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## ***Young people ill-prepared for the world of work***

Many young people are ill-prepared for the world of work, leaving them open to possible exploitation in the workplace, according to a new report from east London charity, Community Links. Young people are making ill-informed choices and believe that informal cash-in-hand work is a good thing because the money they earn goes straight into their pockets, providing *“immediate cash, for immediate use”*, particularly important given that 41% of young people in London live in poverty,

The Community Links report, ***‘Cash-in-hand and working rights for young people’***, strengthens our understanding about young people’s experiences of working, their knowledge of their working rights and attitudes to working cash-in-hand and recommends that young people should be taught more about the world of work.

The findings of the report indicate that young people have some knowledge and understanding about cash-in-hand work and their working rights, but it is limited. They did recognise that cash-in-hand work was often unreliable, *“I didn’t like it but I needed money fast-fast”*, and does not offer the same legal protection, benefits and working rights as formal paid work, including receiving the national minimum wage, insurance, or pensions. As one young person said you get, *“no minimum wage, no holiday pay, no sick pay”*.

**Aaron Barbour**, co-author and linksUK Research & Policy Manager said: *“With the current government’s focus on ‘work as the route out of poverty’, increased efforts must be taken by government to understand what practical and ‘real life’ knowledge about the world of work young people need when they leave education, as this will impact on their future employment opportunities and choices.”*

Recommendations made in the new report include: introducing ‘world of work’ modules into the national curriculum; establishing young people advisory groups at local and national levels; increasing protection and enforcement of national minimum wage and other workers rights for young people; addressing the imbalance of the levels of the national minimum wage; and reducing levels of taxation for young people.

This report is launched during Adult Learners Week as research for the report was undertaken a group of adults training in the theory and practice of Community Development working with the research and policy team at Community Links.

Copies of the report are available from [www.community-links.org](http://www.community-links.org)

## Notes to Editors:

1. **Community Links** is an innovative charity running community-based projects in east London. For 30 years we have helped thousands of children, young people, adults and older people in deprived neighbourhoods. LinksUK leads our programme of national work of training, consultancy, research, publications and demonstration projects sharing the local lessons across the country to widen the impact of our projects; inform policy makers and practitioners and generate lasting social change. [www.community-links.org](http://www.community-links.org)
2. **'Cash-in-hand and working rights for young people'** by linksUK, price £10.00. The report can be downloaded for free at [www.community-links.org](http://www.community-links.org). Please add £2.75 p&p (+50p for each extra copy). ISBN 978-0-9552889-7-5 (A4, 36pp).
3. Review copies are available from Aaron Barbour at Community Links.
4. Further media comment and interviews can be arranged with report authors or research participants
5. Visit **linksUK new blog** [www.community-links/linksuk](http://www.community-links/linksuk) for comment, think pieces and regular updates about our work.
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