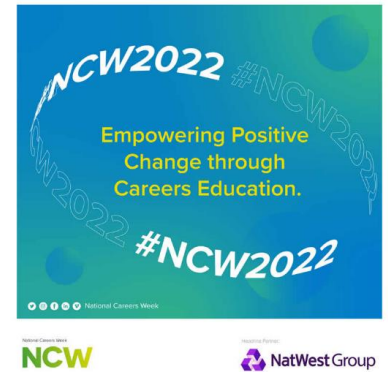


The National Careers Week 2022 Launch Event

Hi, I'm Mohin NCW Champion from Jesmond Park Academy. Y'know, I always wondered what the future was going to hold, in terms of occupation. 'Which career paths are available to me?', 'How am I supposed to know what to do in life?', and 'Where should I go after 16?' are all questions that float around in the back of my mind. That is, until the launch of NCW, which ended up clearing my head of a multitude of doubts I had about the world of careers. How? Let's find out.



The Buildup



I'll be honest, I don't think I grasped just how big this launch event was going to be. I was informed that the event was to be held in Crowne Plaza Hotel, renowned for its luxurious aesthetic, but the realisation didn't hit me until I alighted from the taxi. One look at the place, and I knew this was going to be a momentous occasion.

Me, Fleur, Ahmad, Theresa and Ms. Strong all entered the building with a couple others, and were greeted by a friendly face. We were led to a waiting room with seats, and handed an agenda. As we walked to our seats, Ahmad and Theresa noticed the seemingly formal attire everyone was wearing, and the not-so-formal clothes they were wearing. That was probably one of the only days I'm thankful our school had a dress code.

As the time neared 10:00am, we were all led to a massive meeting room...

The Event

The room was filled with varying authority figures and investors. This was also a LIVE streamed event, and I noticed the various cameras propped up at the back. The focal point was a podium (for speakers) atop an elongated stage, with curtains and a smart board decorating the background. As we sat down, we were given our own versions of the agenda, complete with a few pages dedicated to personal notes and questions we may have at the end. All the while, Ms. Strong was asking us if we were okay and if we needed anything to drink.



As the room quietened, the host (Lucy Winskell) greeted everyone and explained formalities regarding the event, such as what to do when there is a fire, or where the toilets are. After she finished, she introduced Alex Burghart, an MP. Alex Burghart talked about the importance of National Careers Week, as well as his goal, being to support a 'High-wage, High-skill economy'. He 'wanted to make a heartfelt thank-you to everyone behind the scenes in NCW' as it helps young people thrive in the career-aspect of their lives. I completely support his idea of a highly skilled workforce earning a high wage, and I am thrilled we managed to see an MP speak about NCW (He even has his own Wikipedia page!)



The host then introduced NatWest partner Sandra Beattie, who created a programme designed to help young people develop skills, experience, and employability, called CareerSense. She talked about helping young people tap into their potential, something I think is often overlooked, and making them see all available jobs for them. She talked about the importance of creativity and energy, along with how we can tackle gender inequality within entrepreneurship. I've checked the website myself, and am impressed with resources available, with three different age hubs too!

<https://www.mycareersense.com/>

Finishing with the final spokesperson of the welcome address, the host welcomed Laura Watkins, who wanted to broaden the public awareness of jobs in the healthcare sector. She pointed out the many jobs within the NHS, and how some people need to stop thinking it's all about doctors and nurses (guilty). She helped me understand the multitude of jobs available in sectors you wouldn't even dream of, personally I did NOT know you could be an IT specialist inside a hospital.



The host ended the welcome address, and began with the key part of the event, featuring 5 key-speakers with their take on National Careers Week. The host mentioned how NCW required investment funds to continue towards their goal of empowering young people towards healthy career choices, and continued with the event:

Victoria Sutherland took the spot on the podium. She is the Head of Evidence at the What Works Centre, which ties into her firm belief that good decisions are backed by good evidence. She pointed out that what young people see can alter what they think about LMI (Labour Market Info) and careers, and wanted young people to make informed choices. Especially given the pace of change in the world of work, and how demanding the market now is. She addressed primary, secondary and college staff on how they could integrate LMI into the school curriculum, and explained how they can provide a sense of 'ambition' to students, and making careers less about strict requirements. She even brought a few students to talk about their experience with LMI in their curriculum and future jobs they were interested in. I agreed completely with her methods and ideas.



As Victoria Sutherland left the podium, Sarah Glendinning entered. She focussed more on the employer side of Careers, and how beneficial it is to work with employers in your goal of getting the right career for you. She wants people to avoid becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and to develop employability skills. She knows that businesses can struggle to help people career-wise, because of strict timetables and tight budgets which make it hard to commit, but wanted to work around these issues. She welcomed employers on stage to talk about being partners and benefits earned from doing so. I believe there are two ends, employee, and employer, and both must accompany one another to attain success. I hope people can reach out to employers when in need of career guidance.

After the final employer finished, they all depart and the host welcomed Michelle Rainbow and Neil Willis who talk more about young people finding out the right career pathway for them. They continue to talk about the importance of helping people stay away from becoming NEET, and what efforts have been done to address this. I think have done amazingly well, there used to be a 10% NEET rate, which is now reduced to zero with every student having a destination to go to.

They used quotes like 'Raise aspirations, help young people discover entry points into certain careers' and 'Play-level to A-level' to emphasise their point. They introduced people onto the stage to discuss more about young people and where they will go after education. I really enjoyed the message they were conveying, and am surprised at how well they are doing at helping young people get into careers or onto career pathways.



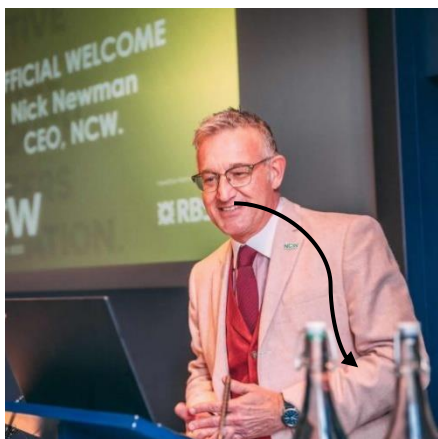
The host came in for one last check-in, before giving the stage to the fifth and final key speaker, Ellen Thinnesen. It had been a long day and I was getting a bit tired, but this did not affect the quality of Ellen's ideas and her discussion. The premise of her idea was recognising and using young people's skill sets. She wanted to make people aware of the ever-changing work landscape and what skills are going to be needed in the near future. She identified that in very technology-dependent future, people need to compete against complete obsolescence by fusing certain skills along with learning in a sustained and thoughtful manner. She, invited people on stage to talk about the importance of a competitive skill set, and how to recognise potential within young people.

I aspire to be a software developer, and knowing that future labour markets may align with my dream job makes me feel reassured.



The key part of the event was now over, and the agenda listed this next part as 'Reflections and Close'. The two 'reflectors' were Nick Newman, the founder of NCW (left), and Chris Richardson, a Deputy Director (right). Unfortunately, Nick had a family emergency and couldn't make it, but Rosie Stewart stepped in to talk about what he was going to.

Summarising what they said, they went over what was going to happen during the week, what it was all about and how much NCW had grown since it started out 11 years ago, in terms of scale, reach and diversity. They thanked all people responsible and wanted to remind young people that 'Talent is evenly distributed, but opportunity isn't', encouraging all that can take opportunities in life to go that extra mile to help themselves and their communities.



Thoughts

After the meeting, we went to grab lunch (best cheesecake ever) and left for school, still digesting all the new information presented to us. I honestly really enjoyed the event, as it gave me an insight on what people were trying to do in order to help people like me reach our dream careers (ones that maybe we didn't even know existed!). Just hearing everyone talk about introducing LMI into our curriculum, or helping businesses work with us, or helping us in finding our future jobs, and so much more, made me think that I'm not alone when it comes to my future, and that if I try hard enough, I will make it into a high skill – high wage environment doing what I love most.

Thank you all,

Mohin.

