

An independent evaluation of Blue Marble Training, Shoreditch Trust

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May 2017

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Executive Summary

Blue Marble Training (BMT) is open to all young people aged 16 to 25 years with difficult life experiences, trains them to be professional chefs and encourages them to choose other types of employment if they prefer.

BMT is located in a training kitchen at Waterhouse Restaurant, a social enterprise, which is owned by Shoreditch Trust, a voluntary organisation situated in the London Borough of Hackney.

This independent evaluation study was undertaken by researchers from the Centre for Social Justice and Change, University of East London between May 2016 and April 2017.

Our research approach is problems-based and realistic and data collected and collated included project monitoring data, case files, observations (4), self-completion questionnaires (24), interviews with current and past trainees (9) and partners (4).

We found that BMT is a distinctive and successful initiative for a particular group of disaffected and unengaged young people.

We found that characteristics of a traditional apprenticeship model lies at the heart of BMT and with additional support this approach provides a positive experience for many trainees.

Support offered to trainees includes mentoring, a health coach, one to one leadership coaching, physical fitness as well as referrals to specialist support within the Trust programmes such as Smoking Cessation and Peace of Mind.

From 2013 to early 2017 118 people registered at BMT and available data for 85 young people shows they are typically black or dual heritage young men aged between 16 and 21 years.

Most referrals are from the Virtual School and voluntary sector organisations. A quarter are self-referrals. The ongoing or rolling intake, 'open door' policy and simple referral system makes referring attractive and is responsive to a young person's current situation.

BMT has a high engagement rate (89%).

The monitoring data shows a completion rate of 64%. Self-referrals and 'looked after young people' have a lower completion rate, both 56%, and those who have been/are homeless with a mental health problem have a 68% completion rate. Those with a drugs and/or alcohol dependency, and those with a criminal record, have a 59% completion rate.

For those who do not complete BMT maintains their 'open door' policy, these young people know that they are welcome to return, and some do on more than one occasion.

There is a wide variation in the time trainees take to complete their apprenticeship; most complete between five and ten months (50%) or between 17 and 32 months (28%) with 18% completing between 11 and 16 months and two completing within four months.

Our findings strongly suggest that attending BMT can have a rehabilitative effect and supporting young people to re-engage with BMT is likely to prevent further offending.

Destination data are largely missing but available data shows that leavers either became chefs (62%), found other employment (27%), or attended further education or college (12%)

Almost a quarter (23%) received or are still receiving ongoing support from Shoreditch Trust staff after they completed their apprenticeship.

The majority of those who participate on the programme gain social skills that enable them to work as a team, builds their confidence and gives them hope. Trainees also gain knowledge and skills to lead healthy life-styles.

We found that traditional apprenticeship training with no formal accreditation offers an alternative learning experience that is attractive to young people. Learning is participative within a community of practice and enables trainees to gain a social identity, join a profession, and gain a place in society.

We found that a traditional apprenticeship model offers distinctive and advantageous opportunities to effectively support young people and contributes to better outcomes. BMT has often succeeded where other services and support have not.

We observed how disaffected and disengaged young people who can be angry and conflictual learn to follow instructions without dissent and to respond positively when working under pressure in the kitchen to complete tasks.

When trainees work alongside chefs, staff gain an in-depth knowledge of trainees' personal issues, the daily routine of preparing meals is conducive to forming trusting relationships and positive peer relationships.

This apprenticeship model has a flexibility that incorporates those with diagnosed mental health issues and additional learning challenges with dignity.

Albeit limited data show that many apprentices were employed as chefs at least three years after they had left BMT. However, some of these young people continue to struggle with debt due to low pay, have housing problems and there is evidence of discrimination and prejudice by employers against young blacks from Hackney.

BMT graduates appreciate the ongoing support and the continuing 'open door' policy improves their life chances.

Shoreditch Trust is held in high regard by partners and this reputation enhances the longer term prospects of BMT.

The long term financial sustainability of BMT is adversely affected by a dominant belief all young people should receive accredited training and gain formal qualifications.

Providers like BMT that work outside the framework of some statutory agencies receive fewer than expected referrals; Job Centres, for example, do not refer as referrals do not help them meet their accredited training or employment targets. Nor have the local Youth Offending Service, or community police officers since 2015, made referrals.

Debates about Shoreditch Trust staff offering 'too much support', precludes more significant discussions about how to provide the 'right kind of support' that offers a collaborative safety net for damaged young people that can provide longer term support.

The absence of targets and outcomes such as a reduction in offending or drug and alcohol dependency, limits opportunities to apply for funding, but this is one reason why the project is successful.

Recommendations

Prestigious hotels and restaurants in the catering industry improve pay, working conditions and promotion opportunities by addressing racial discrimination and prejudice faced by young people typical of the BMT cohort.

Initiatives such as BMT would benefit from funders and commissioners respecting the value of providers who have a different perspective on how best to respond to some young people.

Commissioners and funders integrate ongoing support into their tender documentation to enable young people to adapt to their new working environment.

Shoreditch Trust continues to improve their monitoring system and systematic collection of data.

Acknowledgements

We would particularly like to thank all the young people who participated in this research and partners who agreed to be interviewed. We also wish to thank Shoreditch Trust staff and trustees for enabling the study to happen, for their time, and comments on the draft report, including Femi Ade-Davis, Amrit Bhachu, Jo Burns, Marvin Davidson, Neringa Jurgaitiene, Georgia Kurowska Kyffin, Jacqui Roberts, and Lucca Sokhi.

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May 2017

1. Introduction

This independent evaluation study of Blue Marble Training (BMT) which is part of Shoreditch Trust's enterprise programme was commissioned by Shoreditch Trust and undertaken by researchers from the Centre for Social Justice and Change, School of Social Sciences, University of East London (UEL) between May 2016 and April 2017.

BMT is located in a training kitchen called Waterhouse Restaurant which is owned by Shoreditch Trust and situated in the London Borough of Hackney. The restaurant serves breakfast and lunch during the week, sells takeaways, and caters for private functions. The training programme is for 16 to 25 year olds and welcomes those who are not in employment, education or training, who might have had negative experiences of learning or training and who might be struggling to find the right support. As well as training to be chefs and learning about the catering industry, young people are provided with the support they need to complete the training and progress into paid employment of their choice.

The purpose of this study is to assess how BMT works, describe outcomes for trainees and identify longer term effects of participating on the programme. The research findings show that a traditional apprenticeship model lies at the heart of BMT and with additional support this approach provides a positive experience for many trainees who were previously disaffected and unengaged. Support offered to trainees includes mentoring, a health coach, one-to-one leadership coaching, physical fitness as well as referrals to specialist support within the Trust programmes such as Smoking cessation and Peace of Mind. The majority of apprentices progress into paid employment or attend college or further education.

The term traditional apprenticeship is used throughout this report to distinguish from the substantively different UK government's conceptualisation of an apprenticeship which combines practical training in a job with study to gain formal qualifications. These trainees earn a wage and get holiday pay. A traditional apprenticeship is not formally taught and learning is wholly in the context of practice. Trainees working side by side with an expert with an emphasis on learning how to solve problems, understand and perform tasks and deal with difficult social and practical situations.

1.1 BMT, Shoreditch Trust

Shoreditch Trust is a registered charity that works with residents to support them to improve their health, wellbeing, social networks and opportunities. BMT is one project in the Trust's Learning for Life programme of work.¹

As part of the social enterprise programme, BMT was revamped and refocused in 2015 and delivers a traditional apprenticeship that has no formal qualification. BMT has a core team

¹ Shoreditch Trust website address is: <http://www.shoreditchtrust.org.uk/>

who are paid, including a project manager, head chef, second head chef and kitchen porter. In the restaurant the 'front of the house' staff, as the restaurant is called, includes an events manager, co-ordinator, and a part-time waiter. Trainees are not paid except for special functions. They are found trials and given employment opportunities during their one year apprenticeship. Staff make every effort to keep in touch with those who disengage and encouragement is given to them to return whenever they like.

2. Research

The research has ethics approval from the UEL ethics committee that adheres to professional standards.

2.1 Research approach

Our approach is problems-based and realistic.² We start by finding out how social, psychological, economic, and community problems are formulated or characterised by an initiative, and ask 'to what problem is this intervention a solution?' An evaluation finds out if the problems to which an intervention was designed as a solution have been modified, how changes have occurred, and takes into account unintended consequences or harm.

In keeping with realist evaluations we produce evidence on what works, for whom and under what conditions.

- We consider interventions as theories; these theories of change may be non-linear, inconsistent, and are causal only when they are active. Interventions impact upon the conditions that make them active and this can affect outcomes.
- The effectiveness of interventions is sensitive to the context within which they are implemented.
- Interactions with other social programmes affect the operations and outcomes of the intervention.
- Community factors influence the anticipated causal mechanisms.
- Interventions typically evolve and change as different decisions are made and an evaluation takes this 'life course' of an initiative into account when assessing its progress.

We think that it is useful to conceptualise interventions as having four key features and these structure our data collection and analysis:

- a) Referrals: are the participants who can benefit from the intervention being referred/self-referrals?
- b) Attractiveness: is the intervention relevant and does it act as a 'hook'?
- c) Influencing: does the intervention change attitudes, 'mind sets', behaviour?

² Popper, K (1968) *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, 2nd edn. Hutchinson; Sayer, A (1992) *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach*, 2nd edn. Routledge, Shaw and Crompton; Pawson, R and Tilley, N (1997) *Realistic Evaluation*, Sage; Sampson, A (2007) 'Developing Robust Approaches to Evaluation', *Evaluation*, 13: 469-85.

- d) Facilitating: are there pathways to other programmes to meet multiple needs of participants over time?

2.2 Data collection

Information for this study was collated from various sources and a multi-method approach adopted using primary and secondary data sources.

Secondary data sources included project monitoring data from 2013 to early 2017, 28 trainee case files, information from websites and the academic literature.

Primary data collected included:

Four observations of the training kitchen, each of which lasted between three and four hours, with two carried out towards the beginning of the research and two at the end. In the first instance we used the data to generate hypotheses about how BMT works and in the second instance, we used data to search for alternative explanations to check the reliability of our data analysis. Notes were taken contemporaneously and supplementary information added immediately after an observation.

Nine in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with trainees, of whom seven were male and two were young women. Five were 'looked after young people', and two were current trainees, whilst seven had graduated between one and three years ago. They were asked about their experiences of being a BMT trainee, the support they received and if participating had made a difference to their everyday lives. Those who had left were asked if the training had enabled them to find employment and if they still used the social skills they learnt at BMT. Many volunteered information about their early childhood and interviews lasted up to 90 minutes. To aid analysis, the interviews were taped and transcribed.

Twenty four self-completion questionnaires were completed by trainees either on-line or during a break from working in the kitchen. Those who find reading difficult were supported and the questionnaire took 10 to 12 minutes to complete. Respondents were asked about any changes in themselves and their prospects, social relations and skills necessary to work in a kitchen. They were also asked about their personal problems that affected their learning, the support they received and their employment situation. The data were entered into a statistical package for social scientists to facilitate analysis.

Discussions were held with staff and informal conversations were used to clarify the thinking behind the programme. This included talking to the CEO of Shoreditch Trust, the BMT project manager, and the two chefs. A brief telephone conversation also took place with a mentor of the CEO. Notes were taken after conversations had concluded.

Interviews with four partners were completed and during the semi-structured conversations, issues explored included their experiences of making referrals to BMT, who they referred and if they benefited, what they considered to be fair outcomes and how the scheme might be

improved. The interviews lasted between 40 and 60 minutes and notes were taken contemporaneously and supplementary information added immediately after the interview.

2.3 Data representativeness

We asked for contact details of those who had completed their training, 'looked after young people' and for young people with a variety of issues and backgrounds. Eleven interviewee names and contact details were given to us by Shoreditch Trust staff and nine were interviewed. One young person declined to be interviewed and the other did not answer their telephone three times. Thus a response rate of 82% was achieved.

Since those who we observed were current participants to achieve a balance between current and past trainees, the majority of those interviewed were those who had graduated (78%).

In our discussions and reflections on the data, we concluded that we have collated a wide spread of information from a range of young people who included those who were in the care system, some with drugs and alcohol problems, others who experienced homelessness and mental health illness, some had criminal convictions and others had no issues that affected their learning. However, we think that there is a bias in the incomplete monitoring data and the primary data towards those who have positive experiences and outcomes. There is a group of young people who suddenly left about whom we know very little except from their case files which often states that they have 'decided to leave'.

2.4 Data analysis

All data were analysed from the situated logic of the participants; from the perspective of young people, of the chefs and Shoreditch Trust staff, and the responsibilities and roles of the agencies. We used this information to generate hypotheses about how the project works and used the data to refute these hypotheses and selected those that best fit the data. We discussed contradictory accounts and anomalies to learn more about how problems and challenges were conceptualised and what solutions were proposed. By using this approach to data analysis, we gained some insights into how the BMT programme works, for whom and under what circumstances.

Quotes are used to illustrate and as evidence. We have used 'interviewee 1' and 'interviewee 2' etc. rather than describing gender and/or ethnicity to protect the interviewee and in line with our ethical code that ensures anonymity for research participants.

2.5 Limits of the study

Although small sample sizes and incomplete project monitoring data limit the robustness of our findings, the strength of the research lies in its theoretical approach and using data to refute hypotheses to understand how the BMT works. The spread of the information we have collected and collated using several methods has enabled us to consider many alternative explanations to changes in the attitudes and behaviour of young people. Our data enables us to have some certainty that BMT made a contribution to the changes we identified and we

included information on harm and 'no change' adding to our certainty about possible effects of the programme.

We included a number of reliability checks in our data collection. For example, the findings are dependent on the honesty of participants and the interview schedule and questionnaire included some similar questions and responses to these questions remained consistent.

We have, however, no systematic information about the continuation or otherwise of the many improvements we found in the longer term, although at the time of the research the majority of participants were motivated to keep improving their diets and felt more confident in doing so. This study also lacks information about whether or not participants' new found trust extended beyond BMT staff and Shoreditch Trust as an organisation to other organisations such as colleges, Job Centre and housing.

3. Who signs up?

From 2013 to early 2017, 118 people registered at BMT and data on 85 people are available for analysis. The characteristics of these 85 people are as follows:

The overwhelming majority of those who registered are male (76%), aged between 16 and 21 years (65%) with most 16-18 years old (37%), are black African, Caribbean or British (50%), white British, Irish, European (27%), or dual heritage (14%) and 5 young people are Asian or another ethnic group.

Most referrals have been made by the Virtual School accounting for over a quarter of referrals (27%), followed by St Giles's Trust (12%). Several voluntary organisations refer such as the Pause Project and Mind and account for 17% of the referrals. We note lower than expected referrals from statutory agencies; with no referrals from the local Youth Offending Service and two referrals by community police officers made at the point of arrest in 2015.

Perhaps unusually, a quarter of the referrals are self-referrals. Self-referrers are more likely to be young men (84%, 16) than women (16%, 3) and to be Black (56%) or dual heritage (22%). Thus young black men and men of dual heritage were more likely to refer themselves than agencies.

In 2013 the total number of referrals was 33, double those of subsequent years and due to a grant from City Bridge Trust. Subsequently, between 13 and 19 young people have started training each year. Patterns of referrals from the main referring agency, the Virtual School, was two in 2014 and increased in 2015 to five and remained the same for 2016. Self-referrals fluctuated from four in 2014, to two in 2015 and rose to five in 2016. The majority of those referred and self-referrals live in Hackney.

Although data are missing for between 18 and 20 people, the available information on backgrounds is as follows:

- 56% are, or have been, 'Looked-After-Children'
- 45% have experienced homelessness
- 58% have a drugs and/or alcohol dependency

- 49% have a mental health illness
- 36% have been convicted of a crime

100% of these young people experienced at least one of these circumstances or issues listed above, suggesting that BMT attracts young people with difficult histories. Furthermore they are a cohort of young people who are typically over-represented in the criminal justice system, have high rates of suicide, leave school without qualifications and have a record of unemployment.³In addition, young black men experience prejudice and discrimination and have particularly poor outcomes.⁴

3.1 Making referrals

Referrals are made for several reasons. Some young people will express an interest in cooking and BMT's 'open door' policy for young people with difficult life experiences enables agencies to refer those who cannot be placed on any course due to their entry requirements. Also, they are young people who 'have had years not fitting into the system'. For the same reasons BMT attracts self-referrals from young people who have heard about the programme by word-of-mouth, have been rejected by other providers, and know that the training is free of charge.

Some frontline staff and parents refer a young person to BMT when they are 'at a loss to know what to do with a young person' and hope that 'deep down there may be a spark of an interest' in catering. The simple referral procedure and minimal paperwork as well as the accessibility of Shoreditch Trust add to the attraction of making a referral. Since BMT is a 'rolling programme', there is a system of continuously accepting referrals and this practice also appeals to referring agencies and to those who refer themselves.

We also found that young people are referred to BMT because agencies and foster and birth families are unable to engage with them in any meaningful and constructive way, and no other provision will accept them. Interestingly, these issues preoccupied referring agencies rather than concerns about offending histories, drug dependencies or mental health, for example. Further, at the time of the research, statutory agencies have raised their threshold and recognise that they are 'asking voluntary organisations to deal with very complex cases'. These young people present BMT staff with additional challenges.

³ A Scoping Study on 'Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men in Hackney' by Sancha Cadogan Poole was completed in March 2016 for the Hackney Local Authority. This study found 'Outcomes for young black men in Hackney are disproportionately worse in almost every single sphere: unemployment, low educational attainment, school exclusion rates, obesity and childhood obesity, social housing, family homelessness, youth homelessness, mental health, the criminal justice system, child protection, maternal health, health and wellbeing, and substance abuse.'(Executive summary)

⁴ See report by Sancha Cadogan Poole sited in footnote 3 above.

4. BMT as a traditional apprenticeship

To provide a context for assessing a traditional apprenticeship approach, the statistical findings presented below are indicative of its success.⁵ A high level of engagement (89%) suggests the attractiveness of BMT to those who are referred and who refer themselves. Data show that the majority of BMT trainees complete their training which, taking into account their personal circumstances, is a real achievement.

Completion rates

The monitoring data show completion rates for the apprenticeship training as follows:

55% completed their training including those who returned

31% did not complete the training programme

11% registered but did not engage

4% are current trainees

If, those who registered and did not engage and current trainees are excluded from the analysis, giving a total of 70 young people, the completion rate is 64%.

Self-referrals are the second largest category of young people joining the programme and of those who did not engage and are not current trainees, self-referees have a completion rate of 56%, and 38% who did not complete. This lower than average completion rate is counter-intuitive as these young people were originally sufficiently motivated to refer themselves. The reason for this completion rate are not clear and is worthy of further exploration. Those who were registered but did not engage were most likely to be referred by the Virtual School or a statutory agency. The completion rate of 'looked after young people' is also lower than average at 56%.

Typically, a trainee is considered to have completed the programme following three successful assessments by BMT staff, which includes discussions with the trainee. These assessments include an overview of their knowledge and skills as a chef, the stability of their personal circumstances and their social skills and confidence. Thus, many aspects of these reviews are subjective. Nevertheless, these judgements are guided by the chefs who are knowledgeable about what is required of chefs working in a kitchen at the 'top end' of the catering industry and informed by their philosophy of not setting up young people to fail. The completion date is when an apprentice physically leaves Waterhouse Restaurant.

Data on the time taken to complete the apprenticeship shows a wide variation in completion times, from two who completed in less than four months, to those who took between 17 and 32 months (28%). Reasons for this variation in completion rates include fast learners who need to find paid employment quickly to support their families, to those with mental health

⁵ Note that throughout this report percentages are either rounded up or down and therefore sometimes the total does not add up to 100%.

problems who find it difficult to participate routinely, and those who are in the criminal justice system awaiting trial and due to delays in sentencing decisions, are unable to commit to paid work. This amounted to over two years for one person.

The following table summarises the completion rates using available data.

Table 4.1 Trainees’ completion rates (40 young people)

Time taken to complete (months) apprenticeship	Percentage (number) of trainees
4 months or less	5 (2)
5-10 months	50 (20)
11-16 months	18 (7)
17-32 months	28 (11)

Data on destinations after leaving BMT is largely incomplete but shows that immediately after their training none were out of work and most were employed as chefs. The challenge for staff is to assist young people to gain high-quality employment in prestigious kitchens where they will continue to learn and where they will have opportunities to become a ‘master’ chef. From the limited available data there is evidence that BMT staff are successful in helping trainees find jobs in kitchen with prospects including top hotels, well-known restaurants and up-market shops that serve quality meals.

Employment

The monitoring data on employment after completing the training are largely missing and information is only available for 34 young people. All these leavers found employment or went into further education or college as follows:

62% became chefs (21 young people)

27% found employment not in the catering industry (9 young people)

12% attended further education or college (4 young people)

Destination data on those who did not complete the training is missing for all the attendees except two, both of whom went on to college or further education.

4.1 Structure of the programme

BMT has three distinctive characteristics that lend itself to successfully adopting a traditional apprenticeship model. Firstly, BMT is a rolling programme and at any one time, new participants are starting and others can be close to completing their training. Different levels of experience and abilities are therefore routinely integrated into the ongoing training programme. Secondly, participants are not following a predetermined curriculum nor working towards obtaining a formal qualification and this enables a flexible and responsive approach to learning, and allows for new practices to evolve and take on different forms.

Further, there is no reason to have a draconian attendance policy and a flexible approach towards attendance enables staff to give a warm welcome to those who may have missed a day or two due to their chaotic life-style. Thirdly, young trainees arrive each morning to plan and prepare a menu of recipes for paying customers. The kitchen is part of the restaurant and customers can see the young people 'at work' and everyday trainees are under pressure to deliver meals on time, and their final preparations and take place in public spaces. Thus, these young people are learning in a real world setting.

4.2 Learning

At BMT learning is a process of co-participation within a community of practice.⁶ The following observation notes gives a sense of this community:

When it gets busy there is a real sense of purposefulness and team work. There is a lot of communication. There is reassurance and encouragement of what they're doing e.g. "yes that's right fish goes on now", "lovely, lovely guys just speed up a little bit", "that's beautiful guys". There is individual work as well as each trainee has a separate component to make for each complete dish. [Name of a head chef] encourages trainees to think about timing when putting on components, e.g. "think about timing, the steak will take longer". There is also directness in directions when the kitchen is busy e.g. "I need that yesterday", "chips should be coming up NOW". As with the last observation this is received okay by the trainees.

New members join and are immediately given legitimacy by helping to prepare a meal. A new learner may chop onions or wash lettuce but always working alongside other trainees who are completing other tasks to make a dish. As trainees become more experienced, they perform more complex tasks and take on additional roles. To perform their tasks, young people follow instructions from experienced chefs as well as communicate and coordinate their food preparations with other trainees. Thus, social learning is integral to apprenticeship training. This trainee conveys how it is necessary to work together:

You all have to work together to get the task completed, the job done. (Interviewee 8)

Another trainee describes working together in practice:

The kitchen itself was very team structured so everyone was helping everyone from the head chef right the way through to the newest trainee (Male trainee, case study 1, 2014)

Participants commented on how they found this way of learning supportive:

The kitchen is a very supportive environment as it's built around team work and it adopts the principal that you're only as strong as your weakest team member and from the head chef right the way through to the newest trainee everyone makes everyone feel comfortable (Male, case study 2, 2014)

This co-learning differs from young people's experiences at school where, learning is individualised, pupils have to 'jump through predetermined hoops', and are assessed using abstract examinations. Similarly, vocational qualifications prescribe a set of tasks that have to

⁶ See, for example, Lave, J., and Wenger, E. (1991), *Situated Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and, Wenger, E. (1998), *Communities of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

be completed, limiting the skills set and career possibilities for participants. However, traditional apprenticeship models can also limit learning where trainees are precluded from participating in the full range of different tasks, cultural practices and social skills that constitute a 'craft' or 'trade'.⁷

We found, however, that the apprenticeship model at BMT is a good example of how a traditional approach can work well. The chefs give newcomers special assistance, close supervision and explanations that reduce pressures on them as new learners and at the same time confer legitimacy on them, take them seriously, enabling them to feel useful and responsible. In this context mistakes are inevitable but they offer an opportunity for learning rather than a cause for dismissal or exclusion. We observed chips being burnt, poached eggs landing on the cooker rather than a plate and in each situation the head chef used humour and reassurance and asked the trainee to try again and praised them when they served up brown chips and eggs on a plate. These trainees explain how the chefs support their learning:

Showing me how to do things as well as talking to me about the process after. (Male trainee, case study 3, 2015)

They correct and compliment and that's the way to be taught. (Male trainee, case study 2, 2015)

We observed, and interviewees explained, how they also learn from their peers and this co-learning is a distinctive characteristic of an apprenticeship. An interviewee recalls:

I remember we had loads of busy services and the energy and the rush that we had. Then after service it was like a family feel working with Blue Marble 'cause we always felt like we always had each other's back in the kitchen and it wasn't a thing where anyone was scared to work or anyone was scared to show something that they didn't know because everyone had everyone's back so if someone didn't know something someone would be like, 'All right, this is how you do it,' the head chef would be like, 'This is how you do it.' (Interviewee 4)

Ongoing discussions and talking about practice provides new trainees with a sense of how a kitchen operates and they quickly learn that their contribution is an important part of producing meals. We also found that more experienced trainees are able to progress as they are routinely offered opportunities to learn new skills and take on additional responsibilities. We observed a recent recruit learning to make a simple white sauce and a more experienced trainee making a curry using a variety of spices and learning about how they blend together with good effect. This apprentice explains:

The way how we are fast tracked through things and have much bigger responsibility. It has helped me with my cooking skills and communications skills with customers. (Male trainee, case study 1, 2015)

Trainees also explain how they gain a deeper understanding of the cultural practices associated with cooking as a profession, and their training is more than simply following recipes:

You can cook something and not even understand what you're cooking, you're just following a recipe, but because I been with Blue Marble I understand everything that I'm doing, I understand what the terms are for what and all of that. (Interviewee 4)

This learning was reinforced by trainees' willingness to ask questions and listening to knowledgeable responses from the chefs. We observed trainees routinely asking questions

⁷ See Becker, H. (1972) 'A School Is a Lousy Place To Learn Anything in', *The American Behavioural Scientist*, 16,1: 85-105).

and displaying a genuine interest in food and how to cook well. A strong sense of working to achieve high standards and a collective sense of responsibility was evident; for example, and we observed that every time a trainee passed the stove they gave the curry a good stir and they all joined in tasting dishes, suggested how their flavours could be improved as well as giving praise. We noted how trainees help each other out and swap tasks to ensure everyone finishes making all the dishes in time for when the restaurant opens for lunch. When a chef had to take a telephone call, he rushed off shouting ‘someone mind that toast, don’t let it burn’. Immediately, the nearest trainee took responsibility for finishing off making the sausage sandwich for a paying customer.

Increased access to different roles gives trainees increased competencies and they are able to move from being a novice apprentice towards becoming a ‘master’ chef and understanding that they are learning to be a member of a craft or trade as this young person recognises:

I’m forever thankful to the chefs for equipping me with these vital skills of my trade. (Male, case study 3, 2014)

In these ways trainees come to realise that cooking is more than ‘just a job’ or doing a series of tasks and the BMT chefs encourage trainees to experiment, try new ideas, and allow their relationships to become reciprocal and mutually respectful. This progression enables young people to realise what it means to be a full participant in all aspects of a profession. This young trainee acknowledges his changed status:

Ultimately being on BMT has allowed me to make the transition from being a home cook to training to be a professional chef. (Male trainee, case study 2, 2014)

Some describe themselves embarking on a career as a chef, as this questionnaire respondent comments:

It was the beginning of my journey that has still continued after. I made friends. I made dreams but most of all it gave me a career. (Questionnaire respondent)

Trainees appreciate many opportunities which are integral to well-run apprenticeships, and in particular, the opportunities to experiment and to be creative, as this interviewee explains:

The atmosphere, how others was around me, how I learnt things, I was more active and learnt how to basically design the plates and learnt all the sections as well, so I enjoyed that ... it’s more designing things and you’re cooking your own things and... yeah, I enjoyed it here. (Interviewee 2)

4.3 Social identity

Since much of the learning takes place through co-participation, trainees are discovering a way of being in the social world and in this way, apprenticeships offer them a social identity and a role in society.⁸ These experiences are evident for BMT trainees, an indication of the success of the BMT apprenticeship model, and a source of satisfaction and achievement for young people.

A trainee described having a better understanding of who they are:

⁸ See, for example, Lave, J., and Wenger, E. (1991), *Situated Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and, Wenger, E. (1998), *Communities of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Really enjoyed it. Made me who I am. (Questionnaire respondent)

And a woman trainee described how this has helped her become a confident chef:

This training programme helped mould and sculpt me into the woman I am at present. Through support and direction I was able to finally make the foundation in my career and grow into the confident chef I am today. (Questionnaire respondent)

Others explained how participating has also developed their personality:

It also gave me huge confidence in becoming a chef, which brought my true personality out and help me find myself a lot easier. (Questionnaire respondent)

And how they have incorporated cooking into their lifestyle:

<Laughs> Yeah, cooking become part of my lifestyle. (Interviewee 7)

Whilst these changes represent significant outcomes for trainees, 'becoming' a professional chef also has potential disadvantages if they are not able to find suitable employment or their paid work as a chef is restricted to a few tasks and has limited creative opportunities. Such adverse circumstances are likely to threaten the continuation of their newly formed social identities.

4.4 Joining a profession

A further characteristic of the BMT apprenticeship is that it is more than learning to use tools and applying techniques, the conversations and stories the chefs tell enables trainees to connect to the catering industry by learning how it operates, they learn the language, and how to behave.

During their training young people go on trials to other restaurants. Trials provide young people with an opportunity to experience being in another setting and to learn a specialist skill. This interviewee explained how it gave them confidence:

I went to a hotel... I think it's four star, very big... Fine dining is gonna be different from your average restaurant. The standards are always pushed a lot higher. That helped me a lot. That gave me a lot of confidence coming back from there and feeling like I did well. (Interviewee 1)

Where trials go well and there is a vacancy, a young person can be offered a job. This young woman aged 17 years was offered a job at a prestigious art gallery in Central London the day she finished her trial:

I finished the trial the other day and that's the day I got the job (Interviewee 8).

Another benefit of going on trials and learning about the catering industry from two highly experienced chefs at BMT is that the trainees are able to start developing their own networks. Two trainees explain:

Yeah because of Blue Marble I'm now part of a network and have contacts in the catering industry. (Male trainee, case study 1, 2015)

I've got options and contacts within the catering industry now. (Male trainee, case study 3, 2015)

These experiences are common amongst trainees and the overwhelming majority of questionnaire respondents felt that they had 'a good knowledge of the catering industry'

(88%), felt that they had ‘a lot or a little’ help finding work (83%) and the majority were either employed in the catering industry or wanted to be (80%).

4.5 Apprenticeship training outcomes

The following tables summarise changes in abilities and feelings that may be expected from apprenticeship trainees. The first table summarises changes that can be anticipated to occur whilst trainees are in the kitchen and show that the overwhelming majority of apprentices have improved their skills which are necessary to work as a chef in a busy kitchen. During observations, we also noted that trainees develop professional social skills, for example, they learn not to be loud and they say “yes chef” and “oui chef” in response to instructions. These findings show that the BMT chefs are successfully implementing a traditional apprenticeship scheme.

Approximately a quarter, or less, said that their social skills remained ‘about the same’ and a small minority, one or two young people said that their skills and attributes necessary for working in a kitchen had got worse.

Table 4.2 Changes in apprentices’ attributes and skills since joining BMT (24 respondents)

	Easier/more able Percentage (number)	About the same Percentage (number)	Harder/less able Percentage (number)
To work as a member of a team	83(19)	13 (3)	4 (1)
To cooperate with others	75 (18)	25 (6)	0
To respect others	67 (16)	25 (6)	8 (2)
To support others	67 (16)	25 (6)	8 (2)
	Agree Percentage (number)	I’m not sure Percentage (number)	Disagree Percentage (number)
Understand what to do in a kitchen	91 (21)	4 (1)	4 (1)
Learnt to work under pressure	88 (21)	8 (2)	4 (1)
Learnt to obey instructions	92 (22)	4 (1)	4 (1)

Note: the percentages have been rounded up or down and therefore might not equal 100%. When a respondent has not answered the question the total number of respondents is less and therefore the percentage is different. Hence sometimes the number of the respondents is the same but the percentage is different. For example, ‘understand what to do in a kitchen’ (total of 23 respondents) and ‘learnt to work under pressure’ (total of 24 respondents).

The table below summarises the contribution an apprenticeship can make to personal and social development. The overwhelming proportion of respondents said that they feel more confident, motivated, ambitious, and hopeful about the future. Just under two thirds said that they find it easier to say how they feel and to make friends. These findings reinforce the success of implementing a traditional apprenticeship model.

A minority said that these personal and social issues are ‘about the same’ and one young person said their experiences were detrimental. These issues are discussed in a later section of the report.

Table 4.3 Personal and social changes since attending BMT (24 respondents)

	More/better Percentage (number)	About the same Percentage (number)	Less/worse Percentage (number)
<i>Personal</i>			
Confidence	88(21)	8 (2)	4 (1)
Feelings about self	79 (19)	17 (4)	4 (1)
Motivated	83 (19)	13 (3)	4 (1)
Ambitious	88 (21)	8 (2)	4 (1)
Hopeful about the future	88 (21)	8 (2)	4 (1)
<i>Social</i>	Easier Percentage (number)	About the same Percentage (number)	Harder Percentage (number)
Say how feeling	63 (15)	21 (5)	17 (4)
Make friends	61 (14)	30 (7)	9 (2)

Note: see the note on the table above. The same applies for this table.

Increasingly, emphasis is being placed on healthy eating and healthy living, including taking regular exercise. One chef in particular encourages trainees to do fitness training as a way of reducing aggression and anger. In the kitchen, young people discuss the food they eat and compare their levels of fitness and these conversations maintain their awareness of being healthy. Some young people have a limited diet and this means that they do not know some of the food they are cooking, and we observed that they are encouraged to learn about these foods and to taste them, such as beetroot and a spicy sauce.

Another outcome for some young people is that they are no longer hungry. Staff make sure that these trainees have breakfast and say that trainees concentrate better and are less likely to be argumentative after they have eaten. Sitting down to a meal after paying customers have left, to review and discuss the morning's work also helps these young people to have a better diet. This situation of a young woman is probably typical of other 'Looked After Young People'. She is grateful that she knows how to shop on a low budget, what ingredients to buy and how to cook them. She explains:

Because I've lived on my own since I was 15 and no one taught me how to cook... I've never had a lot of confidence and I used to feel quite shy about not knowing how to do things that would actually seem quite simple in the kitchen, so once I learnt everything I felt a lot better about myself. I didn't feel so silly not knowing how to do it.

The interviewee goes on to comment:

... Yeah, I cook for myself every day at home, I've got to go out shopping. It's little things like knowing what ingredients to buy when you're in a shopping centre to make your meal nice, especially when you're on a budget as well. (Interviewee 9)

5. Supporting apprentices

One feature of BMT is the additional support offered to trainees to enable them to improve their attendance and participation. This support is intended to meet numeracy and literacy needs and reduce anxieties and insecurities that inhibit the capacity of trainees to learn and their ability to form co-operative working relationships.

The statistical information summarised below suggests that the support provided by BMT has a positive impact on completion rates for the majority of trainees.

Those requiring additional support, completion rates, and destinations

According to the monitoring data the majority of young people required additional support: 84% have at least one of the following issues: homelessness, drug and/or alcohol problem, mental health, or criminal conviction. Only 14 people (16%) said that they had none of these problems or issues.

Completion rates for those who are given additional support are:

Those with a drugs and/or alcohol dependency: 59%

Those with a criminal record: 59%

Those with homelessness and mental health issues 68%.

The data on trainees' destinations are largely missing but, as described earlier where there is information all those who completed their training went into employment or further education or college.

Information from observations, conversations with staff, self-completion questionnaires, interviews, and case files give a more complete picture of the lives of these young people than portrayed by the monitoring data alone. They also give a better understanding of the challenges involved in giving support and these findings are discussed in the following section.

5.1 Issues that affect learning

To give insights into the range of issues that affect learning data from the participants themselves, from their peer group, and from adults involved in supporting trainees have been collated.

The table below presents findings from the perspective of participants themselves:

Table 5.1 Issues that trainees say make it difficult or sometimes difficult for them to learn (24 respondents)

Issue	Makes it difficult or sometimes difficult to learn Percentage (number)
Housing	59 (14)
Debt	54 (13)
Depression/anxiety	50 (12)
Family	46 (11)
Friends	46 (11)
My anger/bad tempers	42 (10)

Note: these findings are from the self-completion questionnaires.

Of these young people, four said that none of the issues listed in the table above affected their learning and one issue affected one person. The remaining young people (19) said that multiple issues detrimentally affected their learning; six young people experienced problems with two or three issues, and the majority, 13 young people, experienced between four and six problems that adversely affected them.

During interviews young people observed that their peers who arrive at the restaurant in a 'bad state' and those who become distracted are the ones who typically become upset and angry. They commented how these young people found it difficult to work in the kitchen and they could be difficult to work with but they made an effort to support these trainees. The following interviewee described one situation as follows:

There was one guy on my course, he had some sort of condition ... And everyone just had to deal with him, so we learnt how to try and, I don't know, try and go round his behaviour ... trying to help change his behaviour, that's what it felt like, because sometimes you said something and he just went off on one. (Interviewee 9)

Such issues can affect attendance and as a consequence learning, and are apparent from case files. The following information from case notes illustrates the type of circumstances that account for absences:

- hospitalisation following an overdose of medication,
- stress due to new housing situation,
- victim of a stabbing,
- arrested and detained in custody,
- compulsory appointments and activities organised by probation officers,
- over-sleeping,
- 'disappear' and be out of contact with family and social workers for a week or two, and,
- refusal to attend

As described earlier, co-operative working relationships and working as a team underpins how apprenticeships work. However, during sessions staff have to respond to threatening verbal behaviour. Sometimes they will send a trainee home and ask them to return the following day. One person in the case files was asked to leave with immediate effect whose

'support needs were too high'. However, in many situations the staff are responding to highly charged emotional situations where trainees may:

- just be angry
- distressed by their housing situation, debt, family or friendships
- have serious mental health problems that makes them brittle and defensive, making it difficult to work as a team
- be autistic and react badly if they are asked to change tasks, preferring their existing routines
- have learning difficulties and find it difficult to read social situations and to integrate with other trainees and become frustrated and be frustrating to work with

These findings illustrate the plethora of situations and circumstances faced by trainees, peers, and staff and emphasis the significance and importance of offering effective support.

5.2 Support offered

In responses to the circumstances of these young people, BMT staff and Shoreditch Trust staff more generally work with a trainee to develop a support plan with the intention of improving attendance, supporting them to complete their training, and to find paid employment. Trainees are offered a mentor to discuss and resolve practical issues that affect their learning such as debt, a health coach assists them to stop smoking, increases their awareness of risks associated with taking illegal drugs, supports them to improve their diet and sleep patterns, as well as developing an exercise regime to improve their fitness. For those with learning difficulties and with poor numeracy and literacy skills due to dyslexia, specialist support is provided, and where possible, staff find volunteering opportunities for trainees not wishing to become a chef to improve their CV and chances of finding other types of paid employment.

Some trainees are unable to read or write due to non-attendance at school and due to certain conditions such as autism. These trainees are unable to read recipes or to tell the time. This comment by an interviewee reflects the views of this group:

The biggest challenges? Reading and writing. (Interviewee 7)

5.3 How young people are supported

It is arguable that the support offered at BMT, mentoring, advice from specialists and so forth is typical of effective work with young people. However, we believe that our findings show that there is something additional and distinctive about how young people are supported at BMT. Our research findings show that supportive relationships are shaped by the ethos and social organisation of traditional apprenticeships and that for some young people this experience can contribute to better outcomes. The following findings substantiate this proposition.

5.3.1 Learning by doing offers clarity to doubters

As with most initiatives a young person's prior interest is influential and attracts and retains trainees. Motivations to participate range from enthusiasm to 'may be' and our findings suggest that BMT staff offer reassurance and motivate unsure young people to remain. This

young person talks about his enthusiasm for cooking for others but he did not know if he wanted to be a chef before starting his apprenticeship:

I guess it's the universal idea that no matter what country or what place or what kitchen you are everyone needs food... The idea of making people happy by the food I create, that's always inspired me to do better and try harder in my work... but I didn't know I wanted to be a chef before coming here [BMT]. (Interviewee 1)

At an early stage those who thought that they might be interested but find out that 'it is not for me', are able to leave and the 'learning by doing' enables a young person to make a decision quickly.

5.3.2 *Rolling programme and timely support*

The simple referral process with a short form and the rolling programme enables young people to start an apprenticeship and receive support at a time that suits them. Immediate acceptance onto the programme at a critical moment in their lives can prevent a difficult situation from escalating and just as importantly, makes a young person feel valued. This grateful young person explains:

What surprised me most was that the Trust remained in touch with me while I was in custody and once I was released from prison the second time around my placement on BMT was still open which really empowered me and heightened the expectation I had for myself to succeed, knowing that I had been given a second chance. (Case study 3, 2014)

For young people who have low self-esteem and have been rejected by significant people in their lives, the warm welcome signifies acceptance and the flexible approach to learning is sensitive to their situation and improves retention, as these interviewees explain:

So the way [name of member of staff], way that he received me made me think I want to come here and I love to be where I'm welcomed, so ... they gave me the chance to express myself, to build my ... confidence. (Interviewee 5)

When I was really down'..... If it wasn't for [name of BMT staff] giving me another chance to come back in the kitchen and work, I wouldn't be here, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing right now'. (Interviewee 2)

One advantage of a traditional apprenticeship scheme for this cohort is that completing the training does not rely on 100% attendance. This flexible approach to attendance enables young people to continue and they can complete their training over a longer time frame if they wish, as conveyed in table 4.1.

5.3.3 *Participatory environment and deeper understandings*

Whatever problems or issues young people experience, support is an interactive and iterative social process between a young person and staff. A distinctive aspect of an apprenticeship is that the adults work alongside trainees doing practical tasks together and this setting influences how their relationship is formed. Planning and cooking different meals every day and the professionalism of the chefs creates a positive learning environment that encourages young people to be open and enables them to share their concerns, as this young person explains:

... When I was coming I was learning something new every day, if I had a problem I went to them and most of the time it would be solved. For anything I needed, if I was going to be late they were always answering their

phones... like if you need something they'll go out of their way to get it for you. Lunches were provided to keep you up and going through the rest of the day and there were breakfasts, so it was nice, a nice environment! (Interviewee 9)

As the young person above noted staff routinely 'solve' their problems. One advantage of routinely working alongside a young person is that staff observe and converse with them in a purposeful and 'natural' social situation, every day, week in week out and over several months. This contrasts to the pre-arranged occasional meetings in an office that are organised by social workers, youth justice workers, probation officers and job centre staff. Not only do the chefs have a different set of responsibilities towards the young trainees but also the apprenticeship situation enables them to acquire a deeper knowledge of a young person. One consequence is observed by an interviewee who remarks how staff offer relevant support to each of them:

What Shoreditch Trust does here is they identify the differences of people's situations and then they work around that, so for anything they might have offered to me, they might not have offered it to someone else [it is] ... relevant. (Interviewee 8)

The participatory learning of apprenticeships also shapes how support is offered. For example, trainees can be integrated straight back into the group when they return following a bad patch or a bad day and responsibilities associated with producing a meal gives them a clear purpose. This structure seems to facilitate an easy return, as one interviewee explains:

As I said the one time I didn't turn up, that's when I was really down and I couldn't be bothered and all of that but at the same time you have your little arguments in the kitchen and you get over it the next day, you're just back to normal ... (Interviewee 2)

With respect to receiving support from staff, over two thirds said that they have or had enough support (67%) and 13% (3) of the questionnaire respondents said that they are not sure if they have or had enough support and 21% (5) said they wanted more support from staff.

5.3.4 *Special trusting relationships*

Supportive relationships typically includes 'challenging' young people and encouraging them to 'move on'. These types of relationships are able to withstand bumpy rides through choppy waters and retain trainees on the programme. The largely negative life experiences of these young people makes forming trusting relationships particularly challenging and takes time. Young people talked about their 'hostile' encounters with other agencies and how they breached their trust.

Our findings suggest that forming and reproducing trusting relationships is pivotal to enabling a young person to 'move on'. Research shows that an individual's propensity to develop trust occurs during childhood through parenting and remains stable throughout life.⁹ During the

⁹ This discussion on trust is informed by an article that draws on three different theories of trust advocated by Harin, Uslander, and Giddens, although these theorists concur that trust comprises of 'perceptions of competency and right intentions of others' (See Bradford, B., Sargeant, E., Murphy, K., and J. Jackson (2017), 'A leap of faith? Trust in the police among immigrants in England and Wales', *British Journal of Criminology*, 57:381-

early childhood of the BMT cohort it is likely that opportunities to develop trust was largely absent and, as a result, their default position is typically distrust with the consequence that their lives are characterised by emotional uncertainties and unstable social relationships.

The same daily routines and repetitive practices found in the training kitchen at BMT offers a social context which has been found to be conducive to developing a general expectation of goodwill, the basis for developing trust.¹⁰ Similarly the welcoming and positive social environment is favourable to the formation of trust which makes young people's social world understandable, coherent, and manageable and where trusting relations provide them with a sense of security and a capacity to trust. The following comment by an interviewee is typical of others who emphasize, in the words of another interviewee, their 'positive approach about everything' with the consequence that:

Everyone wants to help each other, everyone wants to do good, everyone wants everyone else to do good and succeed in life. (Interviewee 1)

In addition, Shoreditch Trust plays a significant part in developing a young person's willingness to place trust in an organisation. This aspect of trust facilitates a sense that help and support can be invoked if needed and is both 'useful and enabling'.¹¹ Trusting an organisation to provide help requires a 'leap of faith' and young people's prior experiences of organisations make them resistant to developing a capacity to trust organisations and society. The strong ethos at Shoreditch Trust and the strong BMT team are likely to contribute to trainees' formation and reproduction of trust. For young people keeping personal information confidential is important for building trust and they feel that Shoreditch Trust staff respect their desire to maintain confidentiality as this trainee explains:

I know a lot of it's like if you wanna keep it confidential and ... I wouldn't see Shoreditch Trust just giving out, like just telling people your business. (Interviewee 8)

Thus, the formation of trusting relationships enables young people to develop a sense of goodwill towards others, to feel more secure and to develop a capacity to trust in an organisation, Shoreditch Trust. As an indicator of trust, responses from the self-completion questionnaire show that the overwhelming majority of trainees (94%) felt able to talk to staff 'all or some of the time' about their problems, suggesting high levels of trust. Just one questionnaire respondent said that they would never talk about their personal problems with staff, suggesting a high level of distrust.

5.3.5 *Team work and positive peer support*

The structure of each day with time spent preparing food, washing up and cleaning gives trainees many occasions to talk and these conversations in a safe environment are a source of much social learning and peer-to-peer support.

401). In the discussion for this report we have used aspects of these conceptualisations of trust that gives meaning to our findings.

¹⁰ Bradford et al 2017. See footnote 9 above.

¹¹ Bradford et al 2017: page 385. See footnote 9 above.

Young people describe how in Hackney the street culture or being 'on road' is conflictual and unsupportive, how 'respect is based on fear' and how the 'rules' have changed and this has increased fear. We found that the co-operative structure of the apprenticeship creates a social context that contrasts with their 'on road' experiences and the strong collegiate culture at BMT absorbs many combative and confrontational behaviours typical of newcomers. Over time, trainees learn to amicably negotiate their social relations and this enables them to support each other. This trainee explains:

What I liked as well, it's like I could get along with the people instead of arguing with most people... so I could open up at the same time as well to them to give me advice and give them advice if they need it. (Interviewee 2)

The apprenticeship structure enables established trainees to explain to newcomers when they can expect to receive their 'chef whites', their own knives and to go on trials and staff have observed that these interactions can inspire new trainees.

Trainees also learn to co-operate with people who are different to them and this is a skill that many interviewees appreciate having. One young man's comments reflects others when he says:

Being on this course has also helped me improve my social skills as I'm now able to interact with a range of different people coming from different backgrounds (Male trainee, case study 3, 2015)

The findings from the self-completion questionnaires illustrate the extent to which young people learn to support each other; two thirds (66%) said that they had enough support from other young people and 22% (5 young people) said that they wanted more support from other young people and 13% (3 young people) were not sure if they had enough support.

5.3.6 Learning a craft and equality for all

We found that the chefs are using the flexibility of the traditional apprenticeship approach to include those with limited learning capabilities in ways that gives them dignity and pride. For example, a chef may pair up a trainee who has not yet learnt to read and write with a trainee who can, and in this way all trainees can complete a task that requires reading a recipe and telling the time to know when a dish is cooked. We observed that when trainees are asked to name their favourite 'five a day', the chef holds his hands up high and counts each response on his fingers for every person in the kitchen and for each person trainees help out by suggesting a vegetable or fruit. When it comes to the turn of those with additional learning challenges, this approach enables them to complete the task in the same way as everyone else, thereby treating them as equals.

We found that the circumstances of those who find learning in a formal setting and taking formal examinations difficult are well-suited to a traditional apprenticeship scheme. The following observation notes about a young person with many additional challenges illustrates how all trainees are encouraged to make their own dishes.

George¹² arrived half-an-hour before he was meant to start work and was busy in the kitchen by the time the day formally started. He is making soup using his own recipe with the minimum of supervision. At one stage he left the kitchen and came back with celery and a leek he had purchased from the local shop to add to his butternut squash and ginger mix. He then spent a long time looking through a large tray of fresh herbs, changing his mind and concentrating with great intensity until he settled on a bunch of wild garlic. He put the tray of herbs back in the fridge and smiled with satisfaction. The chef encouraged him to make his own decisions, praised his choice of wild garlic, kept a discrete eye on the time to make sure the soup was going to be ready in time, regularly encouraged George, tasted his soup and explained the difference between table salt and sea salt and suggested he add table salt. When George finished making the soup he received further praise and his sense of achievement and pride was written all over his face.

6. Choosing other careers

The monitoring data show that 39% of BMT trainees chose to pursue a different career path; 27% (9 young people) found employment not in the catering industry, preferring such jobs as banking, midwife, and construction, and 12% (four young people) chose to attend college or further education to gain formal qualifications. These findings indicate that attending BMT has positive outcomes for those who prefer not to become professional chefs. The following findings explain why these young people completed their training even though they did not want to find employment in the catering industry.

The easy entry onto the programme and the willingness of BMT to accept people regardless of their background and those without formal educational qualifications, with drug dependences and a criminal record makes the programme particularly attractive for some. For referring agencies this makes BMT a distinctive provision and is the only local option for some young people. These young people may have other career ambitions but being able to join BMT offers them an opportunity that others will not. This young person explains:

It's like people just expect you to have those things, to have a job, and be like, 'Why don't you have...?' and not really realise what the situation is... It'd gotten to the point where I was really frustrated and annoyed so I didn't really respect anyone in the same way. I wasn't completely insane but... <Laughs>... It's like a downward spiral when you've got loads of doors shut in your face. It gave me an opportunity. (Interviewee 3)

As the research findings show, an interest in learning how to cook and training in a positive environment gives young people confidence and working as a team enables trainees to learn social skills. In this way BMT offers a vital starting point for those who have been previously rejected by other training and education providers or employers and the programme has an influential role in their life course.

¹² Pseudo names are used throughout this report.

7. Life courses of BMT apprentices

Although available data on those who left BMT between 2013 and 2015 are limited and orientated towards those who are still in contact with Shoreditch Trust, the findings show how support and the 'open door' policy extends to those who have left and offer rich insights into the lives of some trainees since they graduated from BMT.

When many apprentices leave BMT to join a prestigious kitchen, they are often aged between 17 and 21 years and given their difficult life histories they access, they are appreciative of ongoing support. One interviewee who graduated when they were 20 years old expresses the views of others when they comment:

When I was working at [name of restaurant] they would check up and see how it's going. When I left they offered me to come and work here again but then I found a different job. It's good. (Interviewee 1)

The monitoring data shows that of the trainees who participated in BMT and for whom there are data (64 young people) almost a quarter (23%), had or have contact with Shoreditch Trust beyond their training. This support ranges from a young person seeking reassurance by visiting Waterhouse Restaurant for a 'chat', to those who have lost their confidence and wish to return to the training kitchen or whose mental health and personal circumstances have deteriorated and ask for support from a trusted organisation. These findings demonstrate that staff do not turn away BMT graduates seeking further support and illustrates another aspect of the 'open door' policy that contributes to improving the life chances of these young people.

Those who had completed their apprenticeship a year or more ago were also able to reflect on the influence of attending BMT on their life course. Of the 11 leavers who completed the questionnaire and left BMT three years ago or more, 82% (9) are chefs, one is in employment not related to the food industry and one is not in paid employment, giving an employment rate of 91%.¹³ Further these young people typically have a higher than average rate of unemployment, particularly in London; the questionnaire respondents are predominantly male (82%,9), aged 21 to 25 years (55%,6) or 26-30 years (36%,4) and black African, Caribbean, or British (55%,6) or dual heritage (27%,3).

When they reflect back on their BMT training, these comments by two respondents is typical of others. One young person commented:

Was the best course ever, totally change my life and made me focus on more positive things than negative. (Questionnaire respondent)

And another, like several others referred to their new found confidence as follows:

¹³ The latest Office for National Statistics data on young Black men aged 16-24 years and living in London show that they have a 29% unemployment rate, 42% higher than those who are White. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/adhocs/006675unemploymentratesofyoungblackmeninlondon>

At the end of my years placement I had obtained a new lease of confidence which I hadn't experienced before and this was really a testament to the training I received. (Questionnaire respondent)

Young people also reflected on how BMT staff successfully supported them through difficult times, as this ex-trainee comments:

The staff at bmt help me through some bad times and got me through difficult situations in my life. Many thanks to all the staff a bmt. Much appreciated. (Questionnaire respondent)

We found, however, that even though they are in employment these young people are struggling with low pay and long hours, the lack of affordable housing close to their work. Some interviewees talked about increasing debt and suffering from health issues due to their anxieties about their circumstances and how these problems affected their ability to concentrate and participate fully in their work. This interviewee explains about the effects of his housing problem on this ability to work and the longer term implications for his future:

I've had a problem with housing... my house where I'm living now is gonna be repossessed very soon unless I find some money... Every single time... I've lived there for five or six months, had to move again, find another place... making me depressed, coming to work upset or coming to work with my head not focused because once I leave work where am I gonna go sleep tonight?... I feel like for me that's a major factor that stops me from progressing a lot further in my actual life, not just my work life... It's sometimes even hard to sleep to be honest with you.. I wanna own my own restaurant... (Interviewee 4)

Interviewees also talked about the discrimination they experienced in the workplace and how they are not given the same opportunities as others. This finding is consistent with many other minority ethnic groups and in addition BMT graduates suffer from discrimination. This young woman chef is really frustrated and describes her situation as follows:

... In my workplace they're not giving me a chance... The chef already told me that he don't trust me in the kitchen, so I'm in a section out of the kitchen... I still want to learn more... he was just saying, 'You two are gangsters... these two guys are both from Hackney'... no one else gets that treatment....' (Interviewee 2).

These outcomes illustrate the ongoing struggles of these young people and require a response to which Shoreditch Trust can be part of, but is probably better led by leading authorities in the catering industry.

Some of those who graduate are understandably unable to cope with these adversities they experience in the workplace and some get in contact with Shoreditch Trust and arrange a meeting. Some of these young people are seeking reassurance and a familiar and warm environment, as this young person who left three years ago explains:

No matter how long after you leave Blue Marble it always feels like home when you come back. That's the good thing about it as well. (Interviewee 3)

Others re-join BMT, receive support, regain their confidence and staff find them another job as a chef or another type of employment. For those who are particularly damaged by their work experiences Shoreditch Trust offers them paid sessional work to enable them to acquire more stability in their lives before they are ready to seek further employment.

8. Non-completers

The monitoring data shows that 11% (9 young people) registered but did not engage with the programme and 31% (25 young people) did not complete their training. Those who changed their minds after their first meeting realised that they could not afford to attend, or had complicated personal circumstances that made it logistically difficult for them to travel to Shoreditch and attend every day. For those who did not complete their training, the data shows that they:

- Initially attend but are under pressure from others to drop out
- 'Give it a try' and find that it is 'not for me'
- Have changed circumstances that make it difficult for them to continue
- Disengage because they are unable to cope and for whom attending may be harmful

Of the 25 young people who did not complete their training, two were asked to leave as their behaviour was considered too unpredictable to be safe in the kitchen, although BMT staff made it clear to their social workers that if they had a better care plan then they could return.

Staff and other trainees said that those who disengage at an early stage either decide that they do not like cooking or are under pressure from peers, new partners, or parents not to attend. Pressures to leave include preferring the young person to spend time with them at home or on the streets, and a dislike of a young person 'working for free' and insistence that they find paid work. For others their circumstances change and they may have a new baby, become a primary carer of a family member who has a long term illness, or their new hostel or semi-independent accommodation is located a long way from Hackney, or they have a court hearing and receive a custodial sentence. When a young person's attendance is sporadic due to problems with their benefits and running out of money, they become disheartened and find it difficult to concentrate and eventually stop attending. Sometimes trainees become overwhelmed with problems and find that they are unable to complete the training, as this trainee explains:

... Basically I went into a really bad depression and not because of Blue Marble Training ... Everything just got on top and I ended up... stopped coming slowly, slowly, less days I was here and then I was just really ill... Well, they diagnosed me with depression and a personality disorder ... and they tried to give me psychotherapy but the place that they sent me to I had a really bad experience there so I decided to cut it off and just get myself better, it was making me worse... so I just needed to take the break. (Interviewee 9)

Others may be described as reluctant learners; those 'with attitude' and those who find it difficult to engage emotionally and are unable to settle and be fully committed to attending regularly. Their progress is described by interviewees as slow due a lack of motivation and a reluctance to 'try new things', and their behaviour can be quite disruptive. One young person thought that these trainees 'do not accept help' whereas those who progress through training do. Included in this group are those who are referred without the expectation that the young person will complete the training. The young people who referring agencies did not expect to complete the apprenticeship were described in interviews for the research as being in a 'negative cycle' and referral agencies hope that attending BMT will give them a positive

experience that will break this negative cycle that prohibits them from progressing. An interviewee made the following observation about the benefits of attending as follows:

I feel like it benefits people that don't see anything going for them, people that don't have the confidence to go out there and get a job or people that feel like they're not gonna get a job and have to resort to selling drugs or something like that. It gives them that option, that path to know that you don't have to go down that path. You can change your life if you come working with us and let us train you and let us develop you and everything like that. (Interviewee 4)

One partner explained how pleased they were with one young person in particular who had made progress for the first time in three years and although he had been arrested and not completed the programme, the interviewee was hoping that the young person will return to the programme in due course.

The data also show that being arrested (6 young people) was a factor in young people ceasing to attend and casefiles show how contact with the criminal justice system disrupts the lives of these young people. Yet our findings strongly suggest that attending BMT can have a rehabilitative effect and supporting young people to re-engage with BMT is likely to prevent further offending. BMT's 'open door' policy enables all non-completers to re-engage and some do take up this opportunity.

9. The longer term sustainability of BMT

In interviews with partner organisations, it was apparent that interviewees held Shoreditch Trust in high regard and that they are sympathetic to the organisation's ethos of working towards reducing social and economic disadvantage in Hackney. The longer term sustainability of BMT is, of course, closely interconnected with the success of Shoreditch Trust as an organisation. Although our study did not include researching Shoreditch Trust as a community development organisation BMT occupies a distinctive place as a community-based intervention that is part of a social enterprise as the training kitchen at Waterhouse restaurant is a social enterprise.

Shoreditch Trust are committed to the social principles of its social enterprise. According to the CEO, for as long as they continue to run an 'open door' policy and trainees' welfare and ongoing support remains paramount, then the core staff including chefs and kitchen porter will receive a salary. In this way the kitchen can function without depending on trainees. With these priorities it is likely that Shoreditch Trust will always require additional funding to sustain the BMT programme. Since 2015, staff in the enterprise team at Shoreditch Trust have renewed their efforts to make Waterhouse restaurant financially viable and they have successfully reduced the deficit without compromising its social purpose.

As an intervention, BMT has been described as 'full of contradictions' and we have found that they affect the reputation of the programme and decisions agencies make about which young people, if any, to refer to the training. These 'contradictions' provide managers and trustees with challenging decisions that impact upon the future of the programme. The main debates raised during the course of the research are as follows:

9.1 *Qualifications*

Debates about accredited courses and formal qualifications have financial implications for Shoreditch Trust. BMT neither fits current government training criteria, funding is only attached to those attending accredited courses, nor is BMT offering employment. Organisations such as Job Centres and other agencies who have employment targets do not refer, or encourage young people to attend BMT as they are not paid and are not considered to be 'in work'. According to the monitoring data, there have been no referrals by a Job Centre since one referral in 2013.

The discussion about BMT is between those who, on the one hand, prefer a traditional apprenticeship model that is better suited to the typical BMT cohort of young people and which offers them a trade that gives them a social identity and place in society. And on the other, those who emphasize the importance of gaining formal qualifications which are important assets that enable young people's progression into the world of work and a better future.

These differences of opinion are influenced, in part, by organisational responsibilities; for example, those working within the statutory sector including educators are proponents of accredited courses although, at the same time, hold BMT in high regard for its flexibility that best suits young people who 'do not fit the system'. Those working in the voluntary sector and some in the statutory sector recognise that young people with a history of being rejected and turbulent relations with social institutions including family, school, housing, and the Job Centre require an alternative approach to achieve social integration. Those who perceive BMT training as learning a craft argue that participative learning accommodates young peoples' 'needs' and enables them to form a more positive social identity and way of being that does not happen when operating within a 'tick box' culture which requires an individualistic and instrumentalist form of learning.

These different perspectives affect how agencies talk about BMT and assess 'success'; for example, taking an accredited course and receiving a certificate is considered achieving the optimal 'hard' outcome and to be a mark of success. Other outcomes such as increased confidence and ability to form constructive social relationships are labelled as 'soft' outcomes and are granted less importance, creating a hierarchical system of better and not 'as necessary' outcomes.

The findings from this study show, however, that outcomes are typically inter-linked and some are sequential and together they enable young people to experience being 'in the system' and to make a contribution to society. For example, at BMT the formation of social relations through teamwork in the kitchen, trust in Shoreditch Trust as an organisation, and training that gives young people knowledge about their 'profession' and how to behave professionally, together change young people's lives. According to these findings ensuring that here are no weak links in the delivery of the traditional apprenticeship model and support offered to young people will produce an interlinked set of causal mechanisms which are most likely to produce good outcomes. This can be achieved through partnership working and a

collaborative approach that offers ongoing support to enable young people to improve their life chances into adulthood.

9.2 Paying trainees

At present trainees are not paid except for events or for special functions such as corporate dinners or weddings and findings from the research show that some young people stop attending due to the absence of pay. From the perspective of Shoreditch Trust, paying trainees a living wage requires raising considerable funds, particularly as there are no state financial incentives to engage with many of these young people. Others may legitimately ask why young people who by virtue of their turbulent histories, are training for free when those in more fortunate circumstances receive a wage, if they are on a government sponsored apprenticeship, for example. If Blue Marble trainees receive a wage then regular attendance with a system of sanctions for non-attendance may be reasonable, but this move it is likely to reduce completion rates thereby undermining the aim of engaging and retaining young people who have lifelong experiences of being rejected.

9.3 Extent of support

During the research the extent to which young people should be supported was raised as an issue. From the perspective of Shoreditch Trust, providing support can be time consuming and expensive. Young people with an Education and Health Care plan come with funding that contributes to covering staff time but there are many young people who do not come with such a plan including repeat offenders, those who no longer meet the increased thresholds but have multiple issues, and those who do not trust agencies enough to disclose the full extent of their problems. Shoreditch Trust considers working with these young people who 'come without funds' within their remit and feel that they should not be overlooked, even though it is financially disadvantageous for them as an organisation.

We found different perspectives on where the balance of support lies. From the perspective of young people they praise the level of support offered by BMT and appreciative of their extra efforts. This young person explains:

I came here with attitude... [and] you're going to stress others out as well... there were some times that you can't really control it... They didn't pull me down a bit... they gave me the chance to express myself, to build my confidence... The support, that was it, support that [name of staff member] gave me so many times. I appreciate what they did for me. (Interviewee 5)

However, some agencies felt that there are times when young people are offered 'too much support' and this occurs when the support is not sustainable over the training period; for example, paying for a young person to catch a taxi every day to-and-from the restaurant as he was fearful of being attacked by members of a gang he was trying to leave.

The opinions expressed in this study centre on two issues. Firstly, making a difficult judgement call between supporting a 'flicker' of enthusiasm in the hope that a young person becomes motivated and quickly allowing a young person to leave to avoid causing them harm. Whilst the temptation is to 'let go' those who are surly, argumentative, disrupt a team and behave badly in front of paying customers, these resistances and protests may belie a deeper

willingness to participate and staff sometimes stand by these young people to give them a chance.

Secondly, many believe that personal circumstances can become too overwhelming and attendance wains and it is best to 'let go' and wait for the young person to return when they are 'more mature' and/or their situation 'less chaotic'. Others argue that it should be possible to support these young people to reduce the turmoil of their personal circumstances to a level that does not 'tip' them over the edge into withdrawing. It is argued that this can be achieved by putting in 'extra' effort. The challenge is, however, that some of the 'right kind of support' is almost impossible to achieve; for example, problems associated with living in poverty such as debt and anxiety, finding affordable stable housing, and accessible and young person friendly mental health services. In these circumstances the solutions lie beyond the influence of Shoreditch Trust alone.

9.4 Respecting and supporting different types of provision

Several 'contradictions' identified above are a consequence of policies and regulations as well as beliefs and dominant practice. There seems to be a reluctance to accept some of the defining principles which underpin BMT, to work with them to improve their offer to young people, and respect differences in their approach. The following discussion illustrates the debates about different perspectives that emerged during our research.

By not working within a risk framework, BMT avoids controlling young people to manage their 'risk' and assigning them 'risky' labels. Rather, BMT offers an option to young people that assumes they can learn to be chefs and find employment. We found that the traditional apprenticeship model offers scope to work positively and flexibly to improve attendance and time keeping which keeps young people engaged in the programme. The research findings are overwhelmingly positive and although a minority say they have experienced few social and personal improvements, BMT has often succeeded when other services and support have not. We observed how disaffected and disengaged young people who can be angry and conflictual learn to follow instructions without dissent and to respond positively when working under pressure to complete tasks.

By not working within a framework of accredited courses and formal qualifications, BMT avoids setting up young people to fail. With their 'open door' policy and encouragement given to young people to return, there is an absence of sanctions and no examinations to mark the end of a course that a young person may not pass. The BMT perspective gives priority to feelings of rejection and labels of 'failure' given to a particular cohort of young people and recognises that they are living in a 'negative cycle'. Our findings show that embedded in the traditional apprenticeship approach are strong theories about how to alter these feelings and experiences through participatory and social learning and joining a community of practice. Everyday practices do not include 'failing', rather learning to be a 'master' chef includes learning how to adapt recipes and dishes to improve them and the BMT chefs have the knowledge and skills to make improvements to dishes that mitigate trainees' feelings of failure.