

Bright Future

An independent Review

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It's what we do

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1 Introduction

Bright Future is a pathway to permanent employment for survivors of modern slavery. It is an initiative created by the Co-op in partnership with City Hearts to offer paid work placements leading to a non-competitive job interview. The programme is open to survivors of modern slavery who are identified as suitable by charity partners who work on the programme with the Co-op along with business partners, and who continue to offer regular support to those on placements.

Bright Future was launched in March 2017. It is one of the first systematic attempts in the world to offer a pathway to employment for survivors of Modern Slavery¹. It fits into the third pillar of the UN's Guiding Principles for Human Rights and Business – access to remedy – for victims of modern slavery, where the abuse experienced is generally work-related².

This is the second review of Bright Future carried out by the University of Liverpool. It follows an interim review which was completed in the autumn of 2017. The interim review concluded that Bright Future is an 'extremely valuable initiative' that has 'qualified success thus far, with good foundations to grow and become an even more beneficial programme in the future'³.

At the point at which this review was completed (June 2019), the Bright Future programme comprised 20 business partners (including the Co-op) and 28 charity partners.



¹ Other initiatives addressing employment opportunities for survivors of modern slavery were reviewed and summarised as part of the interim review of Bright Future.

² United Nations (2011), 'Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights' United Nations: <https://bit.ly/2KMYv8p>

³ A. Balch et al (2018), 'The Co-op's Bright Future programme: An independent Interim Review', University of Liverpool: <https://coop.uk/2j8EP23>.

1.1 Context

The task of supporting survivors of modern slavery in the UK, and the need for programmes such as Bright Future, has become arguably more urgent in the two years since the programme was launched. In 2017, there were 5,143 potential victims referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the system of support for people where there are grounds to suspect they have been a victim of modern slavery. In 2018 the number rose to 6,993, an annual rate of increase of 36%⁴. According to the Home Office Annual Report on Modern Slavery⁵ the total number of potential victims in the UK is between 10,000 and 13,000 (2014 estimate). However, the latest figures from the Global Slavery Index, which estimate a population of 136,000, suggest the number of potential victims could be much larger⁶.

The limited and short-term nature of support available to survivors has been criticised by a series of independent reviews⁷. A large number of individuals referred to the NRM eventually receive negative decisions on their cases⁸ without access to a formal appeals process. In 2018 the government lost a legal challenge to its decision to reduce subsistence funding for victims⁹, and parliamentary attempts to extend victims 'leave to remain' have so far been thwarted¹⁰.

Longer-term support for those identified as victims has thus been left largely to third sector organisations¹¹ while the government has chosen to prioritise the pursuit and prosecution of perpetrators¹². As many (but not all) of the victims of modern slavery are foreign nationals, support for this group is also undermined by recent developments in immigration control policies¹³.

Finally, uncertainty over Brexit is likely to increase the number of individuals in situations of precarity, rendered more vulnerable to exploitation as a result of profound difficulties in achieving legal status to reside and work in the UK¹⁴. In addition, it is likely that many individuals rendered vulnerable to exploitation due (at least in part) to uncertain immigration status, will not have permission to work following their exploitation and so not able to benefit from the Bright Future programme and the pathway it provides to recovery and rebuilding lives.



⁴ Not including potential victims who choose not to enter the NRM, which can be for a range of reasons, including the time an individual can face before a decision is made on their case (NAO 2017).

⁵ <https://bit.ly/2NNEXh0>.

⁶ <https://bit.ly/2J13CiU>.

⁷ Human Trafficking Foundation (2015), 'Life Beyond the Safe House For Survivors of Modern Slavery in London': <https://bit.ly/2RLiVzZ>; A. Balch (2017) 'Fresh Start: Integrating Survivors of Modern Slavery,' University of Liverpool; National Audit Office (2017), 'Reducing Modern Slavery', National Audit Office (NAO): London: <https://bit.ly/2pO9SDl>, pac (2018) 'reducing modern slavery'; Inquiry, Public Accounts Committee: <https://bit.ly/2FyElqt>.

⁸ Those accepted into the NRM have already had a preliminary ('reasonable grounds') decision that they are a victim of modern slavery. These cases are then subject to an investigation before a final ('conclusive grounds') decision is made.

⁹ K & Anor, 8th November 2018, found level of support to be unlawful. <https://bit.ly/2XcEOsl>

¹⁰ The Private Members' Bill tabled by Lord McColl was, as of 5 June 2019, waiting for second reading in the House of Commons.

¹¹ For example, City Hearts has supported several hundred people who have passed through the NRM and no longer qualify for statutory funding, through its long-term support programme: <https://bit.ly/2ZYTFtq>.

¹² G. Craig, A. Balch, H. Lewis and L. Waite Bristol (2019), The Modern Slavery Agenda: Policy, Politics and Practice.

¹³ See for example Criminalisation of Illegal Working and Right to Rent, Immigration Act, 2016.

¹⁴ Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX), London (2019), 'Briefing: Disposable Workers: The Future of the UK's Migrant Workforce', FLEX - Focus on Labour Exploitation: London: <https://bit.ly/322tQt0>; Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group (ATMG), London (2017): 'Brexit and the UK's Fight Against Modern Slavery: A Briefing by the Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group': <https://bit.ly/2Nq8zpW>.

1.2 Key questions

This review has been commissioned as part of the Co-op's ongoing development of Bright Future and its long-term strategy to establish Bright Future as a sustainable independent national programme (See Annex A for full Terms of Reference).

The aims of the review are to:

1. Review the approach of Bright Future to date (including everything from progress against objectives, to achievements and challenges).
2. Review the Bright Future model and its effectiveness, with particular reference to the development of the National Matching System, the new business and charity partners, the Regional Support Framework and implementation of placements in businesses outside of the Co-op.
3. Draw out lessons and recommendations for the next phase of the programme, specifically how Bright Future will become independent of the Co-op, in a sustainable way.

1.3 Methodology

The Review was carried out between March and May 2019 by the authors, and covers the period from the launch of the National Matching System in January 2018 to end-May 2019. The review included 18 semi-structured interviews with key internal and external stakeholders and analysis of pre- and post-placement questionnaires completed by 14 candidates. The interviewees were made up Co-op/City Hearts personnel directly involved in Bright Future (four), Bright Future business partners (four), Bright Future charity partners (six), Bright Future placement candidates (two) and external stakeholders (two). The review also included observation of three regional training events. It was supplemented with a review of key documents including Bright Future process documents being used by business and charity partners and analysis of the database created via the National Matching System.

The research undertaken as part of this review was approved by the University of Liverpool ethics committee, which included scrutiny of all research instruments (in particular, the process to gain informed consent, ensure anonymity and systems relating to protection of data).

2 Evolution of Bright Future (2017-19)

Bright Future initially developed through a collaboration with City Hearts, a charity based largely in the North of England which supports hundreds of survivors of modern slavery after they leave the NRM. (City Hearts is the largest provider of longer term support in the UK.) Bright Future has grown quickly to include other charity partners which support survivors of modern slavery both through the NRM and outside of it. Bright Future offers paid work placements and a guaranteed job interview to survivors of slavery, so offering them one way to build their independence and move on with their lives.

In under two years Bright Future has grown to include 48 organisations comprising charity partners (that support victims and survivors) and business partners (businesses which provide work placements) - see Annex B for a full list of partners.

By 2019 nearly all of those agencies which provide direct support to victims of modern slavery through the UK government's NRM had joined Bright Future. This has involved considerable investment from the Co-op with spending over £100,000 each year, but the Co-op does not see the programme as an open-ended commitment. The vision for Bright Future has always been about creating a sustainable, national system of matching paid work placements to survivors of modern slavery who are ready to and who have permission to work. The investment therefore represents national but limited seed funding that is designed to help Bright Future grow, develop and become self-sustaining.



2.1 Response to the interim review

The interim review put forward a number of recommendations to be considered, the majority of which were taken forward.

Bright Future to move from a manual matching system dependent upon a few individuals, and transform it by creating a permanent 'home' and full-time staffing situation. This was acted upon with the creation of a National Matching System, based within City Hearts and a more robust database approach to storing and tracking the matching process. The future sustainability of Bright Future, and how it will be developed with a fully online platform (due to be completed in 2019) is discussed in Section 2.3 ('Next Steps') and Section 5.1 ('Selecting and developing a sustainable model').

The interim review also recommended **broadening the type of placements offered to candidates, to facilitate an increase in placements.** This has been acted upon by bringing new business partners into Bright Future from a wide range of sectors. There has been a positive start, however more work could be done here to provide an increasing range of opportunities, which will be discussed further in the rest of this Review (see Section 4 'Building the Bright Future Community', and Section 7 'Recommendations').

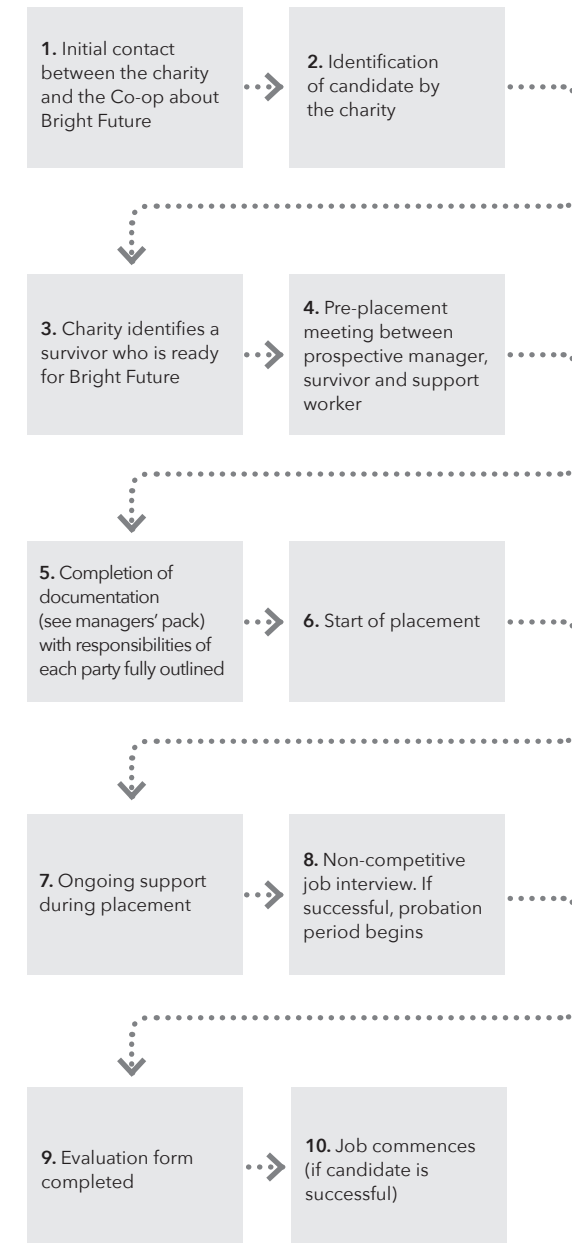
A number of recommendations were made relating to **ensuring robust HR procedures.** The Co-op has responded to this by commissioning a review of process by the HR department; updated materials will be released this year. The interim review also identified a need for more detailed documentation explaining process and the nature of Bright Future. The response to this has been to emphasise the partnership element of the programme, dealing with each case in a bilateral/bespoke manner, based on the building of relationships between partners. As the programme scales up this may prove too intensive to manage and a more comprehensive 'code of practice' may still be needed. The question of how to develop and communicate best practice is addressed in Section 4 (and Section 7).

Finally, the interim review's recommendations included a call for the **Co-op to leverage its campaigning and policy influence.** The business has responded to this and contributed to a number of public debates, using the experience of Bright Future as a positive programme for survivor support. This issue is also returned to in the Recommendations.

2.2 The National Matching System

One of the responses to the interim review was the decision by the Co-op and City Hearts to create a dedicated hub for Bright Future and establish a National Matching System (NMS). A significant part of the development of the NMS was to create a two-person team comprising a National Co-ordinator post, with assistance from another staff member. These positions are currently based within City Hearts and combined with City Heart's programme of long-term support for survivors¹⁵. The role of the National Co-ordinator is to be the first point of contact for charity partners referring a potential candidate. This referral is then matched with an existing job opportunity that has been offered by a Bright Future business partner. The placement process is then overseen by the National Co-ordinator.

As the programme has been expanded to include new business partners and referring partners, the importance of transparency of procedures and transferability of processes is important. We found considerable diversity in the approach taken by managers. Some that we interviewed reported that Bright Future can be an HR-intensive effort as businesses can choose to place it outside of standard HR processes, others told us that they simply fit candidates into existing procedures. We found that in some cases, HR staff are unfamiliar with the issues facing survivors, such as limited education levels (particularly in spoken English and numeracy), challenges related to mental and physical health, and familiarity with the British social and economic system, including practical issues such as gaining NI numbers or opening bank accounts.



¹⁵ A Balch (2017), 'Fresh Start: Integrating Survivors of Modern Slavery' University of Liverpool.

2.3 Future plans

As mentioned previously, the interim review recommended that Bright Future become more systematic and less dependent upon the work of a few individuals searching for opportunities and matching candidates in a rather labour-intensive way. The NMS is managed through a basic database, but plans are underway to move to a fully digital platform with the support of BT and Do It Life¹⁶. This will facilitate the matching process, and streamline and automate communications between business and charity partners. It will also enable a much greater level of insight into any problems and obstacles relating to the process of matching and timescales, allowing deeper analysis of the journey from referral to placement and opening up opportunities for improvement.

It is expected that there will be a fully working system by the end of 2019. Each charity partner will have an organisational profile and user account to access the platform and will be able to submit the candidate profile/matching form online. They will be able to manage the list of candidates and edit details. The details will be used to match against work placements and businesses will also have a profile.

The Bright Future partners have previously discussed what the 'vision' for the programme should be. At a 'summit' held in Manchester in February 2019 a draft version was proposed: **"Bright Future's vision is to see survivors of modern slavery fully restored and living in freedom with dignity. This will be achieved by offering a supported, fast track to work in partnership with business and referral partners."** This vision is due to be formally discussed and potentially agreed by partners at a further summit in June 2019.

The screenshot shows a web form titled 'Create a work placement opportunity' on the 'Do It Life Corporate' website. The form is divided into sections for 'Placement details'. It includes input fields for 'Job title' (with a placeholder 'Enter job title here'), 'Company' (with a dropdown 'Select company'), and 'Description' (a large text area). Below these are several dropdown menus: 'Role types' (with 'What kind of role is it?'), 'Location' (with 'Choose location'), 'What does the site do?' (with 'What site do?'), 'Specific skills required' (with 'Select skills'), 'Part-time role available?' (with 'No'), 'Full-time role available?' (with 'Yes'), and 'Level of English Required' (with 'Level 2 (NVQ)'). At the bottom right, there are two buttons: 'Preview' and 'Create placement'.

¹⁶ Do It Life Social Enterprise Ltd (<https://doit.life>).

3 Assessing Bright Future

Since the second stage of Bright Future began, with the launch of the NMS at the start of 2018, the programme has expanded.



In order to assess Bright Future, the review team carried out interviews with candidates, charity and business partners. The review team were also provided with 13 pre-placement and 12 post-placement questionnaires that candidates themselves had filled in. The questionnaires are intended to provide insight into the impact of Bright Future placements upon candidates, asking how the process has affected the candidate’s confidence and skills, and what the most significant barriers they face are.

The questionnaires have been refined several times since they were first developed as they were not being used consistently, but the total number completed is still relatively small. The value of collecting this source of data for assessing the benefits of Bright Future is clear as the number of placements rises and there are more responses to draw upon.

In general the feedback from those candidates that completed the pre- and post-placement questionnaires (around 50% response rate) was very positive. Over half (7/12) reported an increase in how positive they felt about their future at the end of the placement, and that they felt more ‘part of the local community’. However, it should be noted that most candidates (11/12) reported no change in self-confidence at the end of the placement. A full summary of the responses received is contained in Annex C.

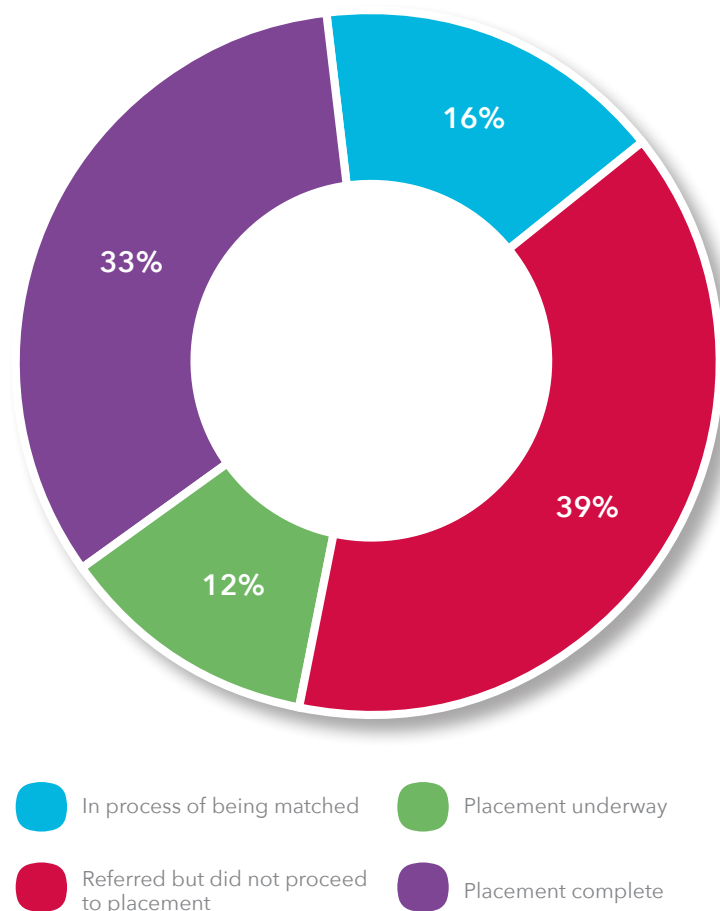
Aside from the impacts of Bright Future on individuals, the questionnaires also help to identify issues faced during the placement or in getting a job before or after a placement. Handling alcohol was identified as a problem in both the questionnaires and the interviews (for religious reasons or because of addiction). The main issue highlighted in the pre- and post-placement questionnaires in terms of making it harder for candidates to find work, was the lack of a job history. Lack of qualifications was also a major barrier. Communication issues were mentioned, but in relation to the candidate’s ability to speak English, rather than understanding of local accents/ dialects, or industry specific language (such as abbreviations).

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<p>“When others who have been through similar circumstances hear that I’m now employed - they’re shocked.” IK</p>	<p>“I think more experience in the job would help. If the placement was extended I feel I would have a better chance.” JK (wasn’t offered a job).</p>	<p>“I love working with the general public, it has given me a lovely boost of energy... this placement has been so important to me because I’m no longer sitting all day in the house which was bad for my mental health.” RK</p>
.....

3.1 Results and challenges

In many of the interviews we carried out, disappointment was expressed in terms of how few referrals end up as placements. There was some frustration expressed by businesses who were keen to offer a placement to a suitable candidate but for one reason or another were unable to make things work. The data collected through the NMS shows opportunity for improvement in terms of the number of referrals that could be turned into placements. A significant percentage were not matched (not taken forward), and this was for a range of reasons.

Figure 1 - Outcomes of candidates referred in the period January 2018 – May 2019



"We have made 10 referrals, and this has resulted in 2 placements. From our side the reasons for placements not going ahead included: Candidates not being interested in the job after initial meeting (didn't want to work in retail), too long a commute to placement (2-3 buses) or unexpected accommodation problems arose."

Interview 1

"Out of 5-6 referrals, we have had 1 successful placement. This has been because of English level being too low. There was one man the business and charity partner did not feel he was mentally ready. For another, they were offered a job but got another one before the placement started (it took about 6 weeks to get things sorted)."

Interview 2

"Sometimes a lot of effort has gone into (arranging the) placement and if it doesn't happen it is sad to know they may have gone back to situation they came from."

Interview 3

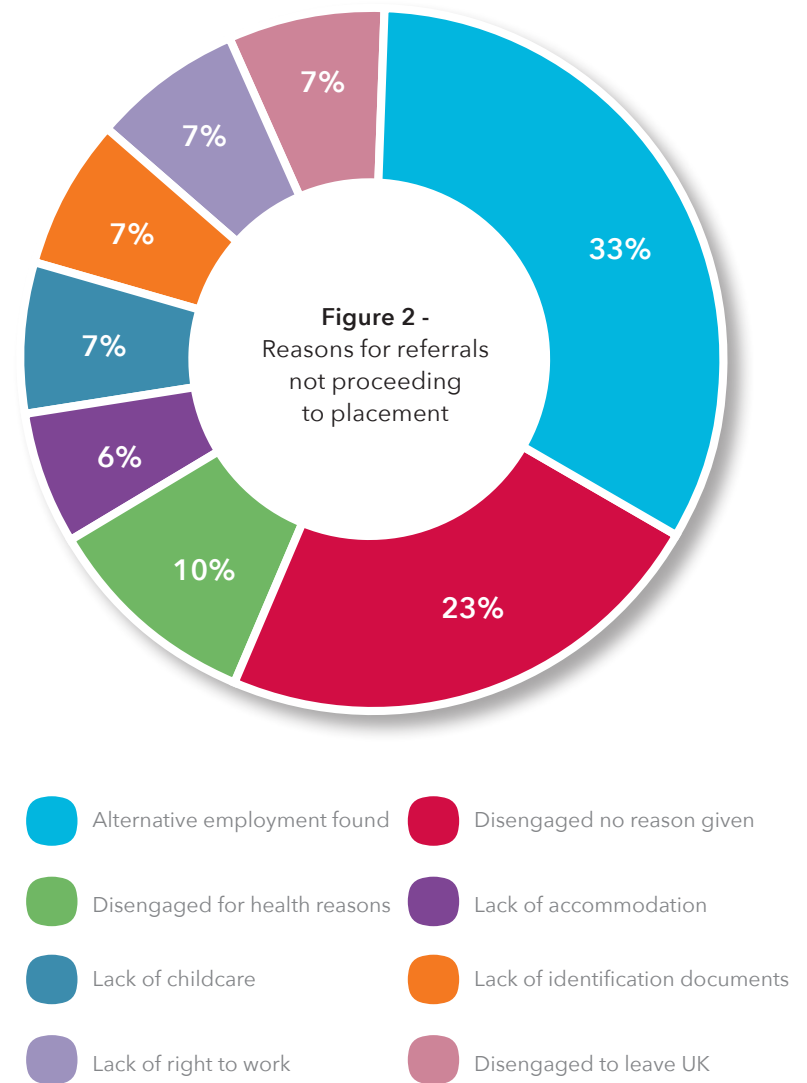
There were a range of different reasons for referrals not turning into successful placements. In some cases, this can be explained by a lack of familiarity with the minimum requirements of the programme by charity partners, meaning the client is not quite ready for a Bright Future placement. In other cases, the candidate chose to withdraw from the programme because it did not meet their needs at that particular time.

The most common reasons for referred candidates not being accepted for a Bright Future placement were:

- English not at required level
- Right to work documentation not ready
- Ongoing charity partner support not in place for commencement of placement
- Instability in personal circumstances
- Arranging the initial meeting – it can be hard to match schedules
- Suitability of job opportunities

Reasons for referred candidates not proceeding to a placement:

- Alternative employment found (10)
- Disengaged – no reason given (7)
- Disengaged for health reasons (3)
- Lack of accommodation (2)
- Lack of childcare (2)
- Lack of identification documents (2)
- Lack of right to work (2)
- Disengaged to leave UK (2)



Our research found that one of the biggest barriers to the expansion of Bright Future is the lack of placements in the right locations. This is particularly the case in the Midlands, where there have been a significant number of referrals but a small number of placements. This is also the case where the client might have the skills and experience to work in warehousing or the construction industry, but not in a public-facing customer service role. One of the challenges in expanding Bright Future and offering more placements is trying to maintain a balance between safeguarding placements and providing enough opportunities. Many industries such as construction or hospitality predominantly use agencies for staff, which has been demonstrated to carry a higher risk of precarious employment and even exploitation¹⁷. Looking at strategies to increase the reach and impact of Bright Future will be addressed in Section 7, Recommendations.

Time between referral and placement

Overall the average time between the referral being submitted to the NMS and the candidate starting their placement is 86 days. The reasons for the delay are similar in some respects to the reasons for referrals not being taken forward. Lack of available placements within a suitable commuting distance is a common issue, as is suitability of work type. Arranging a meeting date and time when everyone is available can be difficult. The ratio of referrals to successful placements, and the time from referral to the beginning of a placement could both be used as key performance indicators of Bright Future.

In the Midlands area particularly, a lack of jobs that are within the skill set of the candidates is a significant delaying factor. Work is being done to expand the number of available placements in a wider variety of sectors, which if successful would reduce waiting times and increase the number of successful referrals.

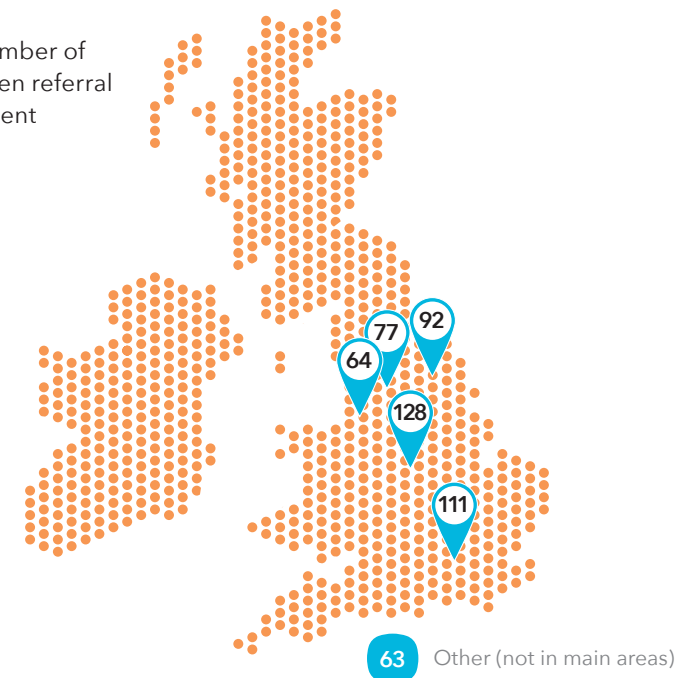
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"Sometimes it has taken 6-8 weeks to get to pre-placement meeting. Whatsapp messages has been an option when the store manager is willing. Cutting me out of any communication to simplify things." HR Manager

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Figure 3 -

Average number of days between referral and placement by location



¹⁷ Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), Nottingham (2017), 'Construction Protocol': <https://bit.ly/2FWSCS3>

3.2 Business partners

During our interviews we were told a lot of positive stories about Bright Future from business partners. The benefits reported to us included:

- Improved understanding about working with vulnerable people.
- Increasing awareness amongst staff, particularly managers, about modern slavery.
- One business partner has since gone on to develop their own training on spotting the signs.



Some businesses told us that they see Bright Future as similar to the framework they have for other placement schemes for vulnerable or excluded groups, with ex-offenders for example. Suggestions for areas for improvements in efficiency and effectiveness in the future include:

- Resources/training
 - Business partners praised the level of guidance and the availability of someone to answer queries. However, some said that written resources that include a greater level of detail would be helpful.
 - We heard a range of views across business about level of training required. Some people were satisfied with their level of knowledge, but others wanted much more around working with vulnerable people.
- Confidentiality
 - We were told of one case where the employer struggled to maintain confidentiality about candidate's past. This was because they wanted to protect the candidate from the curiosity of other colleagues, particularly if they had a 'challenging attitude'. This was explained to us as being 'stuck between a rock and a hard place'.
- Practical difficulties
 - Due to the nature of Bright Future, some candidates with borderline language capability were accepted for placements they might not ordinarily have obtained, and this did cause some difficulties in communication for managers.
 - While employers understood that in these kinds of situations there may be delays in setting up a bank account¹⁸, receiving pay, tax code issues, etc, in one case this caused a trauma relapse for the candidate, where the experience of (apparent) non-payment of wages triggered memories of their previous abusive situation.

¹⁸ The HSBC Survivor Bank account has been offered to a number of Bright Future candidates.

3.3 Charity partners

Our interviews with charity partners were also positive about the value of, and need for, Bright Future based on the growing numbers of potential beneficiaries. These interviewees also raised the following issues:

- **The need for more varied types of placements.**
 - "I would like to see more opportunities for more people in different spheres of work."
- **A request for longer placements** due to the difficulties of balancing reductions in benefits that occur when someone who is unemployed begins work.
 - "A four-week work placement is enough to really screw up someone's benefits. Whilst it was going to be an 8-week placement originally I think, it became 4 weeks. I think that is a problem and I don't know what the solution is..."
- **Clarity around the concept of 'work-readiness'.**
 - Some charity partners asked for more guidance on making judgements on 'work-readiness', despite the fact that the referral form is designed to help with this.
 - In one of the regional training sessions, it was suggested that case workers can become "so involved that they will know if [candidates] are work ready". Another commented that in one case there had been no presentation of trauma issues, but during the placement these were triggered when an issue arose around pay, proving how difficult it is to establish readiness for work.
- **The need for good communication.**
 - Sometimes being the 'middle-person', can be challenging for charity partners. "When the employer comes for the pre-placement meeting, there will always be information that has been communicated differently, for example, there was an issue with hours which the case worker had not understood herself..."
- **Managing everyone's expectations about Bright Future.**
 - It could be useful for the charity partner to develop a comprehensive understanding and outline of expectations in the job (what a typical day looks like, employment practices, breaks, benefits such as pension, annual leave, payment for overtime, what a non-competitive interview 'looks like').
 - Candidates could benefit from a thorough grounding in employment rights and what to expect from an employer – people with a history of exploitative work may not know about standards and what reasonable expectations are.
- **The dilemma of 'special' treatment.**
 - One of Bright Future's strengths is that candidates are treated 'just like any other worker'. However, the complication is that the placement itself (and guarantee of a non-competitive job interview) is not standard. They may also bypass some tests and get their application fast-tracked.
 - If there is no special treatment this can cause difficulties, for candidates with children who need flexibility in choosing shifts, or for candidates who need time-off for police interviews or other commitments related to human trafficking and ongoing legal cases (this would simply be counted as annual leave). This must be clear to possible candidates and charity partners from the start so as not to build false expectations which could lead to resentment or misunderstandings down the line.

Quotes from our interviews with participants
in Bright Future

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**"I work with good people, like a family,
and the manager is so kind - a very
good man."** Candidate

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**"It is the best placement in my life. How
much they encourage me, how much
they give me respect. They give me
training, it is a big store and a very busy
store, there are so many things going
on. So, they gave me training on the till,
and on the shelves."** Candidate

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**"It took it to land on my doorstep
before I knew about Modern Slavery
- if people knew it would give people
the opportunity to step forward and
volunteer to get involved. It opened
my eyes that this is a real issue and is
happening all around."** Manager

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**"I'm hoping to see more employers
hearing about Bright Future, catching
the vision and getting involved."**

Charity partner

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**"The Co-op have bent over backwards
to make this work... they have gone
over and above."** Charity partner

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**"Giving someone so vulnerable an
opportunity is a really good thing.
More companies should be doing this."**

Business partner

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4 Building the Bright Future community

Two years on from its launch Bright Future now represents a community of 48 business and charity organisations. Despite this, and the move to a more systematic process via the NMS, Bright Future still appears to be dependent upon the hard work and commitment of a relatively small number of people at the centre.

In our view it is essential that the Bright Future community and the experience and knowledge that sustains this be further developed through greater attention being paid to learning, training and communication.



4.1 Learning and training

Business partners currently do not have any formal training as part of Bright Future. We heard from businesses who had a meeting with a representative from Bright Future (usually City Hearts or the Co-op), and attended one of the quarterly summits to exchange experiences. We also spoke with managers who had simply sat down with a representative from a charity partner for half an hour in order to familiarise themselves with the programme.

In 2019 Bright Future ran a series of training events in key locations across the country (Manchester, London, Sheffield). These events were for charity partners only and were designed to give a detailed breakdown of the referral process and the appropriate way to fill in the referral form. The meetings also provided an opportunity for discussion and workshop time where partners could discuss issues 'on the ground' and get clarification on any problems or obstacles they may have been encountering. Members of the research team attended each of the sessions. We found them to be helpful opportunities to build a sense of community among charity partners, especially in terms of introducing new partners to the process and providing basic training, or to refresh existing partners on best practice. The feedback we received from participants was very positive, but there was a feeling that in order to extract the maximum value from the sessions they need to be more than a one-off exercise and be held regularly in order for issues to be explored in greater depth.

There is not currently any formal training offered for business partners or the line managers that will be working with the candidates on a day-to-day basis. This is a potential gap that could be filled to benefit the programme. An aspect of training that may be of particular value would be to provide a basic level of trauma and post-trauma awareness, as well as training on the nature of a Bright Future placement and candidate.

4.2 Communication and support

The partnership between Bright Future, the candidate, the charity partner and the business partner is a vital part of its success. In instances where there has been positive and meaningful communication between partners, placements have been more successful and any issues arising have been dealt with effectively. Where communication has been less strong, this has created delays and risks the progress of the placement itself. To mitigate this there have been some innovative developments in developing communication, such as Whatsapp groups. The importance of regular and good quality communication between charity partner, candidate and placement manager should be emphasised as this provides the opportunity to potentially pick up problems before they develop.

4.3 Internal ongoing evaluation

In order to maintain a continual evaluation of the programme, pre- and post-placement feedback questionnaires are built into the process which are to be completed by candidates. There has been some success with collecting data this way as summarised above (and in Annex C), but there are opportunities for improvement in order to get more usable information (see our Recommendations, Section 7). There was an attempt to include line managers in this process of gaining feedback on placements, but during the period covered here no forms had been completed by this group.

5 Sustainable work-based remediation for survivors of modern slavery

The evidence from this review, and the previous interim review, is that Bright Future is producing welcome results in the field of work-based remediation for survivors of modern slavery. It is an effective way of addressing some of the harms experienced by this group, and this success means it now sits front and centre of work-based remediation for survivors of modern slavery in the UK. It also underlines how important it is for Bright Future to continue to grow and become sustainable in the longer term. Only then can it achieve its goal of providing the necessary opportunities for those who are work-ready and in the NRM.

Section 2 shows how City Hearts and the Co-op have been central in building Bright Future. But this means that any changes in either of those organisations, or their withdrawal, could threaten the sustainability of the programme. If there is broad agreement among stakeholders that Bright Future should continue to operate, and even be expanded, a decision needs to be made about the choice and construction of a national model. Such a decision should be made in an open, collective and consultative manner.



5.1 Selecting and developing a sustainable model

When considering what form a sustainable model for Bright Future should take, a preliminary question is what extent this should be government-supported? The authors of this review are firmly of the view that long-term support should be a core part of the government's provision of support for survivors. However, the evidence from Bright Future is that when a high-profile business – in this case the Co-op – makes a financial commitment and assumes leadership, then it is possible to make a difference for survivors by encouraging other businesses and civil society to work together towards a common goal. This has happened in ways it would be hard to imagine government achieving through policy or regulation.

However, this is of course a balance: the role of government is essential in ensuring a supportive environment for programmes such as Bright Future. The relationship between the government's National Referral Mechanism and the benefits system is crucial, and government policy could do much more to promote survivor recovery. This could be via work opportunities if there is funding for needs-led, longer-term support that includes wider access to the right to work and residence, such as is proposed through Lord McColl's Private Members' Victim Support Bill.

If Bright Future is to remain independent of government, what are the options for a national system? Obvious alternatives are for Bright Future to become:

- A charity with board of trustees
- A company limited by guarantee
- A co-operative
- A Social Enterprise



We asked our interviewees for their views on how Bright Future should be developed (see selected quotes below) and while there were a range of opinions, the option most favoured was for Bright Future to operate as a business. The alternative of Bright Future operating as a national charity could risk losing some of the value gained by having a business identity, run as a business and prioritising work-based remediation.

.....

"It is key that there is a motivational and inspirational leader leading Bright Future."
Business partner

.....

"I would worry if it went big and that the experience wouldn't be great. There needs to be really strong HR processes built into the business to make it work." HR Manager

.....

"I think it should be run by a business - if the role was just with an NGO, I think they would struggle more to get mainstream businesses involved. There is always buy in from NGOS, but businesses are harder to get." Charity partner

.....

"There should be a coherent policy for remediation for all individuals in the NRM, and this [Bright Future] should be the work strand. That's why it needs to be run as a business and leadership is crucial - to make a business out of this."
Stakeholder, Stronger2gether

If Bright Future is run as a business, this raises a further series of questions including: "What is the business case?" and "Where would the money come from?". The answers to these questions are beyond the scope of this review. However, it should be noted that the more than £100,000 investment from the Co-op thus far has been considerable. This commitment has also included payments to the charity partners to cover part of their costs supporting the candidates throughout the process. Any future national independent Bright Future would have to factor in how those costs are met, and in our view a company limited by guarantee could answer many of these issues. This would mean Bright Future becoming a private limited company with guarantors instead of shareholders. These guarantors could be made up of the existing business partners. These guarantors could not only make a contribution to the ongoing costs (as the Co-op has been doing), but also agree to pay towards debts in the case of any financial difficulties. This would also have the advantage of creating a legal entity that is independent of those running it, thus providing greater stability and sustainability.

6 Conclusions

The evidence gathered from candidates and other participants in Bright Future as part of this review confirmed the findings from the interim review, that the Bright Future model is both **relevant** and **effective**. The interviews with charity and business partners point to the strongly positive impact of Bright Future for its stakeholders and beneficiaries. As such, Bright Future is worthy of continued support. It shows what can be done by businesses and sets a benchmark for work-based remediation in the field of modern slavery.

The **results** of Bright Future are encouraging. There has been a positive rate of growth from the beginning of 2018 when Bright Future moved into its second phase with the introduction of the National Matching System. This demonstrates the enthusiasm of business and charity partners and the potential number of candidates that are interested in exploring the opportunities that Bright Future offers. However, it also demonstrates the potential for even greater levels of impact and raises questions around **efficiency**. Referrals to Bright Future have increased, but the number of successful placements has remained relatively low, and the time between referrals and placements is quite long. This review has examined the reasons for this and addressed the question of efficiency in detail. We identified a number of important issues regarding the interface between the business and charity partner, the process of matching, and factors which can explain the gap between referrals and placements.

The findings from our research were used to generate a set of usable recommendations (Section 7) on how to close this gap and improve efficiency. We also considered the best way to grow Bright Future, exploring alternatives and identifying how it could be scaled up to operate independently and at a national level. Other recommendations emphasised the importance of maintaining a process of learning and communication to maintain and build upon the community which Bright Future has created around work-based remediation. Finally, we recommended that the knowledge from Bright Future be used to advocate for policy change. The voices of candidates and other stakeholders outlined in this report can be used as a powerful tool to demand the changes so urgently needed to improve support for those who have experienced modern slavery.

7 Recommendations

1. Improve the efficiency of matching candidates with placements

- a. Enhance communications between Bright Future's partners:
 - i. Use the new online system to streamline communication and help build relationships in the Bright Future community, and explore integration with other communication tools (eg social media platforms).
 - ii. Develop and share with all partners information about time-frames, realistic expectations of the job and work together to reduce delays.
- b. Take a more strategic approach to selecting businesses to join Bright Future in order to deliver the type of jobs that are suitable for the candidates that are referred.
- c. Develop more robust vetting procedures for new business partners, to help reduce risks as more companies get involved. These risks could be mitigated through a review of the existing Bright Future Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for business partners to include basic training and a Code of Conduct.
- d. Provide a greater range of placement opportunities geographically and by sector. For example, engaging in a meaningful partnership with employment agencies to provide stable work placement may be a way to expand the programme, although a full risk analysis involving stakeholders would be required.
- e. Explore opportunities to offer a greater number of placements that last beyond 4 weeks. Longer placements are likely to be less disruptive for candidates.
- f. Develop and use key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor efficiency. For example, KPIs could include candidate satisfaction measured through pre- and post-placement questionnaires. Others could include ratio of referrals and time between referral and start of placement.

2. Improve learning within the Bright Future community

- a. Develop the design of pre and post-placement questionnaires:
 - i. Include clearer information about who will see the questionnaire and how the data will be protected (with due consideration regarding how this may impact on the level of disclosure).
 - ii. Provide more space in the questionnaires for open responses, for example to help illuminate attitudinal data.
- b. Increase understanding among Bright Future's partners about processes and objectives to help address some of the issues for candidates, charity partners and business partners. For example, this could include the creation of online 'handbooks' for each party to provide a resource to answer questions and provide clarity on processes. Charity partner training could be held to create more of a two-way learning process. Regional training sessions for charity partners should be continued, but with a wider remit to act as a forum to discuss challenges and obstacles.
- c. Expand training to include more partners and stakeholders. Business partners and line managers could benefit from some basic training on the experiences and challenges facing victims. This might include, for example, an introduction to trauma delivered by an expert – trauma is a complex area where there can be many triggers.
- d. Consider using the new online system to provide access to more materials for partners and highlight potential opportunities for candidates. For example:
 - i. Business partners could use the platform to offer other opportunities such as training schemes.
 - ii. Charity partners could offer candidates additional support relating to work-readiness, e.g. language training, resources and links for those struggling with non-work issues. This would respond to the need to help those who are not 'work-ready'.
 - iii. This should only be done if strict oversight can be maintained around quality/appropriateness and ensuring coherence with existing resources¹⁹.
- e. Provide more information to candidates at the end of the placement. This could be in the form of a 'de-brief' or 'leaving pack' and is particularly important for those not successfully going on to a job. Anything that could impact positively on the understanding of survivors about their relationship to the workplace and how to succeed in the UK labour market here may help mitigate anxiety experienced in future job-related situations.

¹⁹ See, for example, HTF mapping of services <https://bit.ly/2NpkqEM> and Anti-trafficking Hub <https://athub.org.uk/>

3. Advocate for improvements in policy and practice affecting victims and survivors of modern slavery

The charity partners in particular are very aware of the current policy debates around the NRM, and were keen to put forward challenges they face, for example, on grants of leave for survivors and commented that Bright Future could help by putting forward a united front.

- a. Use the results from Bright Future to advocate for improved support for those who have experienced modern slavery. The evidence from Bright Future could help make the case around the potential benefits of stable work, in terms of prevention of and recovery from exploitation, and the need for an immigration status that allow for this, particularly the right to change employer, employment sector and provide for recourse to public funds.
- b. Use testimony from partners and candidates to help to challenge myths and misunderstandings about the relationship between immigration and the welfare system. The story of Bright Future and the experiences of those who have been on placements are potentially something suitable for wider dissemination, particularly targeting relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- c. Work with the government to clarify the benefits position for participants in Bright Future. This remains an area that is challenging but where there may be ways to mitigate some of the disadvantages experienced by those who have experienced modern slavery. For example, could a Bright Future placement be considered 'therapeutic work'? If so, it would be exempted from affecting benefits until the candidate was in a stable position. If exploitative work can be considered as 'genuine and effective work' then time for which victims were trafficked could serve as a job history, in accordance with victims wishes/without victims having to disclose their trafficking experience.

Annex A. Terms of Reference

Independent Review of Bright Future Project to 2019:

Purpose, objectives and scope of the second review

The primary audience and main user of the findings of this review will be the Co-op, as it considers opportunities for improving how candidates are currently matched and supported through placements into work, and how best to develop the partnership in 2019 and beyond as Bright Future moves towards independence.

The other key audience for this review will be policy makers. The Co-op will share the findings to support its member-endorsed campaign for better treatment of victims of modern slavery in the UK. It hopes to demonstrate the potential for significantly more employment opportunities to be provided for victims if Government were to provide additional, long-term support for victims.

The Co-op will also use the findings to engage with other businesses to encourage them to consider supporting Bright Future.

The primary focus of the review will be the period January 2018 (when the National Matching System was established) to December 2018. However, the review should also consider the previous year, prior to the establishment of the National Matching System (some of which was covered by the Interim Review).

The overall **purpose of this Review** is to:

1. Review the approach of Bright Future to date (including progress against objectives, achievements and challenges).
2. Review the Bright Future model and its effectiveness, with particular reference to the development of the National Matching System, the new Business and Charity Partners, the Regional Support Framework and implementation of placements in businesses outside of the Co-op.
3. Draw out lessons and recommendations for the next phase of the programme, specifically how Bright Future will become independent of the Co-op, in a sustainable way.

In terms of **specific objectives**, the Co-op would like the research team to assess the following:

1. **Relevance:** How relevant is the programme to the needs of stakeholders (accepting that Bright Future placements as currently designed are only appropriate for individuals who have the right to work). Are the efforts to link Bright Future to pre-employability training of value, specifically through the Regional Support Framework and engagement with Business in the Community. Are the interventions and outcomes reaching the target population?

2. **Efficiency:** How well is Bright Future using available resources to achieve the desired results? To consider:

- City Hearts' management of the National Matching System and engagement with all Bright Future partners
- Efficiency of the way in which Bright Future partners deploy internal resources to place and support candidates, including the use of the Regional Support Framework as an additional resource for charity partners
- Co-op's ways of working to support placements, work with City Hearts, and efforts to support the Bright Future partnership

3. **Effectiveness:** How successful has the programme been to date in achieving its goals? To consider:

- Establishment of the National Matching System and Bright Future partnership of referring and business partners
- Engagement with/placements in non-Co-op businesses, and engagement with/referrals by new charity partners
- Growth in placement opportunities (number, location, sector, business partner).
- Learning and innovation – the extent to which the Co-op and City Hearts are learning from experience to date, and incorporating lessons into improving processes and performance, producing general replicable learning that we can incorporate into best practice and share with others.

- Data collection (eg finance, activities, outcomes) and its use to monitor the effectiveness and longer-term impact of Bright Future.
- To what extent the recommendations of the Interim Review have been considered and implemented.

4. **Results:** What effect/impact has the programme had on victims who have engaged with/entered Bright Future²⁰ (intended/unintended, positive/negative)? What effect has it had on other stakeholders, including employees of BF business partners involved in supporting colleagues, charity partners, the wider business community, and policy makers?

²⁰ Recognising that victims will be at different stages in the process, this could include those pre-placement, during, or post placement

Annex B. Bright Future partners

Charity partners

Adavu, Anti Trafficking and Labour Exploitation Unit, Black Country Women's Aid, Caritas Bakhita House, City Hearts; ECPAT, GLAA, Haven of Light, Hestia, Hope at Home; Hope for Justice, Hull Homeless Community Project, Jericho Foundation; Kalayaan, Khai Tzedek, Lifeshare, London Borough of Croydon, Medaille Trust, Migrant Help, Olallo House, Palm Cove Society, SEIRCC, Snowdrop Project, Sophie Hayes Foundation, Stop the Traffik, The Children's Society, The Salvation Army, Unseen UK.

Business partners

2SFG, ABP, Angus Soft Fruits, Arco, Body Shop, Co-op Group, Costain, Dixons Carphone Warehouse, East of England Co-op, Flamingo Flowers, Fresca Group, Greencore, John Lewis Partnership, Marshalls, Mid Counties Co-op, Norse Group, Single Resource, Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd, Tulip, Typhoo.

Annex C. Candidate pre- and post-placement surveys

a) To what extent do you agree with the following statement:
"I have a good level of self-confidence"?

- 92% (11/12) of candidates reported no change in self-confidence at the end of the placement, although one candidate already strongly agreed, so could not see a further increase on the scale provided.
- 8% (1/12) said that their level of self-confidence increased at the end of the placement.

b) To what extent do you agree with the following statement:
"I feel positive about my future"?

- 33% (4/12) reported no change in how positive they felt about the future, as they felt before their placement that they 'strongly agreed' with the statement at the end of the placement.
- 58% (7/12) reported an increase in how positive they felt about their future at the end of the placement.
- 8% (1/12) reported a decrease in how positive they felt about their future at the end of the placement.

c) To what extent do you agree with the following statement:
"I feel part of a local community"?

- 33% (4/12) reported no change in feeling part of a local community, although 3/4 had indicated that they already 'strongly agreed' that they felt part of their local community.
- 58% (7/12) indicated that they felt more strongly at the end of the placement that they felt 'part of the local community'.
- 8% (1/12) indicated that they did not feel as strongly that they were part of a local community at the end of the placement.

d) Out of 13 participants' responses to the question
'I feel that I have a good chance of getting a job':

- 77% (10/13) indicated that they 'strongly agreed' with the statement.
- 23% (3/13) indicated that they 'agreed' with the statement.

Factors identified as the 'best thing' about the placement were:

- Team work
- Being supported in the role
- Having a friendly and supportive team and manager
- The team being welcoming
- Being respected

Challenges identified as arising during the placement included:

- Talking to new people (though sometimes a lack of English language skills was not highlighted on the pre-placement survey as a problem)
- Communication with customers due to their strong accents
- Childcare
- Health issues
- Problems handling alcohol (due to addiction)

Evidence from Candidate Questionnaires			
Barriers to finding work	Yes	No	Don't know
Lack of qualifications	9	4	
Lack of English skills	5	7	1
Lack of job history	10	2	1
Lack of CV	8	4	1
No employment references	8	4	1
Lack of confidence	7	3	1
Other - Eating disorder, addiction, trauma, not having refugee status			
What do you hope to get out of the placement?			
New skills	13		
Reference	8		
Meeting new people	11		
A job	12		
Self-confidence	11		
Other - Broaden horizons, work experience, improving English			
Barriers to feeling part of the community			
Language skills	3		
Confidence	10		
No permanent address	6		
Lack of job	10		
Lack of money	12		
Other - Having a baby, addiction, eating disorder, trauma			

"The evidence we gathered from candidates and other participants in Bright Future as part of this review confirmed the findings from the interim review, suggesting that the Bright Future model is both relevant and effective.

The interviews with charity and business partners point to the strongly positive impact of Bright Future for its stakeholders and beneficiaries. As such, Bright Future is worthy of continued support. It shows what can be done by businesses and sets a benchmark for work-based remediation in the field of modern slavery."

University of Liverpool



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