J. Burchell, Diana Day, Maria Hudson, David Ladipo, Roy Mankelow, Jane P. Nolan, Hannah Reed, Ines C. Wichert and Frank Wilkinson

An exploration into the effect of job insecurity on the social, physical and psychological well-being of employees.

£13.95

Whose flexibility? The costs and benefits of 'non-standard' working arrangements and contractual relations

Kate Purcell, Terence Hogarth and Claire Simm

Drawing on the experience of a range of industries and organisations, the report analyses the economic, operational and social effects of flexible employment practices.

£13.95

Finding work in rural areas: Barriers and bridges

Sarah Monk, Jessica Dunn, Maureen Fitzgerald and Ian Hodge

A timely analysis of disadvantage in rural areas, and the role employment plays in this. The report focuses on the particular problems people in rural areas face and what strategies work in attempting to find work.

£12.95

Work and young men

Bruce Stafford, Claire Heaver, Karl Ashworth, Charlotte Bates, Robert Walker, Steve McKay and Heather Trickey

A study which analyses whether certain young men are underachieving, and what the long-term consequences of this are. The authors also review the social, personal and economic factors that affect how young men are integrated into the labour market.

£13.95

Making the grade: Education, the labour market and young people

Peter Dolton, Gerry Makepeace, Sandra Hutton and Rick Audas

The decisions young people make when they first become eligible to leave school are crucial to their long-term prospects. This wide-ranging study investigates what influences a child's performance and choices during this important time.

£14.95

Young Caribbean men and the labour market: A comparison with other ethnic groups

Richard Berthoud

An exploration of the challenges faced by a group of young people with an exceptionally high risk of unemployment. The study relates young Caribbean men's experiences in the labour market to other ethnic groups, whose employment prospects vary substantially.

£14.95

Young people in rural Scotland: Pathways to social inclusion and exclusion

Stephen Pavis, Stephen Platt and Gill Hubbard

This report provides substantial first-hand evidence of what life is like for rural young people today. It explores the impact of education on their work opportunities, and how rural wages, available accommodation and isolation affect their lifestyle and their transitions to adulthood.

£12.95

Youth unemployment in rural areas

Fred Cartmel and Andy Furlong

A review of the distinctive features of rural youth unemployment, including seasonal work, transport issues and the importance of local networks in obtaining work.

£12.95

Successful futures? Community views on adult education and training

Helen Bowman, Tom Burden and John Konrad

This study focuses on the perceptions and experiences of people who have taken part in the new Government schemes designed to enable them to find work and increase their skills.

£12.95

The intermediate labour market: A tool for tackling long-term unemployment

Bob Marshall and Richard Macfarlane

An examination of ILM programmes, designed to move people back into work. It looks at their structure, and what factors lie behind achieving successful implementation and results.

£13.95

Enduring economic exclusion: Disabled people, income and work

Tania Burchardt

This report offers details analysis of the position of disabled people in the labour market and in the income distribution, and how the situation has changed since the 1980s.

£14.95

Everything under a fiver: Recruitment and retention in lower paying labour markets

Donna Brown, Richard Dickens, Paul Gregg, Stephen Machin and Alan Manning

A study of firms offering 'entry-level' jobs, whose wages are in the bottom fifth of the national earnings distribution. The report not only throws light on how these firms and their workers behave, but also explores how their behaviour relates to economic theory.

£13.95

Young men on the margins of work: An overview report

Pamela Meadows

An overview of a series of JRF-funded research projects, which looked at young men's experience in the labour market during the 1990s, against a background of social and technological change. The author draws out the key findings and conclusions from this large body of research.

£10.95

What works locally?

Mike Campbell and Pamela Meadows

This overview study examines current evidence on what can be done at the local level to get people into work. It reviews research on local employment and training initiatives, and considers implications for future policy development.

£10.95

Further reports from this series will be published throughout 2001.