

Work and Pensions Committee

Youth employment, education and training

Third Report of Session 2026–27

HC 180

Work and Pensions Committee

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Summary

It is a travesty that over one million young people in the UK are not in employment, education or training (NEET). The government is right to prioritise this issue and it has taken some positive first steps. However, the policy interventions offered to date do not go far enough. The government must go further and faster to reduce the high number of NEETs today. It must also do more to prevent this situation arising for future generations, working across government to address the underlying drivers of youth inactivity.

There is a lack of coherence across departments, with policies not aligning with the ambition to increase employment, education and training for under 25s. The government must develop a youth employment strategy with a clear target for reducing the UK's NEET rate. Tax policy and benefit rules that disincentivise employers from offering, and young people from pursuing, opportunities must also be addressed.

DWP has launched several schemes under a new Youth Guarantee to ensure all young people are earning or learning. However, the Youth Guarantee's scope and scale are too limited. Current schemes largely support people within the benefit system, but 44% of NEETs are not claiming benefits so the coverage of schemes must be extended. The Youth Guarantee will also require long-term commitment if it is to make a lasting difference. The UK has a long history of here-today-gone-tomorrow youth policies. This short-term approach discourages young people, employers and other stakeholders from getting involved, and the government must do better this time.

Another important tool at DWP's disposal is apprenticeships. We welcome the government's intent to refocus apprenticeships on young people, but we remain to be convinced that the changes it is making will deliver this goal. England's apprenticeship system suffers from overly complex systems, excessive policy tinkering and an ongoing lack of esteem for vocational training. DWP must do more if it wants apprenticeships to deliver for young people.

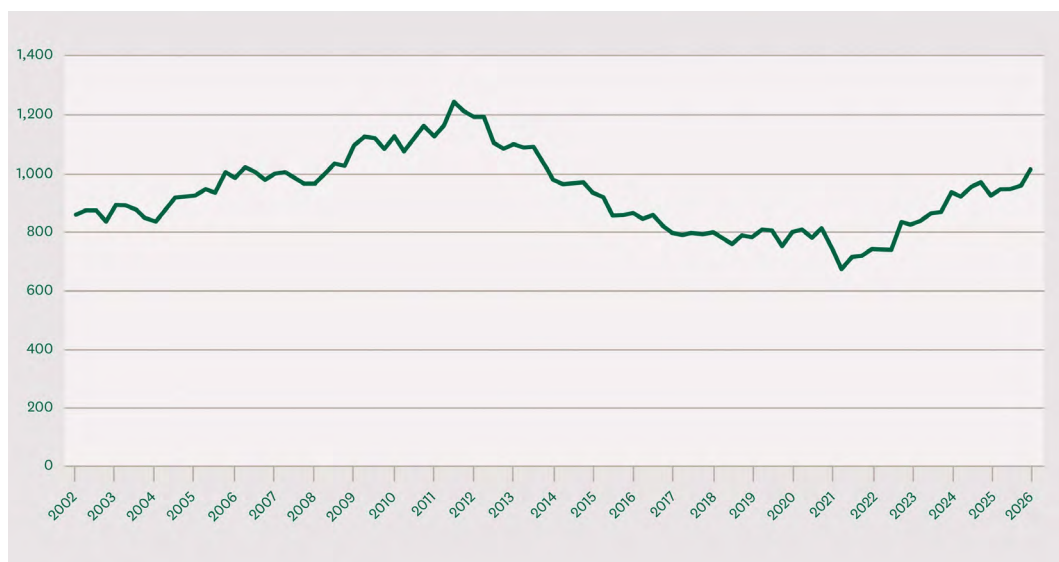
1 Introduction

Background to our inquiry

Young people not in employment, education and training

1. Throughout this report we use the accepted definition of NEETs: young people aged 16 to 24, who are not in employment, education or training.
2. In January to March 2026, there were 1.01 million NEETs. This is equivalent to 13.5% of 16 to 24-year-olds, more than one in eight. Among 18 to 24-year-olds, this rate rises to 15.8%, more than one in seven. As shown in Figure 1, the number of NEETs has been increasing since 2021, when it stood at 673,000 (9.7% of all 16 to 24-year-olds). This increase reversed a long-term decline in the number of NEETs from a peak in 2011 of 1.25 million (16.9% of all 16 to 24-year-olds).¹

Figure 1: Young people aged 16 to 24 not in employment, education or training (NEET), UK, 2002 to 2026, thousands



Source: Office for National Statistics, Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), 28 May 2026

1 Office for National Statistics, Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), 28 May 2026

3. Of the 1.01 million NEETs, 400,000 (39%) are unemployed and 613,000 (61%) are economically inactive.² Unlike in 2011, when the increase in NEETs was driven by unemployment, the current increase in the number of NEETs is driven by both an increase in unemployment and economic inactivity.³ Among OECD countries, this trend is unique to the UK—most other countries have a stable NEET rate and any increases are mainly driven by unemployment.⁴

Figure 2: NEETs by economic activity, UK, 2002 to 2026, thousands



Source: Office for National Statistics, Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), 28 May 2026

Our inquiry

4. Given the increasing number of NEETs, and DWP's focus on this issue (see *Government initiatives* below), we launched our inquiry in January 2026 to examine the causes and consequences of so many young people becoming NEET, the effectiveness of DWP interventions and how barriers to work could be addressed.
5. Our inquiry received significant interest. We published 189 submissions. We held two evidence sessions as part of this inquiry, and have also drawn on other one-off evidence sessions, including: a session on NEETs held before launching the inquiry, a session with Skills England and our regular

2 Someone is unemployed if they are not in work but are looking for work. Someone is economically inactive if they are neither working nor looking for work.

3 House of Commons Library, [NEET: Young people not in education, employment or training](#), Research Briefing 6705, 5 June 2026

4 [Q73](#)

scrutiny of the Secretary of State. We held a roundtable with young people, organised by the Stockton Employment & Training Hub, to hear from those with experience of being NEET.⁵

Impacts

6. During our inquiry, we heard that being NEET could have a long-term ‘scarring effect’ on people, with diminished lifetime earnings and worse health and wellbeing outcomes.⁶ Participants in our roundtable used negative and emotional language to describe their experience. One participant said they felt like “a leech” as they couldn’t contribute to their household’s costs. Another said they felt “in limbo.” Participants reported that long periods out of work with multiple rejected applications were harming their confidence and motivation.⁷
7. The direct cost of one million young people being NEET is estimated at around £47 billion.⁸ We also heard about the significant impact on the economy, with reducing the NEET rate to 5% estimated as having the potential to increase the UK’s GDP by £69 billion.⁹
8. In Chapter 2 we consider some of the factors that increase the risk of someone becoming NEET, how these factors have changed and how this might be driving the recent increase.

Government initiatives

9. Soon after his appointment as Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in autumn 2025, Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP told us that he was “very concerned” about the rising NEET rate, that reducing it was a “real priority”, and that he wanted to see “urgency and energy” in addressing it.¹⁰
10. In November 2025, the government launched an independent investigation into the rise in youth inactivity by the former Secretary of State for Health, Alan Milburn. In May 2026, Alan Milburn published his interim report

5 Tees Valley youth guarantee trailblazer ([YEET0201](#))

6 Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Q1](#); Dr Dylan Murphy ([YEET0002](#)); University of Warwick ([YEET0007](#)); Dr Stefan Sönke Speckesser (Associate Dean at University of Brighton) ([YEET0029](#)); Centre for Mental Health, Children and Young People’s Mental Health Coalition ([YEET0051](#)); Association of Colleges ([YEET0108](#)); Impetus ([YEET0136](#)); UK Youth ([YEET0160](#)); West Midlands Combined Authority ([YEET0161](#)); The King’s Trust ([YEET0183](#)); New Economics Foundation ([YEET0186](#)); Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) ([YEET0188](#))

7 Tees Valley youth guarantee trailblazer ([YEET0201](#))

8 Department for Work and Pensions, [Young people and work: interim report](#), May 2026, Table 7

9 Impetus, [Youth Jobs Gap - Exploring compound disadvantage](#), May 2025, p.9

10 Oral evidence taken on 19 November 2025, [Qq100, 105](#)

diagnosing the problem. He concluded that the rise in NEETs was due to “a whole system failure.” He plans to publish a final report with policy recommendations later in the year.¹¹ We discuss the need for a whole of government approach in Chapter 3.

11. To support NEETs, the government has put in place a Youth Guarantee, which, through several component schemes, aims to ensure all young people are earning or learning. This Youth Guarantee is the focus of Chapter 4.
12. The government has also made changes to the apprenticeship system, with the aim of encouraging more young people to take up apprenticeships.¹² These changes are discussed in Chapter 5.

13. **CONCLUSION**

The current level of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) is a travesty. These false starts to people’s working lives have deep and long-term consequences for them, for society and for the economy. Young people deserve better.

14. **CONCLUSION**

We are pleased that this issue is getting the attention it demands, including through the Milburn review. A million young people are currently NEET, and there is a risk that many of them will be in their 30s before the benefits of any policy changes are felt. As the government brings forward more initiatives, we expect to see a level of ambition and urgency to match.

15. **RECOMMENDATION**

We recommend that the government responds to the recommendations from the Milburn review within two months of it reporting.

11 Department for Work and Pensions, [Young people and work: interim report](#), May 2026, Foreword and para 3

12 [Apprenticeships and Skills Training](#), HCWS672, 2 June 2025

2 Risk factors

Health

16. In April 2026, the Resolution Foundation published research into the drivers of the UK's rising NEET rate. It found economic trends explained around half of the rise, and observed that for the remaining increase “broader health trends since the pandemic” corresponded closely with the rise in youth inactivity.¹³ Alan Milburn described ill health as “the new kid on the block”, telling us that over the last 10 years there had been a 70% increase in the number of NEETs with a work-limiting health condition.¹⁴
17. In particular, there has been an increase in mental health conditions among young people. Professor Taylor-Robinson, Professor of Public Health and Policy and W.H. Duncan Chair in Health Inequalities, University of Liverpool, described this an “epidemic.”¹⁵ Louise Murphy, Senior Economist, Resolution Foundation, told us that multiple markers showed an increase in children and young people experiencing poor mental health. These markers included prescriptions of antidepressants, self-diagnosis in surveys and engagements with hospitals for self-harm.¹⁶
18. We asked witnesses for their explanations of the rise in ill health, particularly deteriorating mental health, among young people. Barry Fletcher, CEO, Youth Futures Foundation (YFF), told us that YFF research had found there was no change in the resilience of young people. Instead, it highlighted four causal factors: declining sleep quality, greater financial precarity, social media and smartphones, and the reduction in children's and youth services.¹⁷ Professor David Taylor-Robinson said that a country's NEET rate was a function of its investment in children and children's health over the first 20 years of their lives, citing the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries as having some of the best health outcomes for children and the lowest NEET rates.¹⁸

13 Resolution Foundation, [Lost in transition](#), April 2026, p.6

14 [Q46](#)

15 Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Q2](#)

16 Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Q11](#)

17 Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Q12](#)

18 Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Q15](#)

Child poverty and childhood adversity

19. Evidence highlighted the significance of childhood experience to the risk of becoming NEET. A recent study looked at NEET rates among the UK Millennium Cohort Study.¹⁹ It found that young people exposed to both persistent poverty and poor parental mental health throughout childhood had five times greater odds of being NEET. It further estimated that half of the UK's NEET figures could be explained by persistent childhood poverty and family adversity.²⁰ Professor Taylor-Robinson, who was involved in the study, told us that there was a “causal pathway” from childhood adversity to mental health problems, to educational failure, to becoming NEET and to subsequent negative outcomes. He went on to say that child poverty was the “single most modifiable thing” for addressing high NEET rates.²¹ The government published its Child Poverty Strategy in December 2025, which aims to deliver a “the largest reduction in child poverty by any government in a single parliament”.²² We are currently running an inquiry on Delivering the Child Poverty Strategy jointly with the Education Committee.²³

Experience of care

20. Young people with experience of the children's social care system are also at much greater risk of being NEET. Professor Neil Harrison, Professor of Education and Social Justice, School of Education, University of Exeter, told us that they were three to 10 times more likely to be NEET than other young people. There are currently around 81,000 children in care across England and around 1% of all children will spend some of their childhood in care.²⁴ He explained that their transitions into adulthood might be fundamentally affected by traumatic experiences, experience of neglect or maltreatment in the family home, and that 50 to 75% of young people who were care-experienced would have a diagnosable mental health problem. Professor Harrison further emphasised that a lack of adequate support increased

19 The Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) is a UK longitudinal birth study. It is following the lives of around 19,000 young people born across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland between 2000 to 2002. It has tracked measures such as physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and behavioural development, economic circumstances, parenting, relationships and family life across the life course.

20 Udu K, Adjei NK, Akanni L, Niccodemi G, Chen Y, Chua YW, et al. [“Poverty and family adversity trajectories and not in education, employment or training \(NEET\) status in late adolescence: evidence from the UK Millennium Cohort Study”](#), BMJ Public Health., Volume 4, Issue 1, March 2026

21 Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Qq9, 13](#)

22 Cabinet Office, [Our Children, Our Future: Tackling Child Poverty](#), CP 1449, 13 March 2026

23 Work and Pensions Committee, [Realising potential: Delivering the Child Poverty Strategy](#), parliament.uk, (accessed June 2026)

24 Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Q1](#)

risks for this group. He described local authority support to help care-experienced children transition into adulthood as a “postcode lottery”, with a lack of sufficiently flexible work or education options.²⁵

Experience of education

21. Research by the Department for Education (DfE) highlighted the importance of children’s experience of education. It found that the most significant risk factors were having an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), being persistently absent from school during Key Stage 4, and low GCSE attainment. DfE found that other factors were also important, such as lack of participation in leisure activities, parents having no qualifications, and low engagement in school.²⁶ Our evidence also highlighted a strong link between young people’s education experience and their risk of becoming NEET. Barry Fletcher told us that a young person who did not achieve level 2 qualifications (equivalent to GCSE-level) was three to four times more likely to be NEET over their lifetime.²⁷ Alan Milburn said that school absence, school exclusion and home education all showed a strong correlation with becoming NEET.²⁸
22. In his interim report on young people and work, Alan Milburn also highlighted changes to support services. He reported a 40% decline in the health visitor workforce after 2015, and a 44% decline in spending on early intervention services between 2010/11 to 2023/24. While spending on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) increased from £7.8 billion to £11.8 billion between 2015/16 and 2023/24, the report said that pressure on local authorities and schools meant young people did not receive the support they needed.²⁹

COVID-19 pandemic

23. Many written submissions mentioned the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. They highlighted that the children whose education was most disrupted by national lockdowns were the NEETs of today.³⁰ Mental Health UK said that

25 Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Qq12, 14, 18, 19](#)

26 Department for Education, [Risk factors for becoming NEET: a statistical analysis using linked data](#), May 2026

27 Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Q6](#)

28 [Q57](#)

29 Department for Work and Pensions, [Young people and work: interim report](#), May 2026, paras 307, 325

30 Employment Related Services Association (ERSA) ([YEET0093](#)); Action for Children ([YEET0094](#)); Sutton Trust ([YEET0122](#)); Bradford Council ([YEET0140](#)); The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award ([YEET0143](#)); UK Youth ([YEET0160](#)); Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) ([YEET0188](#)); Mental Health UK ([YEET0194](#))

the disruption to children's education and routine impacted their social development, confidence, resilience and motivation, and made post-16 transitions much harder to navigate.³¹ Several submissions described the pandemic as amplifying existing issues, with the impacts falling unequally across society. For example, the Work Foundation, Lancaster University said:

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing inequalities in mental health among young people in the UK, reinforcing socioeconomic disparities. Impacts varied based on age, family structure, and socioeconomic background. Adolescents from single-parent, and low-income households were particularly affected, with isolation negatively impacting peer relationships and increasing the risk of social exclusion.³²

Labour market

24. We also heard that the labour market had weakened, making it harder for young people to move into work and amplifying the above risk factors. Alan Milburn told us that recent changes to the labour market had particularly impacted young people. He explained that hospitality, retail and warehousing jobs had diminished, which were good entry level jobs or suitable for part-time work alongside education.³³

25. **CONCLUSION**

While there are many factors that increase the risk of a young person becoming NEET, none of them are or should be considered inevitable causes. Furthermore, these risk factors can either be mitigated with effective support, or amplified by absent or inadequate support. Unfortunately, various systems of support, from schools to children's health services, have failed young people in recent years.

31 Mental Health UK ([YEET0194](#))

32 Work Foundation at Lancaster University ([YEET0133](#))

33 [Q66](#)

3 Coherence across government

26. In this chapter, we discuss the need for all of government to work together to address the UK's rising NEET rate. We consider options for bringing a common focus on youth employment, education and training across government and discuss misaligned policy areas, including tax policy and across benefit rules.

Bringing a common focus across government

27. A common theme across evidence was that the UK's high NEET rate was the result of support systems not working together. For example, we heard that the health system did not include a goal of supporting youth participation in the workforce. Dr Veerle Miranda, Head of Youth Employment and Social Policies Unit, OECD, told us “often, the mental health system tries just to get a young person better, whereas the employment system tries to get them into work, but as long as they do not have the same incentive, it will not work.”³⁴ In his interim report on young people and work, Alan Milburn highlighted that the health system emphasised clinical activity, with little accountability or incentive for education or employment outcomes:

The health system is configured for episodic treatment, not sustained functional recovery. Funding models reward activity and throughput, not whether a young person returns to school, sustains further education or progresses towards work.³⁵

Target

28. In our call for evidence, we asked if it would be useful for the government to set a target relating to the number or proportion of NEETs.³⁶ Since 2025, the Youth Futures Foundation (YFF), the What Works Centre for youth employment, has been calling for the government to set a target for

34 [Q89](#)

35 Department for Work and Pensions, [Young people and work: interim report](#), May 2026, para 466

36 Work and Pensions Committee, [Call for evidence](#), parliament.uk, (accessed June 2026)

reducing the UK's NEET rate. It proposes a 'north star' goal for the UK to have the lowest NEET rate in the OECD by 2050.³⁷ Barry Fletcher, CEO, YFF, told us the government needed to be ambitious:

Over the last 30 years, we have not really had an ambition for what our NEET rate should be. ... Until you set that, it is really hard to work back and say what action you should take... You need to set a goal. Aiming for the lowest rate in the OECD is a good ... systemic goal. It is something you have to think about for the long term.

29. While there was broad consensus that a target would provide a useful policy focus, submissions also discussed the risks. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development cautioned that targets risked incentivising short-term outcomes and recommended that any targets should measure sustained participation in employment, education or training, rather than just headline reductions in NEET rates.³⁸ Other submitters expressed concern that targets might distract from supporting the most vulnerable.³⁹ Many concluded that what mattered was matching any target with commitment and resources. The Employment Related Services Association told us: "national targets do not necessarily change the amount of support and opportunities available for young people, but putting adequate support in place first would improve outcomes regardless of targets."⁴⁰
30. We asked the Secretary of State, Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP, whether he would consider setting a target for reducing the number of NEETs. He confirmed that his aim was to reduce this number and, while the government did not currently have a target, he did not rule it out:

Perhaps we could set a target. I do not have religion one way or the other about it. You described a holy grail; I do not think a target is always the holy grail.⁴¹

Strategy

31. One mechanism for delivering cross-government change is joint strategies. In December 2025, the government launched its child poverty strategy, jointly developed and delivered by DWP and DfE. We asked the Secretary of State whether he thought a similar approach would be useful for youth employment. He recognised the need to improve cross-departmental working, which he described as a long-term challenge, but told us that it

37 Youth Futures Foundation, [Youth Employment 2025 Outlook](#), November 2025; Youth Futures Foundation ([YEET0199](#))

38 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) ([YEET0188](#))

39 Nacro ([YEET0074](#))

40 Employment Related Services Association (ERSA) ([YEET0093](#))

41 [Qq57, 67](#)

was more important to have a “shared political commitment,” and that he already saw such a commitment to reducing the NEET rate from his cabinet colleagues, including from the Prime Minister.⁴²

32. Manchester City Council highlighted the need for a coherent national strategy to reduce the number of NEETs. It highlighted confusion around the definition of the term, fragmented oversight and inconsistent initiatives. These problems, it said, “undermine clarity, cause confusion and a lack of accountability and a postcode lottery as to which young people are eligible for what intervention.”⁴³

33. **CONCLUSION**

Young people have been let down multiple times and by multiple systems. Single-department policies and one-off programmes will not be sufficient. Addressing the UK’s NEET crisis is going to require a concerted and long-term effort from the whole of government.

34. **RECOMMENDATION**

The government should bring forward a youth employment strategy. A cross-departmental strategy would demonstrate its seriousness about this issue, set a long-term path and ensure cross-government efforts. This should include ambitious targets for increasing the rate of youth employment, education and training, and reducing the inequalities in youth unemployment for different groups and areas.

Aligning tax policy

35. At the Autumn Budget 2024, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP, announced an increase in employer National Insurance contributions (NICs), starting from 6 April 2025.⁴⁴ The changes included an increase in the rate of Secondary Class 1 NICs (the amount paid by employers on their employees’ earnings, commonly known as employer NICs) from 13.8% to 15%, and a decrease in the Secondary Threshold (at which employer NICs start being payable on an employees’ earnings) from £9,100 to £5,000 a year.⁴⁵ The Chancellor also made changes to the employment allowance, which allows eligible employers to reduce their annual NICs liability.⁴⁶

42 Oral evidence taken on 17 June 2026, [Qq157–59](#)

43 Manchester City Council ([YEET0090](#))

44 HC Deb, 30 October 2024, [cols 817–818](#)

45 Chancellor of the Exchequer, [Autumn Budget 2024 Fixing the Foundations to Deliver Change](#), HC 295, 30 October 2024, p.127

46 HC Deb, 30 October 2024, [col 818](#)

- 36.** We received a significant number of written submissions from businesses that described rising employment costs, including from the changes to employer NICs.⁴⁷ For example, the British Retail Consortium estimated that changes to employer NICs and the increases to the National Living Wage and Minimum Wage⁴⁸ would add £5 billion in new employment costs for retailers.⁴⁹ Businesses told us that they were less likely to recruit new staff, with some looking to shrink their workforce.⁵⁰
- 37.** We heard from a panel of employer representative organisations, who also emphasised the impact of rising costs on youth employment. Kate Shoesmith, Director of Policy, British Chambers of Commerce, told us that businesses were struggling to stay afloat due to cost pressures, with increasing costs impacting opportunities for young people. She told us about a mid-sized professional services firm that faced a £170,000 increase to their wages bill, and, as a result, would pause some of the training and progression activities that helped bring young people into the business. Kate Nicholls, Chair, UKHospitality, told us about the challenges facing the hospitality sector, which employs more 16 to 24-year-olds than any other sector. She reported that the sector's wage costs had increased by £1 billion.⁵¹
- 38.** Certain groups, including young people, have different thresholds for employer NICs. At present, employers do not pay NICs for all employees under the age of 21 and apprentices under 25 until they earn over £967 a week (see Table 1).⁵² This is known as the Upper Secondary Threshold and is equivalent to an annual salary of £50,270. By way of comparison, for a non-apprentice employee over the age of 21, the thresholds would be £96 per week (£5,000 a year). Employers of staff earning over these thresholds pay employer NICs at the 15% rate on their earnings.

47 For example: Institute of Directors ([YEET0036](#)); British Chambers of Commerce ([YEET0040](#)); Make UK ([YEET0076](#)); UKHospitality ([YEET0091](#)); British Retail Consortium ([YEET0144](#)); Jobs Foundation ([YEET0173](#)); Enginuity ([YEET0174](#))

48 In April 2026, the government increased the National Living Wage to £12.71 per hour for workers aged 21 and older, and increased the rate for 18 to 20-year-olds to £10.85 per hour. The 18 to 20-year-old rate increased at a faster rate, and the government's policy is to align the different age rates.

49 British Retail Consortium ([YEET0144](#))

50 [Qq3, 5, 17](#)

51 [Qq4-5](#); UKHospitality ([YEET0091](#))

52 HMRC, [National Insurance rates and categories: Contribution rates](#), gov.uk, (accessed June 2026)

Table 1: Selection of employer Class 1 National Insurance rates for tax year 2026/27⁵³

National Insurance category letter	Employees earning £0 to £96 a week	Employees earning £96 to £967 a week	Employees earning over £967 a week
A: all employees except those in other categories	0%	15%	15%
H: apprentices under 25	0%	0%	15%
M: employees under 21	0%	0%	15%

Source: HM Treasury, [National Insurance rates and categories: Contribution rates](#), gov.uk (accessed June 2026)

39. We heard calls for further changes to employer NICs for young people. Kate Nicholls recommended that the Upper Secondary Threshold for under 21s be extended to under 24s. She said this would encourage employers to recruit more young people by easing some of the costs that currently inhibited them from doing so.⁵⁴ Chris Russell, Senior Policy Manager, Federation of Small Businesses, made a similar suggestion of a NICs threshold increase for employers employing those who were currently economically inactive, similar to the Upper Secondary Threshold applicable to those employing veterans.⁵⁵ More broadly, Louise Murphy, Senior Economist, Resolution Foundation, called for more “joined-up policy” that made sure there were entryways to jobs that are stepping stones into the labour market for young people.⁵⁶
40. The Resolution Foundation estimated that scrapping employer NICs for under-25s would lead to 38,000 more young people in work, at a cost to the public purse of £5.1 billion.⁵⁷ However, its analysis did not consider the longer-term costs and benefits of this policy. Charlie Mayfield in his Keep Britain Working review estimated that a 22-year-old who fell out of work

53 This table only shows 3 of the 16 National Insurance Category letters. For a full list, see: [National Insurance rates and categories: Contribution rates - GOV.UK](#)

54 [Q18](#)

55 The threshold for employer NICs for veterans is set at the Upper Secondary Threshold of £967 per week. [Q19](#)

56 Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Q18](#)

57 Resolution Foundation, [Take a chance on me](#), June 2026, p.11

for health reasons could be more than £1 million worse off over the course of their life than if they had been in sustained employment, with the state incurring a similar cost.⁵⁸

41. CONCLUSION

There is overwhelming evidence from businesses about the rising cost of employing people, in part due to changes to employer National Insurance contributions. This has had a knock-on impact on young people. They have been disproportionately affected by slower recruitment, which can then inhibit their future career progression as they struggle to secure their first job.

42. RECOMMENDATION

We recommend HM Treasury extend the National Insurance Upper Secondary Threshold so that all employees under 25 attract no employer Class 1 National Insurance contributions until they earn more than £967 a week. We request HM Treasury provide modelling of the long-term costs and benefits of this recommendation.

Coherence across benefit rules

- 43.** We also received evidence about inconsistencies within the current welfare system, which can act as disincentives or barriers to young people taking up employment, education or training.

Apprenticeship cliff edge

- 44.** The Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) found that 16 to 18-year-olds risked negatively impacting their families' benefit income if they chose to start an apprenticeship. As apprentices receive a wage, the benefits system considers this young person to be working and so removes them from the family unit when assessing entitlement. The SSAC examined six example family scenarios, finding a loss of benefit income in all of them. The financial loss ranged from £17.25 per week to "an extraordinary" £339.92 per week. In each scenario, had the individual chosen to stay in full-time education instead of taking on an apprenticeship, their families' benefit entitlements would have been unaffected.⁵⁹

58 Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Business and Trade, [Keep Britain Working: Final report](#), November 2025

59 Social Security Advisory Committee, [SSAC Occasional Paper no.27: The influence of the social security system on educational and vocational decision-making at age 16](#), March 2026, p.6–7

45. The SSAC observed that the approach in the benefits system contradicted the stated objectives of the government. The Education and Skills Act 2008, which raised the participation age in England, redefined apprenticeships as educational pathways equivalent to A-levels. The SSAC commented:

the UK government simultaneously declares all post-16 pathways equivalent—while its benefits system financially penalises some families whose children choose vocational routes. This is not a minor administrative inconsistency. It represents a fundamental policy contradiction potentially affecting thousands of families, distorting educational decision-making, and working directly against government’s stated objectives for universal participation and skills development.⁶⁰

46. The SSAC made 13 recommendations to address the apprenticeship cliff edge and bring coherence to benefits policy as it affects 16+ pathways. One of its recommendations was that DWP should undertake a comprehensive review of all benefit rules and how they interact with participation of 16 to 18-year-olds.⁶¹

21-hour rule for young carers

47. Young adult carers are young people aged 16 to 24 who provide unpaid care to someone on a regular basis. There are 131,417 16 to 24-year-olds in Great Britain providing at least 20 hours of unpaid care per week, and over 40,000 providing more than 50 hours of care.⁶² Carers who provide more than 35 hours of care a week may be eligible for Carer’s Allowance. Eligibility criteria include having net earnings below £204 a week and not studying for 21 hours a week or more (defined as being in full-time education).⁶³

60 Social Security Advisory Committee, [SSAC Occasional Paper no.27: The influence of the social security system on educational and vocational decision-making at age 16](#), March 2026, p.15

61 Social Security Advisory Committee, [SSAC Occasional Paper no.27: The influence of the social security system on educational and vocational decision-making at age 16](#), March 2026, p.14

62 All-Party Parliamentary Group for Young Carers & Young Adult Carers, [Inquiry into removing the barriers to higher education, employment and training for young adult carers](#), January 2026, p.11

63 Department for Work and Pensions, [Carer’s Allowance: Eligibility](#), gov.uk, (accessed June 2026)

48. In March 2024, our predecessor Committee heard evidence about problems with Carer’s Allowance, including the effect of the 21-hour rule on young adult carers. Tamara Sandoul, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Carers UK, told the Committee:

If you are a young adult carer you have to choose between getting an education and qualifications and getting some financial support. That is not right. It will affect people for the rest of their lives.⁶⁴

49. Writing to the then Secretary of State in May 2024, our predecessors concluded that the 21-hour rule was an unnecessary barrier to young adult carers’ education choices and risked impacting their future employment prospects. It recommended that DWP remove the 21-hour rule.⁶⁵ In a response sent to us in November 2024, DWP rejected this recommendation. The Minister for Social Security and Disability, Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP, said that it was “a long-standing principle, under successive Governments, that the benefit system does not normally support full-time students.” He said that young adult carers in full-time education were supported by the educational maintenance system, though part-time students could receive Carer’s Allowance.⁶⁶
50. In January 2026, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers published its inquiry into removing the barriers to higher education, employment and training for young adult carers. It highlighted that the 21-hour rule continued to be a barrier to opportunity for young adult carers. The APPG also highlighted the inadequacy of the educational maintenance system. The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund, a UK government-funded scheme to help students overcome barriers to remaining in education, does not specify young adult carers as an eligible group.⁶⁷

64 Oral evidence taken by the Work and Pensions Committee on 6 March 2024, [Q46](#)

65 Letter from the Chair of the Work and Pensions Committee to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions regarding Carer’s Allowance, [15 May 2024](#)

66 Letter from the Minister of State for Social Security and Disability to the Chair regarding Carer’s Allowance, [12 November 2024](#)

67 All-Party Parliamentary Group for Young Carers & Young Adult Carers, [Inquiry into removing the barriers to higher education, employment and training for young adult carers](#), January 2026

Delaying access to Universal Credit health element until age 22

- 51.** In March 2025, in the Pathways to Work green paper, the government set out a proposal to delay access to the health element of Universal Credit until someone is 22.⁶⁸ It said it was particularly concerned about the 150,000 16 to 24-year-olds who were in receipt of the health element of Universal Credit and not receiving any employment support, who, it said, risked being trapped in long-term economic inactivity before their careers had even begun. The government proposed “establishing a distinct and active transition phase for 18–21-year-olds, that ensured young people are earning or learning,” with the fiscal savings diverted to employment support. Its rationale for this age limit was that, at the time of the green paper, the Youth Guarantee (see Chapter 4) covered 18 to 21-year-olds.⁶⁹ In September 2025, the Chancellor extended the Youth Guarantee up to age 24.⁷⁰ The green paper did not provide evidence for the effect of the proposed age restriction on employment, education or training.
- 52.** We looked at this proposal during our Get Britain Working: Pathways to Work inquiry. The evidence we heard on this subject was very critical. Dr Lucy Foulkes, Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford, said she did not think the proposal made sense from a developmental perspective as it was a period of risk for developing mental health conditions.⁷¹ We concluded that there was no basis for restricting access to the Universal Credit health element for young people and urged the government to reconsider its proposed changes.⁷²
- 53.** In June, we asked the Secretary of State whether he still planned to raise the threshold for access to the Universal Credit health element to age 22. He responded that he wanted to consider the outcomes of ongoing reviews, including the review into young people and work led by Alan Milburn, and did not want to rule out any options.⁷³

68 The health element of Universal Credit is an additional payment made to someone who has been assessed as having a work limiting health condition.

69 Department for Work and Pensions, [Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper](#), March 2025, paras 253–254

70 Department for Work and Pensions, [Major employment drive to help unlock 200,000 new jobs and apprenticeships for next generation](#), gov.uk, 16 March 2026, (accessed June 2026)

71 Oral evidence taken on 7 May 2025, [Q68](#)

72 Work and Pensions Committee, Third Report of Session 2024–26, [Get Britain Working: Pathways to work](#), HC 837, para 138

73 Oral evidence taken on 17 June 2026, [Q54](#)

54.

CONCLUSION

The Secretary of State told us that increasing youth employment, education and training is his top priority, yet certain benefit rules disincentivise young people from pursuing opportunities. It is particularly concerning that 16 to 18-year-olds who take on an apprenticeship risk reducing the benefits paid to the rest of their family, and that young adult carers who study for more than 21 hours a week risk having to choose between education and their carer's allowance payments. Further, the Government is considering removing the health element of Universal Credit for under-22s having not provided evidence on the employment impact. This lack of coherence within DWP-specific policy areas is inexcusable. We are concerned that there are likely to be other instances where benefit rules do not align with wider policy objectives.

55.

RECOMMENDATION

16 to 18-year-old apprentices should be treated as part of the family unit when assessing benefit eligibility, and the 21-hour limit of weekly study for carers should be removed. DWP should also drop its plans to remove the health element of Universal Credit for under-22s. It has not produced evidence to justify a different approach for young people or that such a change would have a positive employment effect.

56.

RECOMMENDATION

We also recommend that DWP undertake a comprehensive review of all its benefit rules to ensure they are all coherent with the priority of supporting youth employment, education and training.

4 The Youth Guarantee

57. This chapter looks at the Youth Guarantee, DWP's main policy vehicle for increasing youth employment, education and training. It discusses the different components of the guarantee and compares it to both previous policies and to youth guarantees in other countries.

The Youth Guarantee

58. In November 2024 as part of the Get Britain Working white paper, the government said it would establish a Youth Guarantee to ensure all young people were learning or earning.⁷⁴ Through subsequent announcements, the government has expanded the Youth Guarantee, including announcing additional components in September 2025 and March 2026.⁷⁵ As at June 2026, the Youth Guarantee included the below.
- Trailblazer areas: the government funded eight areas to trial local-based initiatives to support young people, and announced plans to expand to the rest of the country in future.⁷⁶
 - Jobs Guarantee: the government is currently piloting providing six months of paid work to 18 to 24-year-olds who have been receiving Universal Credit for 18 months without earning or learning. Participants also receive employability support. It is initially only available in six areas.⁷⁷ The government expects the scheme will provide employment for 90,000 young people between 2026/27 and 2028/29.

74 Department for Work and Pensions, [Get Britain Working White Paper](#), CP 1191, November 2024, para 95

75 HM Treasury, [New youth guarantee for eligible young people and funding for libraries in all primary schools](#), gov.uk, 29 September 2025 (accessed June 2026); Department for Work and Pensions, [Major employment drive to help unlock 200,000 new jobs and apprenticeships for next generation](#), gov.uk, 16 March 2026, (accessed June 2026)

76 The eight youth guarantee trailblazer areas are the following mayoral authorities: Liverpool City Region, West Midlands, Tees Valley, East Midlands, West of England, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough and two in London.

77 The Jobs Guarantee is initially available in Birmingham and Solihull, East Midlands, Greater Manchester, Hertfordshire and Essex, Central & East Scotland and Southwest and Southeast Wales

- Youth Jobs Grant: a grant of £3,000 to employers for every young person they take on who has been on Universal Credit and looking for work for six months. The government expects business to take on 60,000 young people over the next three years as a result of this grant.
- Changes to encourage employers to take on more apprentices, as discussed in Chapter 5.
- Other measures, including: additional work coach support through the Youth Guarantee Gateway, guaranteed college or further education places for 16 and 17-year-olds, additional work experience places, expanding the Sector-based Work Academy Programme and increasing the number of youth hubs.⁷⁸

59. In the Autumn Budget 2025, the government announced a £1.5 billion funding package for employment and skills from 2026/27 to 2028/29, including £820 million of funding for the Youth Guarantee.⁷⁹ In March 2026, the government announced an additional £1 billion of funding to expand components of the Youth Guarantee, including raising the age limit of the Jobs Guarantee from 21 to 24.⁸⁰ The government said it expects the measures in the Youth Guarantee to deliver 500,000 opportunities for young people to work, train or undertake apprenticeships by 2029.⁸¹

Response to the plans

60. While we did not receive evidence opposing the Youth Guarantee, we did hear several criticisms. A common theme was a perceived lack of ambition. Youth Futures Foundation said “given the scale and complexity of the challenge and the risk of it worsening... much more will need to be done to build on these promising foundations.”⁸²

Jobs Guarantee

61. Many submitters criticised the eligibility of the scheme, particularly waiting 18 months before intervening. The Work Foundation, Lancaster University, said that intervening after someone had been unemployed for 18 months was “too late, as evidence indicates that the longer someone is out of

⁷⁸ House of Commons Library, [Youth Guarantee](#), Research Briefing 10827, 8 May 2026, p.5–6

⁷⁹ HM Treasury, [Budget 2025 Strong Foundations, Secure Future](#), HC 1492, 26 November 2025, para 2.73

⁸⁰ Department for Work and Pensions, [Major employment drive to help unlock 200,000 new jobs and apprenticeships for next generation](#), gov.uk, 16 March 2026, (accessed June 2026)

⁸¹ HC Deb, 2 June 2026, [col 993, 1002](#)

⁸² Youth Futures Foundation ([YEET0199](#))

the labour market, the harder it can be to support them into sustained employment.”⁸³ Chris Russell, Senior Policy Manager, Federation of Small Businesses, told us that it was also asking a lot from employers to take on someone who has been out of work for 18 months with little, if any, previous work experience.⁸⁴

62. The eligibility criteria for the Jobs Guarantee limit it to young people receiving benefits and seeking work. The Resolution Foundation estimated that 44% of NEETs were not receiving benefits, so would not be eligible for support.⁸⁵ Similarly, Alan Milburn, in his interim report on Young People and Work, observed that the Jobs Guarantee was not available to any of the 290,000 young people who are out of work on health and disability benefits.⁸⁶

63. **RECOMMENDATION**

The Jobs Guarantee is a good offer, but its eligibility is too tight and will limit its impact. We are concerned about the long-term impact on a young person of being unemployed for 18 months and that waiting a year and a half before offering a work placement risks undermining the benefits of the scheme. DWP should undertake and publish a cost-benefit analysis for the Jobs Guarantee. This analysis should test different options for how long someone is unemployed before the scheme kicks in and show how DWP arrived at an 18-month period. We are also concerned that the scheme excludes the 44% of NEETs who are not claiming benefits. DWP should develop options for NEETs outside the benefits system to take part in the Jobs Guarantee.

Trailblazers

64. In spring 2025, the government launched eight Youth Guarantee trailblazers, all in mayoral authorities, to identify young people most at risk of becoming NEET and to test various proposals to support them into employment, education or training. The government provided £45 million in both 2025/26 and 2026/27 for these trailblazers.⁸⁷ The Secretary of State told us the approach deliberately provided significant local flexibility and, as a result, he expected very different results between areas, with some likely to be more successful than others.⁸⁸

83 Work Foundation at Lancaster University ([YEET0133](#))

84 [Q23](#)

85 Resolution Foundation, [False starts](#), October 2025, p.13

86 Department for Work and Pensions, [Young people and work: interim report](#), May 2026, para 521

87 House of Commons Library, [Youth Guarantee](#), Research Briefing 10827, 8 May 2026, p.16

88 Oral evidence taken on 17 June 2026, [Q68](#)

65. Submitters welcomed the support for place-based interventions and recognised the need for improved local coordination. However, they highlighted various challenges faced by local areas. The Youth Futures Foundation said:

The Youth Guarantee trailblazer place-based pilots also have the potential to deliver this form of coordinated response that incorporates a national strategy, local leadership and youth voice. However, a far more sophisticated approach to national and local coordination is required if we are to match the progress of our international counterparts.⁸⁹

66. We also heard concerns about ‘policy churn’ and a lack of coherence to the plans. David Gaughan, Director of Employment and Skills, West Midlands Combined Authority, told us that there was a risk of just “throwing programmes at a challenge.” He said that local authorities faced a range of national programmes continually coming on stream, and that there was often a “rub” and “disconnect” between nationally designed programmes and local delivery.⁹⁰ The Greater Manchester Combined Authority criticised the large number of pilots, describing them as often rolled out in “an uncoordinated manner that lacks strategic intent or longevity,” making it difficult for local leaders to deliver long-term outcomes. It said the Youth Guarantee trailblazers continued this approach.⁹¹

67. We also heard from non-trailblazer areas. Jan Feeney, Head of Employment and Skills, Norfolk County Council, told us how difficult it can be for local areas to secure funding for local initiatives and called for the opportunity of the Youth Guarantee to be expanded to other areas. She said it would enable local areas, such as Norfolk, to build on their current work and local partnerships:

As a non-devolved area at the moment, we do feel that we are missing out. We are not at that table, we do not have those opportunities, and we do not want our young people to be disadvantaged even further.⁹²

Sam Avanzo Windett, Deputy Director, Learning and Work Institute, concluded that “a lot of young people outside some areas like trailblazers are actually not seeing a lot happening.”⁹³

89 Youth Futures Foundation ([YEET0199](#))

90 [Qq38–40](#)

91 Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) ([YEET0172](#))

92 [Q35](#)

93 Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Q25](#)

68.

RECOMMENDATION

As DWP rolls out the Youth Guarantee to more local areas, it must balance the benefits of local flexibility against the risk of a postcode lottery of outcomes. In its response, the government should set out how it will monitor the performance of local areas and the steps it will take if any areas are not delivering the desired outcomes.

Work experience

69. Young people taking part in the Tees Valley trailblazer told us about the importance of work experience. Participants described an ‘experience trap’: entry-level jobs demanded prior experience that the young people could not get without getting an entry-level job. They said that gaining work experience was one of the biggest benefits of the trailblazer, helping them gain transferable skills and opening their eyes to other job opportunities. Their experience of work experience while at school had been poor. They told us that, although schools required students to undertake work experience, they generally provided no support in finding placements, leaving pupils to arrange them entirely on their own.⁹⁴

70. Alan Milburn similarly found that the provision of school-aged work experience was poor. He highlighted how the current system amplified inequalities.

Lack of work experience is the single most-cited barrier to work amongst young people. At present, the provision of work experience is an afterthought for many schools. Students are often told to find their own placements. Unsurprisingly, those without strong networks and connections are more likely to miss out. School capacity and local employer willingness are weakest in the areas of highest need. The young people who most need early exposure to work are the least likely to receive it. The vast majority of the young NEET people we spoke to had done no work experience at all.⁹⁵

71. DWP told us that it had created 300,000 additional work experience opportunities through the Youth Guarantee, including up to 150,000 work experience placements and up to 145,000 additional Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs).⁹⁶ The Secretary of State told us he

94 Tees Valley youth guarantee trailblazer ([YEET0201](#))

95 Department for Work and Pensions, [Young people and work: interim report](#), May 2026, para 355

96 Department for Work and Pension and Department for Education ([YEET0075](#))

recognised the crucial importance of work experience to young people as it enabled young people to get out of the ‘experience trap.’ He said it was right that the government help people to gain this experience.⁹⁷

Youth hubs

- 72.** Youth hubs also offer a valuable opportunity for young people to network with employers and prepare for working lives. DWP launched youth hubs in 2020 as part of the government’s response to rising unemployment among young people. Instead of attending Jobcentres, some young people attend youth hubs, where they receive support from a specialist work coach. Youth hubs are designed to be more welcoming environments than Jobcentres, also providing access to other services, such as health advice and counselling. In December 2025, the government said youth hubs “will be expanded to every local area of Great Britain”, meaning there would be over 360 hubs. In January 2026, there were 114 fully opened youth hubs.⁹⁸ We heard positive evidence about youth hubs during our inquiry on Reforming Jobcentres.⁹⁹

Previous policies

- 73.** Over recent decades, there have been several policies and programmes to increase youth employment, education and training.
- Kickstart (2020 to 2022) provided six months of subsidised work for 16 to 24-year-olds on Universal Credit. Participation was voluntary.¹⁰⁰
 - The Youth Obligation (launched in 2017) required 18 to 21-year-olds on Universal Credit to participate in six months of intensive support, after which they had to move into a placement or face benefit sanctions.¹⁰¹
 - The Youth Contract (2012 to 2015) was a package of measures, including wage incentives, employer grants and work experience placements. The broad objective of the Youth Contract was to make young people more appealing to employers looking to recruit.¹⁰²

97 Oral evidence taken on 17 June 2026, [Q58](#)

98 House of Commons Library, [Youth Guarantee](#), Research Briefing 10827, 8 May 2026, p.6

99 Work and Pensions Committee, Fourth Report of Session 2024–26, [Get Britain Working: Reforming Jobcentres](#), HC 653, p.45 box 3

100 Department for Work and Pensions, [Kickstart Scheme - process evaluation](#), July 2023

101 Department for Work and Pensions, [Youth Obligation Support Programme statistics](#), July 2019

102 House of Commons Library, [Youth Contract](#), Standard Note SN6387, 25 February 2015

- The Young Person's Guarantee (2009 to 2011) guaranteed an offer of a job, training or work experience to all 18 to 24-year-olds reaching six months of unemployment. The guarantee consisted of different elements, including the Future Jobs Fund, Community Task Force, Routes into Work, Care First Careers and Work Focused Training.¹⁰³
- The Future Jobs Fund (2009 to 2011) was part of the Young Person's Guarantee and provided subsidised jobs for six months.¹⁰⁴
- The New Deal for Young People (1998 to 2009) was a mandatory employment programme for all young people aged 18 to 24 who had been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for six months.¹⁰⁵

74. Witnesses told us that past schemes had shown some success, especially Kickstart and the Future Jobs Fund. The Work Foundation, University of Lancaster, praised the voluntary nature of these schemes, with outcomes comparing favourably to the mandatory participation in New Deal for Young People, which it said delivered limited long-term gains.¹⁰⁶

75. We also received evidence about the problem of such rapid policy churn. Alan Milburn, in his interim report on young people and work, highlighted the UK's tendency to introduce new youth employment policies in times of crisis, none of which last: "the country treats youth disengagement as a series of emergencies requiring temporary responses, when the evidence shows it is a permanent structural condition requiring permanent infrastructure."¹⁰⁷ The Youth Futures Foundation recommended making the Youth Guarantee schemes permanent, with the ability to scale them up and down as youth unemployment rises or falls.¹⁰⁸

76. RECOMMENDATION

To have an impact with young people, the Youth Guarantee must not become another here-today-gone-tomorrow scheme. Having started down this path, DWP should make the guarantee the long-term basis for youth policy. To demonstrate its commitment, DWP should announce a minimum funding level for the next 10-years. This should include equally long-term funding settlements with local government so that local areas and stakeholders can make long-term planning decisions.

103 Department for Work and Pensions, [Young Person's Guarantee Official Statistics](#), October 2011

104 House of Commons Library, [Future Jobs Fund](#), Standard Note SN05352, 15 December 2011

105 House of Commons Library, [New Deal for Young People](#), Standard Note SN/EP/820, 21 July 2005

106 Work Foundation at Lancaster University ([YEET0133](#))

107 Department for Work and Pensions, [Young people and work: interim report](#), May 2026, para 578

108 Youth Futures Foundation; Youth Futures Foundation ([YEET0199](#))

International comparisons

- 77.** Other countries have had youth guarantees for many years. We heard evidence about these different schemes and about what the government could learn from them.
- 78.** In 2020, in response to rising youth unemployment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government launched the Young Person's Guarantee. This guaranteed the opportunity for all 16 to 24-year-olds to pursue employment, education or training. The guarantee drew together all other employability initiatives, providing a single point of entry for young people and employers.¹⁰⁹ By 2023, Scotland had a higher employment rate among 16 to 24-year-olds than the rest of the UK, and the fifth lowest youth unemployment rate compared to EU 27 countries.¹¹⁰ Dave McCallum, Head of Career Information Advice and Guidance Operations, Skills Development Scotland, told us that key to the success of the guarantee had been working in partnership with local government, third sector organisations and employers.¹¹¹
- 79.** In 2013, the EU launched a youth guarantee to tackle the high youth unemployment across member states. It committed governments to ensuring that all young people received a 'good quality offer' of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education.¹¹²
- 80.** Dr Veerle Miranda, Head of Youth Employment and Social Policies Unit, OECD, told us that European countries had now built up more than 10 years of experience with the youth guarantee. One key learning was the importance of early intervention with young people. In Belgium, Denmark and Sweden, young people were encouraged to register with the public employment services while still studying, which helped to identify and support those most at risk of becoming unemployed. Dr Miranda contrasted this with the UK's approach that focused on those already on benefits and the long-term unemployed, which would require the most effort to get into work or education. She also compared the wider systems of support between the UK and other countries:

A more overall point is that the youth guarantee in many OECD or EU countries is embedded in the broader system rather than being stand alone. In the UK, it is still very programme-based. You have

109 Scottish Government, [Young Person Guarantee No-one Left Behind - Initial Report](#), September 2020

110 Scottish Government, [Young Person's Guarantee Update Report](#), March 2023

111 [Q34](#)

112 OECD, [Local implementation of youth guarantees: emerging lessons from European experiences](#), October 2014

hiring subsidies, a job programme and the youth hubs, but they are all different things. There is no overall structure or system where everybody works towards a common goal. That is where the main difference with the EU countries lies in this respect.¹¹³

81.

CONCLUSION

There is a seed of a good policy in the Youth Guarantee. We welcome many of the policies announced under the umbrella of the Youth Guarantee, including the localised funding of the Trailblazers and the expansion of the youth hubs. However, the government must go further to make a success of it. Other countries have shown that Youth Guarantees require a long-term commitment and to be part of wider support systems. In particular, they have shown the value of intervening as early as possible to support young people at risk of becoming NEET, and of long-term policy commitments. This requires a framework for the early identification of those at risk. The UK has a long history of short-term youth programmes, which can discourage young people, employers and other stakeholders from getting involved. It must do better this time.

5 Apprenticeships

- 82.** In this chapter, we look at the role that apprenticeships can play in tackling the rising number of NEETs. We discuss recent changes to the apprenticeship system and some of the ongoing challenges. This chapter is not a comprehensive assessment of apprenticeships in England, and we may choose to take a closer look at apprenticeships in the future.
- 83.** Skills and training are devolved policy areas. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland operate their own apprenticeship systems.¹¹⁴ Our scrutiny, and the conclusions and recommendations in this chapter, focuses solely on the apprenticeship system in England.

Apprenticeships in England

- 84.** In September 2025, the government announced that it would move responsibility for apprenticeships from the Department for Education (DfE) to DWP. The Secretary of State wrote to us explaining that the move was partly motivated by government ambitions to reduce the number of NEETs: “this move will further strengthen DWP’s offer to employers and provide greater opportunity for young people who are not in employment, education or training.”¹¹⁵

Apprenticeship funding

- 85.** Public money is available to fund apprentices’ training and assessments. In 2017, the government introduced the apprenticeship levy to raise funds.¹¹⁶ Under the levy, employers with an annual pay bill over £3 million per year pay the levy at 0.5% of their total pay bill, minus an apprenticeship allowance of £15,000.¹¹⁷ HMRC holds each employer’s levy funds in an apprenticeship service account and employers have 24 months to use their funds (12 months from August 2026). Employers can use levy funds on the

114 House of Commons Library, [Apprenticeships Policy in England](#), Research Briefing CBP03052, 3 October 2024, p.26

115 Letter from the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to the Chair regarding machinery of government changes, [19 September 2025](#)

116 House of Commons Library, [Apprenticeships Policy in England](#), Research Briefing CBP03052, 3 October 2024

117 The allowance means that only those employers with an annual pay bill of over £3 million have to pay the levy as 0.5% of a £3 million pay bill is £15,000, which is equal to the levy allowance.

training and assessment costs of an apprenticeship; funds cannot be used for other apprenticeship costs, such as an apprentice’s wages. Levy-paying employers can also transfer funds to non-levy-paying employers.¹¹⁸

Apprenticeship statistics

86. In academic year 2024–25, 761,500 people were participating in an apprenticeship in England, with 353,500 people starting an apprenticeship. From a peak in the early 2010s, when there was an increase in apprenticeship funding, apprenticeship starts fell from 2017–18, following the introduction of the apprenticeship levy (see Figure 3).¹¹⁹

Figure 3: Apprenticeship starts in England, 2002–03 to 2024–25, thousands



Note: Chart shows academic years

Source: Department for Education, [Academic year 2024–25 Apprenticeships](#), November 2025

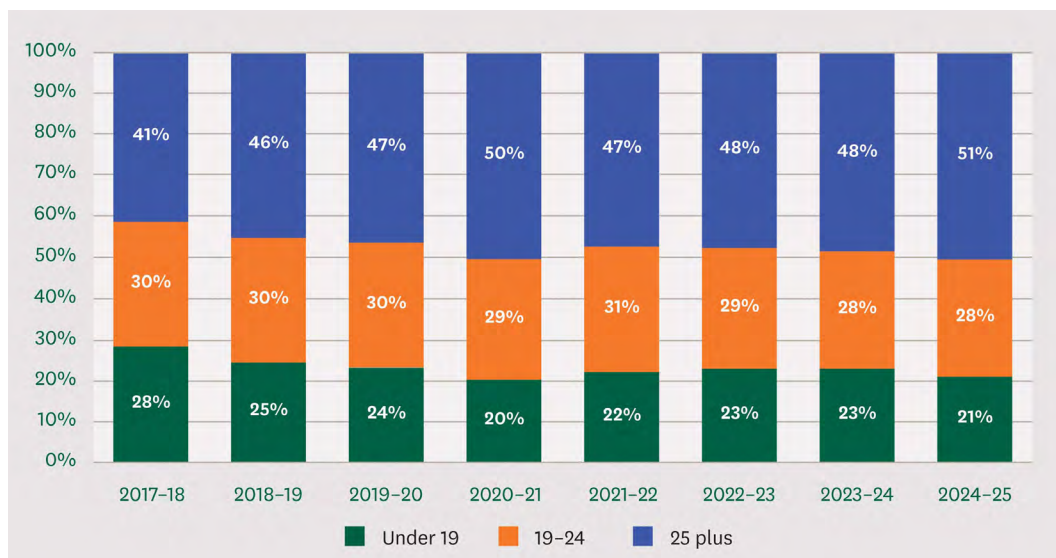
87. Last year, over half (51.3%) of apprenticeship starts were by apprentices aged 25 or older, with 21.2% of starts by apprentices aged under 19 and 27.5% by apprentices aged between 19 and 24 (see Figure 4).¹²⁰

118 House of Commons Library, [Apprenticeships Policy in England](#), Research Briefing CBP03052, 3 October 2024

119 House of Commons Library, [Apprenticeship Statistics for England](#), Research Briefing CBP06113, 4 December 2025, p.5

120 House of Commons Library, [Apprenticeship Statistics for England](#), Research Briefing CBP06113, 4 December 2025, p.7

Figure 4: Composition of apprenticeship starts in England by age, 2017–18 to 2024–25



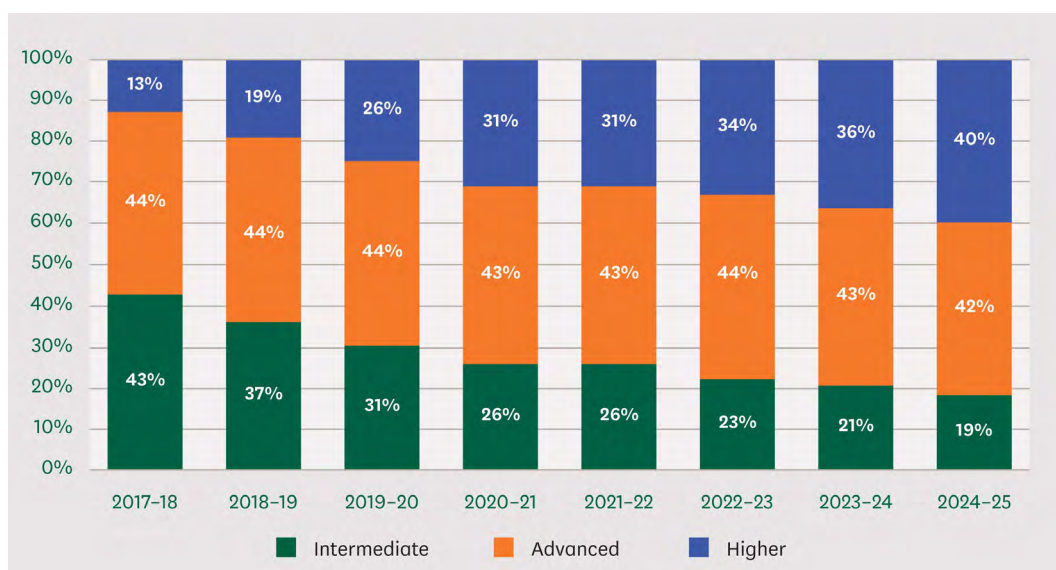
Notes: Chart shows academic years. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Source: Department for Education, [Academic year 2024–25 Apprenticeships](#), November 2025

- 88.** Since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017, the proportion of higher level apprenticeship starts has increased (from 13% in 2017–18 to 40% in 2024–25), with a similar decline in intermediate apprenticeships (from 43% in 2017–18 to 19% in 2024–25) (see Figure 5).¹²¹

¹²¹ House of Commons Library, [Apprenticeship Statistics for England](#), Research Briefing CBPO6113, 4 December 2025, p.11

Figure 5: Composition of apprenticeship starts in England by apprenticeship level, 2017–18 to 2024–25



Notes: Chart shows academic years. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Source: Department for Education, [Academic year 2024–25 Apprenticeships](#), November 2025

The opportunity of apprenticeships

89. During our inquiry, we heard praise for England’s apprenticeship system. Emily Rock, CEO, Association of Apprentices and Engagement Director, the St Martin’s Group, said that “apprenticeships have a really strong brand and are seen as the gold standard for how to train to occupational competence, both by employers and apprentices alike.”¹²² More specifically, Ben Rowland, CEO, Association of Employment and Learning Providers, praised level 2 and level 3 apprenticeships, telling us that they were well understood, well liked and worked especially well for people aged between of 17 and 23.¹²³
90. We also heard that an effective apprenticeship system can reduce the number of NEETs. Professor Hubert Ertl, Vice President and Director of Research, Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, described the system in Germany where apprenticeships are a widespread and well-integrated pathway for young people.¹²⁴ Barry Fletcher, CEO, Youth Futures Foundation, told us that:

¹²² Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Q37](#)

¹²³ Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Q36](#)

¹²⁴ [Q76](#)

Most of the countries that are very good at this [a low NEET rate] also have a stronger vocational focus to some of their education, and especially an apprenticeship system that has many more young people ... the evidence base is that apprenticeships are a very successful way of helping young people who are NEET into work. We have too few young people doing apprenticeships in England at the moment. That is a policy choice that we can change, and that we should change.¹²⁵

91.

CONCLUSION

Apprenticeships are a fantastic opportunity. Other countries demonstrate that a well-designed and well-respected apprenticeship system is effective at reducing youth unemployment and creating invaluable opportunities for young people.

Recent policy changes

Refocusing on younger people

92. The government aims to refocus the apprenticeship system towards young people and getting young people into work. In June 2025, the Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP, told Parliament: “we want to rebalance the programme back towards young people beginning their careers.”¹²⁶ The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions reiterated this position when he appeared before us in November 2025, saying “the decision we are taking... is to tilt that [apprenticeships] more towards young people.”¹²⁷ In June 2026, he told us that the public apprenticeship budget should be focused on young people rather than on in-work training for those over 25.¹²⁸
93. To demonstrate this shift in focus, in September 2025, the Prime Minister announced a new target. He replaced the previous target for 50% of young people to go to university with a new target of two-thirds of young people participating in higher-level learning (academic, technical or apprenticeships) by age 25. This includes a sub-target for at least 10% of young people pursuing higher technical courses or apprenticeships by 2040, nearly double the current level.¹²⁹

125 Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Q16](#)

126 [Apprenticeships and Skills Training](#), HCWS672, 2 June 2025

127 Oral evidence taken on 19 November 2025, [Q102](#)

128 Oral evidence taken on 17 June 2026, [Q24](#)

129 Prime Minister’s Office, 10 Downing Street, [Prime Minister unveils reforms to transform further and higher education](#), gov.uk, 30 September 2025, (accessed June 2026)

94. At the Autumn Budget 2025, the government announced a £725 million package of reforms to the apprenticeships system. The reforms aim to address youth unemployment and create an additional 50,000 apprenticeships.¹³⁰

Incentives for hiring young apprentices

95. To encourage employers to recruit more young apprentices, the government has increased incentives for employers. From August 2026, the government will fully fund apprenticeship training costs for 16 to 24-year-olds for non-levy paying employers. Previously, this only happened for apprentices aged 16 to 21 and apprentices aged 22 to 24 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP); for all other apprentices, employers had to contribute 5% of the costs. The government has also announced hiring incentives, with non-levy paying employers receiving £2,000 when they take on 16 to 24-year-old apprentices and all employers eligible to receive £3,000 for hiring apprentices aged 18 to 24 who have been on Universal Credit for over six months. The government already provides £1,000 to employers when they take on apprentices aged under 19, or 19 to 24-year-old apprentices who have an EHCP or have been in care. These payments can be stacked together.¹³¹ This is in addition to the higher threshold for employer National Insurance contributions for apprentices aged under 25.¹³²

Growth and skills levy

96. In September 2024, the government announced a new growth and skills levy.¹³³ While the charging of the new levy is equivalent to the old system, businesses will be able to use levy funds differently. New features include the introduction of foundation apprenticeships (entry-level apprenticeships exclusively for young people) and apprenticeship units (short and flexible training courses).¹³⁴ The changes also include defunding certain apprenticeships, including: level 7 apprenticeships for over-21s, and management and leadership apprenticeships.¹³⁵

130 Department for Work and Pensions, [50,000 more young people to benefit from apprenticeships as Government unveils new skills reforms to get Britain working](#), gov.uk, 7 December 2025, (accessed June 2026)

131 [Apprentices: Finance](#), UIN 7072, 12 June 2026

132 HMRC, [National Insurance rates and categories: Contribution rates](#), gov.uk, (accessed June 2026)

133 Department for Education, [Prime Minister overhauls apprenticeships to support opportunity](#), gov.uk, 24 September 2024, (accessed June 2026)

134 Department for Education, [Find training and employment schemes for your business - The Growth and Skills Levy](#), (accessed June 2026)

135 While the apprenticeships are still available, defunding means that levy funds cannot be used to fund apprentices' training and assessments. Department for Education, [Prime Minister overhauls apprenticeships to support opportunity](#), gov.uk, 24 September 2024,

- 97.** In June 2026, the Minister for Skills, Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern, wrote to Skills England setting out four objectives for the growth and skills levy:
- 50,000 more young people starting an apprenticeship by March 2029;
 - improved quality of apprenticeship training provision, increasing the achievement rate to over 70%;
 - greater flexibility to meet employers' skills needs; and
 - a simplified system, with better targeted funding and easier for employers.¹³⁶
- 98.** Much of the evidence we took recognised the need for changes to the apprenticeship levy, highlighting long-standing issues. Research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) showed that apprenticeship starts among small employers fell by 45% between 2016–17 (when the levy was introduced) and 2020–21, and by 56% among medium-sized enterprises. Starts among larger employers fell by 14%. It explained that this shift was significant because smaller employers had historically been more likely to recruit younger apprentices and to provide entry-level opportunities for those with lower qualification levels.¹³⁷ Dr Emily Erickson, Research Fellow, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick, told us the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017 accelerated the shift to higher level apprenticeships and retraining of older workers.¹³⁸

Foundation apprenticeships

- 99.** As part of the growth and skills levy, the government launched foundation apprenticeships in May 2025. Foundation apprenticeships are level 2 apprenticeships for young people aged 16 to 21.¹³⁹ They are designed to bridge the gap between school and the world of work, providing an alternative route for young people who need extra support with employability skills and the transition to the workplace.¹⁴⁰ However, CIPD said that the extremely limited early take-up of foundation apprenticeships raised questions about whether the programme was sufficiently embedded within a coherent entry-level pathway. For foundation apprenticeships

(accessed June 2026); Department for Work and Pensions, [Major employment drive to help unlock 200,000 new jobs and apprenticeships for next generation](#), gov.uk, 16 March 2026, (accessed June 2026)

136 Letter from the Minister for Skills for the Department of Work and Pensions to Skills England regarding apprenticeship funding bands review, [22 June 2026](#)

137 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) ([YEET0188](#))

138 [Qq76-77](#)

139 The upper age limit for foundation apprenticeships is 24 for care leavers, prison leavers or those with an EHCP.

140 Skills England, [An introduction to foundation apprenticeships, by Jonathan Mitchell](#), gov.uk, 16 September 2025, (accessed June 2026)

to succeed, CIPD recommended strengthening the pathway into full apprenticeship, ring-fencing long-term funding, improving employer engagement and treating them as a core component of the apprenticeship system.¹⁴¹

Defunding level 7 apprenticeships

- 100.** In June 2025, the Secretary of State for Education confirmed that from January 2026 employers would no longer be able to use levy funds for level 7 apprenticeships for those over 21. She explained that the government wanted to create more opportunities for young people, so needed to prioritise public funding towards young people, rather than for those already in work with more prior learning and qualifications.¹⁴²
- 101.** After announcing this change, the government asked Skills England to provide evidence of the impact of its decision. Skills England found that level 7 apprenticeships generally have a higher proportion of older learners than other apprenticeships. Exceptions to this finding include accountancy and taxation professionals where 71% are below 25. Skills England also found that level 7 apprenticeships have improved access among certain professions, such as increasing the diversity of solicitors. Employers told Skills England that they are unlikely to continue to fund level 7 apprenticeships at similar levels following the defunding decision. Despite these findings, Skills England concluded that there was not a strong economic rationale for exempting a small group of level 7 apprenticeships from defunding.¹⁴³

Defunding leadership and management apprenticeships

- 102.** In March 2026, the government announced that it would ‘streamline’ the available apprenticeship standards. It announced that it would defund 16 apprenticeship standards, including the team leader and operations manager standards.¹⁴⁴ In a written answer, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of the Department for Work and Pensions, Andrew Western MP, explained the government’s decision:

141 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) ([YEET0188](#))

142 [Apprenticeships and Skills Training](#), HCWS672, 2 June 2025

143 Skills England, [Skills England: evidence on defunding of level 7 apprenticeships](#), gov.uk, 30 April 2026

144 Department for Work and Pensions, [Major employment drive to help unlock 200,000 new jobs and apprenticeships for next generation](#), gov.uk, 16 March 2026, (accessed June 2026)

The changes to streamline the apprenticeship offer will help to create headroom to invest in more opportunities for young people and new apprenticeship units for adults. Employers who value these apprenticeship standards can continue to use them on a privately funded basis.¹⁴⁵

- 103.** We heard that leadership and management apprenticeships were valuable options for employers, and that they indirectly benefitted young people. Kate Shoemith, Director of Policy, British Chambers of Commerce, told us that the government shouldn't have an "either/or" approach to funding decisions. She explained that management apprenticeships helped young people by creating entry opportunities as existing staff progress and by providing future development opportunities within a role.¹⁴⁶ The Chartered Management Institute also highlighted the importance of good managers to young people's first experience of work.¹⁴⁷

Funding band review

- 104.** In June 2026, the Minister for Skills wrote to Skills England instructing it to review the funding bands for apprenticeships. Funding bands determine the maximum amount that can be drawn down from the apprenticeship budget for training and assessment. The minister said that the funding rates for some of the standards most used by young people were no longer sufficient and needed to be increased. She asked Skills England to identify apprenticeship standards for review, prioritising those that had a high proportion of starts by people aged under 25. Skills England will report later in the year. The minister's letter also said the government expects to fully spend its apprenticeship budget of £3.3 billion.¹⁴⁸ In the absence of additional funding, any uplift in funding bands will need to be paid for from the existing budget.

¹⁴⁵ [Management: Apprentices](#), UIN 126933, 20 April 2026

¹⁴⁶ [Q26](#)

¹⁴⁷ Chartered Management Institute ([YEET0065](#))

¹⁴⁸ Letter from the Minister for Skills for the Department of Work and Pensions to Skills England regarding apprenticeship funding bands review, [22 June 2026](#)

105. CONCLUSION

Many people would be surprised to learn that last year more than 50% of apprenticeship starts were by over 25s. The government is right to look to rebalance apprenticeships towards young people. However, its approach of defunding a handful of apprenticeships pursued by a high proportion of over 25s has been too blunt. Defunding these apprenticeships will have an immediate impact on many workers looking to retrain, reduce opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds and risk inadvertently harming the prospects of young people looking to enter the labour market. It is deeply regrettable that DWP only sought evidence from Skills England and employers after making its defunding decisions.

Ongoing challenges for candidates

Lack of apprenticeship opportunities

- 106.** During our roundtable with young people from Tees Valley, some participants said they had wanted to start an apprenticeship after leaving school but had found limited opportunities to do so in their local areas.¹⁴⁹ The St Martin's Group also highlighted the problem of limited apprenticeship supply and called for employers, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, to be encouraged to invest in more apprenticeship opportunities.¹⁵⁰

Parity of esteem

- 107.** The young people we heard from also said that, in their experience, schools tended to prioritise academic routes with little support for pursuing apprenticeships: "it just seemed like they wanted everyone to go to college".¹⁵¹ Mr Muhammad Hamza Sohaib, a young person who submitted evidence to us, said that there remained a strong cultural emphasis on university as the default or "successful" pathway, with apprenticeships presented as an alternative rather than an equal option. He also said that many young people experienced confusion about how apprenticeships worked, with little support from schools.¹⁵²

149 Tees Valley youth guarantee trailblazer ([YEET0201](#))

150 The St Martin's Group ([YEET0101](#))

151 Tees Valley youth guarantee trailblazer ([YEET0201](#))

152 Mr Muhammad Hamza Sohaib ([YEET0023](#))

- 108.** The Secretary of State said he recognised that vocational training and apprenticeships had not always been held in as high esteem as degrees. He told us that he wanted to change this view and to make apprenticeships an important feature of England’s system.¹⁵³ In December 2025, the Prime Minister said:

It’s time to change the way apprenticeships are viewed and to put them on an equal footing with university. This is a defining cause for this government.¹⁵⁴

Ongoing challenges for employers

- 109.** Our evidence showed that employers also found parts of the apprenticeship system difficult, resulting in them offering fewer apprenticeship opportunities. Research by the UK Institute for Technical Skills and Strategy found that only around 55.5% of levy funding was used on average and just 4% of employers used all their levy funds.¹⁵⁵
- 110.** We acknowledge that the Government has invested in support for young people with a £10 million package to be delivered by the King’s Trust.¹⁵⁶ Schemes that help to strengthen employers’ capability to mentor young people and apprentices are important. Wider investment in apprenticeships by employers and the Government is at risk if those charged with supporting young people as they enter work do not have the right training and skills to mentor them effectively.

System complexity

- 111.** Evidence to our inquiry highlighted the complexity within the apprenticeship system as a barrier to employers. For example, there are over 700 apprenticeship standards in England. This is twice as many standards as Germany and Switzerland.¹⁵⁷
- 112.** System complexity increases costs for employers. Research by the Institute for Employment Research found that the cost of apprenticeships for employers in England was almost double that in Austria and Germany. Part of the difference is wage cost, but the research also highlighted the greater

¹⁵³ Oral evidence taken on 17 June 2026, [Q7](#)

¹⁵⁴ Department for Work and Pensions, [50,000 more young people to benefit from apprenticeships as Government unveils new skills reforms to get Britain working](#), gov.uk, 7 December 2025, (accessed June 2026)

¹⁵⁵ Miss Farheen Akhtar (Policy and Engagement Manager at UK Institute for Technical Skills and Strategy) ([YEET0116](#))

¹⁵⁶ Department for Culture, Media and Sport, [Major new package of support for young people announced with Kings Trust](#), gov.uk, 3 June 2026, (accessed July 2026)

¹⁵⁷ Learning and Work Institute ([YEET0110](#))

administrative time required by English employers to navigate the system, such as finding local training providers in a competitive marketplace. The UK Institute for Technical Skills and Strategy said the apprenticeship system was “fragmented and poorly communicated,” with complex processes and paperwork discouraging employers. It called on DWP to reduce the administrative burden on employers.¹⁵⁸

- 113.** Skills England, the new government agency managing apprenticeships, told us that it recognised that the complexity of the apprenticeship system could make it difficult and that it aimed to simplify the system.¹⁵⁹
- 114.** We heard how apprenticeship systems in other countries help employers navigate potential complexities. Dr Emily Erickson highlighted the role of collaboration and co-ordination among stakeholders. In Germany and Austria there is a formalised system for collaboration, with chambers operating as key intermediaries between employers, training providers and apprentices. Not only does this help employers navigate the system, but it also helps maintain quality standards and gives employers a collective voice.¹⁶⁰

Policy changes

- 115.** In the last decade, there have been several major changes to the apprenticeship system.
- In 2017, the government introduced the apprenticeship levy.
 - In 2021, the government created a new type of apprenticeship, the flexi-job apprenticeship,¹⁶¹ and made changes to the transfer of levy funds between employers.¹⁶²
 - As discussed, in September 2024, the government announced a growth and skills levy, with changes to what levy funds could be used.¹⁶³

158 Miss Farheen Akhtar (Policy and Engagement Manager at UK Institute for Technical Skills and Strategy) ([YEET0116](#))

159 Oral evidence taken on 22 April 2026, [Q9](#)

160 [Qq80–82](#)

161 Under a flexi-job apprenticeship, an apprentice is employed by a sector body, groups of employers or other interested organisation, who arrange placements with different employers.

162 From April 2024, the government increased the amount levy-paying employers could transfer to other employers to 50% of an employer’s levy funds, from previous caps of 10% (2017–2019) and 25% (2019–2024); House of Commons Library, [Apprenticeships Policy in England](#), Research Briefing CBP03052, 3 October 2024

163 Prime Minister’s Office, 10 Downing Street, [Prime Minister unveils reforms to transform further and higher education](#), gov.uk, 30 September 2025, (accessed June 2026)

- Responsibility for apprenticeship policy has moved between three government departments, moving from the former Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to the DfE in 2016, and from DfE to DWP in 2025.
- Two different agencies, under three different names, have managed apprenticeship standards: the government established the Institute for Apprenticeships in May 2016, which became the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) in January 2019, and in June 2025 it replaced IfATE with Skills England.¹⁶⁴

116. Witnesses told us that frequent changes to the apprenticeship system further discouraged employers from engaging. Emily Rock told us: “the pace and nature of some changes have felt quite uncomfortable, and actually employers are asking for longer lead-in times to help embed it into their businesses.”¹⁶⁵ The St Martin’s Group emphasised the need for policy stability:

Employers consistently emphasise that policy stability and genuine consultation are essential for long-term investment. Frequent reforms, unclear timelines and sudden announcements disrupt planning cycles and deter training spend. A system that is flexible, stable and employer-focused is key to increasing employer investment in skills and expanding opportunities for young people.¹⁶⁶

117. Dr Emily Erickson told us that, compared to other European countries, there had been greater policy instability and change in England’s apprenticeship system. This, she said, pushed up the cost to employers of taking on apprentices and thus reduced the number of apprenticeship opportunities.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ House of Commons Library, [Apprenticeships Policy in England](#), Research Briefing CBP03052, 3 October 2024; Department for Education, [Skills England to transform opportunities and drive growth](#), gov.uk, 22 July 2024, (accessed June 2026)

¹⁶⁵ Oral evidence taken on 26 November 2025, [Qq26, 33](#)

¹⁶⁶ The St Martin’s Group ([YEET0101](#))

¹⁶⁷ [Q76](#)

118. CONCLUSION

In recent years, England's apprenticeship system has not delivered as well as it could or should have done. 55% of levy funds go unused, with employers choosing to lose these funds rather than take on more apprentices. Constant tinkering with apprenticeship formats and funding rules has undermined confidence in the system for employers, training providers and potential apprentices. These changes have also created unnecessary complexity, increasing costs for employers and disincentivising them from taking on apprentices. Employers and training providers require policy stability to commit to investing in an apprenticeship, and candidates need to know the apprenticeship will still be running in the future. The government should ensure that any further changes are evidence-based.

119. RECOMMENDATION

Having launched the growth and skills levy, the government must now closely monitor the impact of this change. It needs to build a greater understanding of when to intervene and how to mitigate unintended consequences. In its response to this report, the government should set out how it will monitor and evaluate the apprenticeship system, and the impact of its recent changes. It should avoid further changes until it has assessed the effectiveness of the current framework.

120. RECOMMENDATION

England's apprenticeship system is complex and difficult for employers to understand. The government must do more to communicate how it works and help employers understand the opportunities available. In its response, DWP should explain what steps it will take to improve awareness and understanding of apprenticeships, including how the growth and skills levy operates.

121. RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the government, through the Department for Education (DfE), ensure that schools, colleges and educators are aware of and actively promote apprenticeships and other non-academic 'earn and learn' pathways alongside academic routes. The government must show clear cross-departmental commitment to this objective; as a starting point, we suggest DfE and DWP set out in a joint statement to the House what steps it has taken to date to promote 'earn and learn' pathways and what further steps it intends to take.

Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

1. The current level of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) is a travesty. These false starts to people's working lives have deep and long-term consequences for them, for society and for the economy. Young people deserve better. (Conclusion, Paragraph 13)
2. We are pleased that this issue is getting the attention it demands, including through the Milburn review. A million young people are currently NEET, and there is a risk that many of them will be in their 30s before the benefits of any policy changes are felt. As the government brings forward more initiatives, we expect to see a level of ambition and urgency to match. (Conclusion, Paragraph 14)
3. We recommend that the government responds to the recommendations from the Milburn review within two months of it reporting. (Recommendation, Paragraph 15)

Risk factors

4. While there are many factors that increase the risk of a young person becoming NEET, none of them are or should be considered inevitable causes. Furthermore, these risk factors can either be mitigated with effective support, or amplified by absent or inadequate support. Unfortunately, various systems of support, from schools to children's health services, have failed young people in recent years. (Conclusion, Paragraph 25)

Coherence across government

5. Young people have been let down multiple times and by multiple systems. Single-department policies and one-off programmes will not be sufficient. Addressing the UK's NEET crisis is going to require a concerted and long-term effort from the whole of government. (Conclusion, Paragraph 33)

6. The government should bring forward a youth employment strategy. A cross-departmental strategy would demonstrate its seriousness about this issue, set a long-term path and ensure cross-government efforts. This should include ambitious targets for increasing the rate of youth employment, education and training, and reducing the inequalities in youth unemployment for different groups and areas. (Recommendation, Paragraph 34)
7. There is overwhelming evidence from businesses about the rising cost of employing people, in part due to changes to employer National Insurance contributions. This has had a knock-on impact on young people. They have been disproportionately affected by slower recruitment, which can then inhibit their future career progression as they struggle to secure their first job. (Conclusion, Paragraph 41)
8. We recommend HM Treasury extend the National Insurance Upper Secondary Threshold so that all employees under 25 attract no employer Class 1 National Insurance contributions until they earn more than £967 a week. We request HM Treasury provide modelling of the long-term costs and benefits of this recommendation. (Recommendation, Paragraph 42)
9. The Secretary of State told us that increasing youth employment, education and training is his top priority, yet certain benefit rules disincentivise young people from pursuing opportunities. It is particularly concerning that 16 to 18-year-olds who take on an apprenticeship risk reducing the benefits paid to the rest of their family, and that young adult carers who study for more than 21 hours a week risk having to choose between education and their carer's allowance payments. Further, the Government is considering removing the health element of Universal Credit for under-22s having not provided evidence on the employment impact. This lack of coherence within DWP-specific policy areas is inexcusable. We are concerned that there are likely to be other instances where benefit rules do not align with wider policy objectives. (Conclusion, Paragraph 54)
10. 16 to 18-year-old apprentices should be treated as part of the family unit when assessing benefit eligibility, and the 21-hour limit of weekly study for carers should be removed. DWP should also drop its plans to remove the health element of Universal Credit for under-22s. It has not produced evidence to justify a different approach for young people or that such a change would have a positive employment effect. (Recommendation, Paragraph 55)
11. We also recommend that DWP undertake a comprehensive review of all its benefit rules to ensure they are all coherent with the priority of supporting youth employment, education and training. (Recommendation, Paragraph 56)

The Youth Guarantee

12. The Jobs Guarantee is a good offer, but its eligibility is too tight and will limit its impact. We are concerned about the long-term impact on a young person of being unemployed for 18 months and that waiting a year and a half before offering a work placement risks undermining the benefits of the scheme. DWP should undertake and publish a cost-benefit analysis for the Jobs Guarantee. This analysis should test different options for how long someone is unemployed before the scheme kicks in and show how DWP arrived at an 18-month period. We are also concerned that the scheme excludes the 44% of NEETs who are not claiming benefits. DWP should develop options for NEETs outside the benefits system to take part in the Jobs Guarantee. (Recommendation, Paragraph 63)
13. As DWP rolls out the Youth Guarantee to more local areas, it must balance the benefits of local flexibility against the risk of a postcode lottery of outcomes. In its response, the government should set out how it will monitor the performance of local areas and the steps it will take if any areas are not delivering the desired outcomes. (Recommendation, Paragraph 68)
14. To have an impact with young people, the Youth Guarantee must not become another here-today-gone-tomorrow scheme. Having started down this path, DWP should make the guarantee the long-term basis for youth policy. To demonstrate its commitment, DWP should announce a minimum funding level for the next 10-years. This should include equally long-term funding settlements with local government so that local areas and stakeholders can make long-term planning decisions. (Recommendation, Paragraph 76)
15. There is a seed of a good policy in the Youth Guarantee. We welcome many of the policies announced under the umbrella of the Youth Guarantee, including the localised funding of the Trailblazers and the expansion of the youth hubs. However, the government must go further to make a success of it. Other countries have shown that Youth Guarantees require a long-term commitment and to be part of wider support systems. In particular, they have shown the value of intervening as early as possible to support young people at risk of becoming NEET, and of long-term policy commitments. This requires a framework for the early identification of those at risk. The UK has a long history of short-term youth programmes, which can discourage young people, employers and other stakeholders from getting involved. It must do better this time. (Conclusion, Paragraph 81)

Apprenticeships

16. Apprenticeships are a fantastic opportunity. Other countries demonstrate that a well-designed and well-respected apprenticeship system is effective at reducing youth unemployment and creating invaluable opportunities for young people. (Conclusion, Paragraph 91)
17. Many people would be surprised to learn that last year more than 50% of apprenticeship starts were by over 25s. The government is right to look to rebalance apprenticeships towards young people. However, its approach of defunding a handful of apprenticeships pursued by a high proportion of over 25s has been too blunt. Defunding these apprenticeships will have an immediate impact on many workers looking to retrain, reduce opportunities for people from disadvantaged backgrounds and risk inadvertently harming the prospects of young people looking to enter the labour market. It is deeply regrettable that DWP only sought evidence from Skills England and employers after making its defunding decisions. (Conclusion, Paragraph 105)
18. In recent years, England's apprenticeship system has not delivered as well as it could or should have done. 55% of levy funds go unused, with employers choosing to lose these funds rather than take on more apprentices. Constant tinkering with apprenticeship formats and funding rules has undermined confidence in the system for employers, training providers and potential apprentices. These changes have also created unnecessary complexity, increasing costs for employers and disincentivising them from taking on apprentices. Employers and training providers require policy stability to commit to investing in an apprenticeship, and candidates need to know the apprenticeship will still be running in the future. The government should ensure that any further changes are evidence-based. (Conclusion, Paragraph 118)
19. Having launched the growth and skills levy, the government must now closely monitor the impact of this change. It needs to build a greater understanding of when to intervene and how to mitigate unintended consequences. In its response to this report, the government should set out how it will monitor and evaluate the apprenticeship system, and the impact of its recent changes. It should avoid further changes until it has assessed the effectiveness of the current framework. (Recommendation, Paragraph 119)
20. England's apprenticeship system is complex and difficult for employers to understand. The government must do more to communicate how it works and help employers understand the opportunities available. In its response,

DWP should explain what steps it will take to improve awareness and understanding of apprenticeships, including how the growth and skills levy operates. (Recommendation, Paragraph 120)

21. We recommend that the government, through the Department for Education (DfE), ensure that schools, colleges and educators are aware of and actively promote apprenticeships and other non-academic 'earn and learn' pathways alongside academic routes. The government must show clear cross-departmental commitment to this objective; as a starting point, we suggest DfE and DWP set out in a joint statement to the House what steps it has taken to date to promote 'earn and learn' pathways and what further steps it intends to take. (Recommendation, Paragraph 121)

Annex: Notes from roundtable

Summary note of roundtable with young people from the Tees Valley Youth Guarantee trailblazer

On 26 March 2026, the Committee held a virtual roundtable with young people. All the participants had experience of being not in employment, education or training, and had found work placements through the Tees Valley Youth Guarantee trailblazer. This note sets out an anonymised summary of the discussion.

The participants were extremely positive about the trailblazer. It had given them optimism and opened their eyes to the opportunities they could pursue. Before entering the trailblazer, they had all sought employment or apprenticeships, but come up against several barriers, including: limited apprenticeship opportunities, not meeting functional requirements (maths GCSE) and employers seeking experience that an 18-year-old couldn't possibly have.

Experience of being not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Prior to entering the trailblazer programme, the participants had all unsuccessfully sought employment or apprenticeships. They described their negative experiences of this time and how that period had made them feel. The young people also described some of the barriers they had each faced.

- Participants used negative and emotional language to describe their experience of being NEET. One participant said he felt like “a leech” as he was living with his partner’s family but couldn’t contribute towards costs. Another said he felt “in limbo.” Long periods out of work, with multiple rejected applications, harmed participants’ confidence and motivation.

- There was a recurring theme of the experience trap: entry-level jobs demanded prior experience that the young people couldn't get without getting an entry-level job. As one participant said: "you can't get your foot in the door to start working and a lot of places need that."
- One participant expressed frustration at the lack of feedback from unsuccessful job interviews. He wanted to learn and improve, but without the feedback he didn't know why his applications were unsuccessful.
- Prior to the trailblazer, several participants had worked on zero-hour contracts. They found them precarious and unhelpful to building useful experience, but it was the only paid work they could find. Shifts were often cancelled at short notice, leading to income instability, wasted travel costs, difficulties saving, and a further loss of confidence and motivation.

Support prior to leaving school

The participants criticised the support they received at school. They felt that school had not given them some of the key skills for the world of work and that schools prioritised academic routes, with little support for those who wanted to move into apprenticeships or employment.

- Schools tended to prioritise academic routes—focusing heavily on college and university: "it just seemed like they wanted everyone to go to college". One participant, who did not want to pursue an academic route, described just being sent some job websites, but received no advice on CV writing, interviews or understanding job descriptions.
- Careers advice was minimal and hard to access. Their schools did not run employment fairs or careers events, meaning the participants left school with little understanding of local job markets or the pathways available to them.
- Advice on practical workplace competencies (professional communication, writing emails, interview skills) was largely absent. Participants would have welcomed this training from their school.
- Although schools required students to undertake work experience, they generally provided no support in finding placements, leaving pupils to arrange them entirely on their own. Several participants had very limited or irrelevant work experience (e.g. a week in supermarket roles) that did not actually help them explore career options.

- One participant did not complete her maths GCSE, which prevented her accessing apprenticeships or technical roles. The school did not help her with a resit.

Impact of the trailblazer programme

Feedback on the scheme was overwhelmingly positive. Tees Valley's trailblazer matches young people to 6-month work placements. The job-matching was personalised to each participant, with hub staff exploring their aspirations and existing skills. The Stockton Employment & Training Hub, part of Stockton Borough Council, provides young people with pre-placement training to build their confidence and professional skills prior to starting with an employer.

- From a practical perspective, the programme helped the young people gain relevant work experience from which they can build a career. Several participants were pleased to be in office-based jobs, having previously struggled to move out of insecure retail, hospitality or manual work. The work had helped them develop transferable skills and opened their eyes to other job opportunities (e.g. HR, business admin and logistics).
- Importantly, all participants expressed renewed confidence and aspirations as a result of successful placements. They noted the benefits of the personalised support and mentoring that was part of the placements.
- The pre-placement training was described as transformative. It included practical exercises to break down social barriers and gain self-confidence. A member of staff described how young people who arrived extremely shy or anxious were soon able to deliver presentations to panels, something they would previously have avoided.
- Many participants appreciated personalised support, mentoring, and the chance to work in stable, structured roles, compared to previous insecure jobs.
- Several participants secured extensions to placements, new qualifications, or felt newly motivated to apply for apprenticeships.

Suggested improvements to the trailblazer

Participants offered constructive suggestions about the trailblazer programme. Participants would like to see:

- Longer weekly hours to reflect real workplace expectations. The placements are currently 25 hours per week, rather than 37.
- Ensuring placements consistently have meaningful and prepared workloads, with one participant describing de-motivating times when she did not have work to do.
- More sustained support after placements finish, with several participants nearing the end of their placement and unsure about next steps.

Recommendations for government

The participants also made more general recommendations about improving support for young people who are NEET. These included:

- Increasing apprenticeship opportunities to ensure more opportunities exist locally, and advertising apprenticeships in schools.
- Better promotion of employment hubs, and equivalent schemes, through schools and social media.
- Better options for 16 to 18-year-olds who are not in college and cannot access adult-funded courses, leaving them with no pathways for years.

Formal minutes

Wednesday 15 July 2026

Members present:

Debbie Abrahams (Chair)

Lee Barron

Peter Bedford

Steve Darling

Damien Egan

Patrick Hurley

John Milne

Liz Twist

Youth employment, education and training

Draft Report (*Youth employment, education and training*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 121 read and agreed to.

Annex and Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134).

Adjournment

Adjourned till Wednesday 2 September 2026

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Wednesday 11 March 2026

Kate Nicholls, Chair, UKHospitality; **Chris Russell**, Senior Policy Manager, Federation of Small Businesses; **Kate Shoesmith**, Director of Policy, British Chambers of Commerce; **Tim Balcon**, Chief Executive, Construction Industry Training Board [Q1–30](#)

David Gaughan, Director of Employment and Skills, West Midlands Combined Authority; **Jan Feeney**, Head of Employment and Skills, Norfolk County Council; **Dave McCallum**, Head of Career Information, Advice and Guidance Operations, Skills Development Scotland [Q31–44](#)

Wednesday 20 May 2026

Alan Milburn, Chair, Young People and Work Report [Q45–72](#)

Professor Hubert Ertl, Director of Research and Vice President, Germany's Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB); **Dr Veerle Miranda**, Head of Youth Employment and Social Policies Unit, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); **Dr Emily Erickson**, Research Fellow, Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick [Q73–92](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

YEET numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

1	A S Training (International)	YEET0026
2	ABTA	YEET0099
3	AELP	YEET0171
4	AKG UK	YEET0078
5	Action for Children	YEET0094
6	Advice UK	YEET0132
7	Agusita, Dr Emma (Senior Lecturer: Media Communications and Culture, Media and Creative Industries, University of the West of England); and Ashton, Professor Daniel (Professor of Cultural and Creative Industries, University of Southampton)	YEET0167
8	Akhtar, Miss Farheen (Policy and Engagement Manager, UK Institute for Technical Skills and Strategy)	YEET0116
9	Ambitious about Autism	YEET0179
10	Anderson, Oliver (PhD researcher, University College London)	YEET0048
11	Association of Colleges	YEET0108
12	Association of Directors of Public Health	YEET0125
13	Baker Dearing Educational Trust	YEET0054
14	Become	YEET0193
15	Belong	YEET0138
16	Better Society Capital	YEET0184
17	Bisson, Miss Ruberta	YEET0123
18	Blackpool NEET Partnership; and Blackpool Pride of Place Partnership	YEET0039
19	Bradford Council	YEET0140

20	Bridges Outcomes Partnerships	<u>YEET0181</u>
21	British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP)	<u>YEET0176</u>
22	British Association of Teachers of Deaf Children and Young People (BATOD)	<u>YEET0097</u>
23	British Chambers of Commerce	<u>YEET0040</u>
24	British Dyslexia Association	<u>YEET0037</u>
25	British Psychological Society	<u>YEET0128</u>
26	British Retail Consortium	<u>YEET0144</u>
27	Buziuk, Hleb (Independent public policy and governance researcher, FairGo CIC)	<u>YEET0001</u>
28	Carers Trust	<u>YEET0027</u>
29	Catch22	<u>YEET0107</u>
30	Centre for Britain and Europe	<u>YEET0158</u>
31	Centre for Mental Health; and Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition	<u>YEET0051</u>
32	Centre for Policy Research on Men and Boys	<u>YEET0088</u>
33	Centre for Social Mobility University of Exeter	<u>YEET0031</u>
34	Centre for Young Lives	<u>YEET0052</u>
35	Chang, Professor Kirk (Professor, Research Lead, University of East London)	<u>YEET0067</u>
36	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)	<u>YEET0188</u>
37	Chartered Management Institute	<u>YEET0065</u>
38	Checkatrade	<u>YEET0084</u>
39	Cheshire West and Chester Council, Skills and Employment Department	<u>YEET0034</u>
40	Child Poverty Action Group	<u>YEET0102</u>
41	Citizens Advice Scotland	<u>YEET0127</u>
42	City & Guilds	<u>YEET0111</u>
43	Coach Core Foundation	<u>YEET0059</u>
44	Compass Group UK & Ireland	<u>YEET0120</u>
45	Coventry City Council	<u>YEET0191</u>
46	Cystic Fibrosis Trust	<u>YEET0147</u>

47	Daguerre, Dr Anne (Reader in Social Justice, University of Brighton); Pearce, Dr Sioned (Lecturer, Cardiff University); Fitzpatrick, Dr Ciara (Senior Lecturer, Ulster University); and Chapman, Dr Alexandra (Lecturer, Ulster University)	YEET0081
48	Dangeni, Dr (Post-doctoral Research Fellow, Anglia Ruskin University); and Moreau, Prof. Marie-Pierre (Professor, Anglia Ruskin University)	YEET0041
49	De Fraja, Professor Gianni (Professor, University of Nottingham); and Rockey, Prof. James (Professor, University of Birmingham)	YEET0196
50	Department for Work and Pension and Department for Education	YEET0075
51	Dickerson, Professor Andy (Professor of Economics, University of Sheffield); Crawford, Professor Claire (Professor of Economics, UCL Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities (CEPEO)); McIntosh, Professor Steven (Professor of Economics, University of Sheffield); and Anderson, Oliver (PhD Student, UCL Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities (CEPEO))	YEET0109
52	Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) Cymru	YEET0100
53	Douthwaite, Dr Alison (Research Associate, University of Bath)	YEET0089
54	Down's Syndrome Association	YEET0053
55	EFL in the Community	YEET0087
56	ENABLE	YEET0038
57	EQUALISE team @ UCL; and Taylor, Katie (Impact Manager, EQUALISE team @ UCL)	YEET0022
58	EY Foundation	YEET0072
59	Edge Foundation	YEET0042
60	Educationwise	YEET0019
61	Employment Related Services Association (ERSA)	YEET0093
62	Engineering Construction Industry Training Board	YEET0118
63	EngineeringUK	YEET0096
64	Enginuity	YEET0174
65	Family Fund	YEET0055
66	Fedcap	YEET0169
67	Federation of Master Builders	YEET0187

68	Feeney, Jan (Head of Employment & Skills, Norfolk County Council)	YEET0197
69	Forstenzer, Dr Joshua (Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Sheffield); and Zriouel, Mr Naïm (Co-Founder , L'Epopée)	YEET0095
70	Future Minds Campaign; and Centre for Young Lives	YEET0151
71	Gerrard, Sue	YEET0017
72	Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)	YEET0172
73	Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network (GMLPN)	YEET0156
74	Grosvenor Hart Homes	YEET0044
75	Hampshire County Council	YEET0163
76	Harrison, Professor Neil (Professor of Education and Social Justice, University of Exeter)	YEET0050
77	Heyes, Professor Jason (Professor of Employment Relations, University of Sheffield)	YEET0115
78	Impetus	YEET0136
79	Inspiring Scotland	YEET0045
80	Institute of Directors	YEET0036
81	Institute of the Motor Industry	YEET0024
82	JTL	YEET0077
83	Jobs Foundation	YEET0173
84	KFC UK and Ireland	YEET0104
85	King's College London	YEET0016
86	Kooth	YEET0103
87	Lacey, Dr Rebecca (Reader in Social and Lifecourse Epidemiology, City St George's, University of London)	YEET0012
88	Laporte, Dr Dionne (Research associate, UKRI Population Mental Health Consortium, King's College London)	YEET0112
89	Learning and Work Institute	YEET0110
90	Learning Disabilities Research Network, University of Strathclyde	YEET0165
91	Leeds Trinity University	YEET0117
92	Leonard Cheshire	YEET0192
93	Lincolnshire County Council	YEET0098
94	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	YEET0146

95	Local Government Association (LGA)	YEET0153
96	Low Pay Commission	YEET0189
97	Maguire, Professor Sue (Honorary Professor, University of Bath)	YEET0062
98	Make UK	YEET0076
99	Manchester City Council	YEET0090
100	Maximus UK	YEET0182
101	McCallum, Dave (Head of Career Information, Advice and Guidance Operations, Skills Development Scotland)	YEET0198
102	Medway Council	YEET0139
103	Mental Health Foundation	YEET0070
104	Mental Health UK	YEET0194
105	Mind	YEET0063
106	Murphy, Dr Dylan	YEET0002
107	Muslim Council of Britain	YEET0178
108	NASS (National Association Special Schools)	YEET0020
109	NCFE	YEET0069
110	Nabbosa, Lynette (Founder, Elimu)	YEET0190
111	Nacro	YEET0074
112	National Autistic Society	YEET0141
113	National Education Union	YEET0071
114	National Foundation for Educational Research	YEET0180
115	Natspec	YEET0130
116	New City College	YEET0135
117	New Economics Foundation	YEET0186
118	Newark, Mr Edward Richard	YEET0124
119	Nuffield Foundation	YEET0157
120	Office for National Statistics	YEET0195
121	OneHive	YEET0035
122	Open Hiring UK project of Social Entrepreneur Place Ltd; and Start Foundation (The Netherlands)	YEET0137
123	Pearson plc	YEET0155
124	People's Health Trust	YEET0134

125	Positive Steps	YEET0185
126	Premier League	YEET0121
127	Pullen, Charlynn (Principal Research Fellow, Sheffield Hallam University)	YEET0049
128	RAND Europe	YEET0086
129	Rea, Dr Jessica (Research Scientist (Principal Investigator), University College London)	YEET0006
130	Recro Consulting	YEET0079
131	Reed in Partnership	YEET0150
132	Ren, Professor (Dean of Lifelong Learning and Professional Practice, Newcastle University)	YEET0200
133	Resilient Young Minds	YEET0142
134	Ruscoe, Dr Daniel Philip (Chief Executive Officer, CFDN)	YEET0021
135	Sense	YEET0177
136	Sherriff, Barbara	YEET0080
137	Skills Builder UK	YEET0061
138	Skills Federation	YEET0164
139	Social Mobility Commission	YEET0152
140	Sohaib, Mr Muhammad Hamza	YEET0023
141	Spear	YEET0113
142	St Giles Trust	YEET0114
143	Stefan, Dr (Associate Dean, University of Brighton)	YEET0029
144	Sutton Trust	YEET0122
145	Tan, Dr Angel (Teaching Fellow & Programme Director, Aston University); Di Chiacchio, Dr Laura (Lecturer in Information Systems and Cybersecurity, Aston University); Saw, Dr Rebecca (Evaluation Analyst, Digital Futures Work Experience Programme, Aston University); Senior, Dr Carl (Reader in Psychology, Aston University); and Taylor, Ms Lalita (CEO, We Job Box)	YEET0082
146	techUK	YEET0047
147	Tees Valley Youth Guarantee Trailblazer	YEET0201
148	The Aurora Group	YEET0159
149	The Bell Foundation	YEET0148
150	The Careers & Enterprise Company	YEET0085

151	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	YEET0143
152	The Education Training Foundation (ETF)	YEET0058
153	The Food and Drink Federation	YEET0106
154	The King's Trust	YEET0183
155	The Manchester Metropolitan University	YEET0030
156	The Opportunity Provider Ltd	YEET0025
157	The Salvation Army UK and Ireland	YEET0064
158	The Spark Group (Staffordshire) Limited	YEET0008
159	The St Martin's Group	YEET0101
160	Trades Union Congress	YEET0028
161	Training for Employment (Yorkshire) CIC	YEET0004
162	Trussell	YEET0166
163	Turas Nua	YEET0073
164	UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies	YEET0083
165	UK Youth	YEET0160
166	UKHospitality	YEET0091
167	Understanding Society, the UK Household Longitudinal Study	YEET0046
168	University College London, UCL Bartlett School of Sustainable Construction; and University College London Institute of Education, Department of Psychology & Human Development	YEET0168
169	University of Birmingham	YEET0162
170	University of Cambridge	YEET0154
171	University of Sheffield	YEET0105
172	University of Southampton	YEET0149
173	University of Warwick	YEET0007
174	Walk Wheel Cycle Trust (formerly Sustrans); and Centre for Transport and Society, University of the West of England	YEET0013
175	Warwick Institute for Employment Research	YEET0068
176	West London Alliance	YEET0056
177	West Midlands Combined Authority	YEET0161
178	Wigan Borough Community First; Everyday Lessons; and Wigan Deanery Trust	YEET0170

179	Wigston, Ian (Chief Executive, Bright Field Consulting Ltd); and Seeley, Bishop Martin	YEET0018
180	Wilkinson, Dr Eleanor (Senior Research Fellow, University of Sheffield); and Clark, Dr Ames (Research Associate , University of Sheffield)	YEET0057
181	Witherslack Group	YEET0033
182	Work Foundation at Lancaster University	YEET0133
183	WorldSkills UK	YEET0032
184	Xiang, Xinyu (PhD student, King's College London); Zavos, Helena (Reader in Psychology, King's College London); and Eley, Thalia (Professor of Developmental Behavioural Genetics, King's College London)	YEET0060
185	YMCA England & Wales	YEET0119
186	Young Women's Trust	YEET0129
187	Youth Futures Foundation	YEET0199
188	Youth Sport Trust	YEET0131
189	Z2K	YEET0015

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2026–27

Number	Title	Reference
2nd	Transition to State Pension Age	HC 76
1st	Employment support for disabled people: Connect to Work	HC 77

Session 2024–26

Number	Title	Reference
7th	Employment support for disabled people: Disability at Work	HC 1227
6th	The appointment of Emma Douglas as Chair of the Pensions Regulator	HC 1610
5th	Get Britain Working: Creating a new jobs and careers service	HC 1286
4th	Get Britain Working: Reforming Jobcentres	HC 653
3rd	Get Britain Working: Pathways to Work	HC 837
2nd	Pensioner Poverty: challenges and mitigations	HC 465
1st	Safeguarding Vulnerable Claimants	HC 402
7th Special	Get Britain Working: Creating a new jobs and careers service: Government response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 1494
6th Special	Get Britain Working: Reforming Jobcentres: Government response to the Committee's Fourth Report	HC 1493

Number	Title	Reference
5th Special	Pensioner Poverty: challenges and mitigations: Government Response	HC 1384
4th Special	Get Britain Working: Pathways to Work: Government Response	HC 1385
3rd Special	Safeguarding Vulnerable Claimants: Government response	HC 1248
2nd Special	Defined Benefit Pensions Schemes: Government Response	HC 870
1st Special	Statutory Sick Pay: Government Response	HC 787