

Skills for every young person: Government Response

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Geographical Scope

The Government recognises that certain policy areas explored within this inquiry touch on matters that are the responsibility of the Devolved Administrations. Where the text below mentions devolved matters, this should be read as relating to England only.

For wider background:

1. In Northern Ireland, benefits and employment support are transferred and are therefore the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Executive.
2. Some parts of social security have been devolved to the Scottish Government through the Scotland Act 2016. Responsibility for disability, industrial injuries and carer benefits transferred to the Scottish Government from April 2020. The Scottish Government has also been given power to set up its own contracted employment support programmes to help the long-term unemployed and disabled people into work. Support from Jobcentre Plus is reserved to the UK Government.
3. The Scottish Government and the Welsh Government are responsible for health, local government, education, skills and social care. Any response relating to these devolved areas should be read as focusing on England only.
4. In Wales, benefits and employment support are reserved to the UK Government. This means that any reference in this written evidence to benefits and employment support do apply to Wales.

The Government remains committed to working in partnership with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to consider how best to deliver support for young people.

Executive Summary

On 26 November 2021, the House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee published *Skills for every young person - Report of Session 2021-22* (HL 98).

The Government welcomes the Committee's investigation exploring how best to address the challenge posed by youth unemployment and would like to thank them for recognising the successes of the measures already put in place, such as the Government's [Plan for Jobs](#)¹ and the work of the Careers and Enterprise Company.

Tackling youth unemployment is a priority for this Government and it is crucial to our commitment to Levelling Up. As highlighted in the [Levelling Up White Paper](#)² published earlier in February, we are committed to providing all young people with the best education, support and prospects to enable them to achieve their potential, secure jobs and have fulfilling careers. February's Labour Market Statistics (for the period October -December 2021) show that this commitment is paying off. 5.88 million 16-24-year-olds are in full-time education or work. This is up 65,000 (1.1%) on the year.

¹ [Plan for Jobs - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>

The latest statistics for young people (aged 16-24) not in employment, education, or training (NEET) in October-December 2021 was estimated at 10.2%, down 0.9 percentage points compared with pre-COVID-19 levels in October to December 2019³. There were an estimated 260,000 young people in the UK who were NEET and unemployed in October to December 2021 – this is a record low⁴.

Before the pandemic, the Government was already providing a comprehensive package of support for young people. We recognised, however, that COVID-19 had a significant impact on youth unemployment, and responded by putting additional support for new opportunities in place. The Plan for Jobs, announced in July 2020, provided an unprecedented economic support package to protect, support and create jobs, with a particular focus on young people.

The response included targeted measures to protect the jobs of those already in work. For example, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme supported 11.7 million jobs, alongside the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, which helped 2.9 million individuals. For young people not in work or those who unfortunately lost their jobs, support included the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) Youth Offer. This provides enhanced intensive work search support for 16-24-year-olds in the Universal Credit Intensive Work Search Group through the 13-week Youth Employment Programme, Youth Employability Coaches, who provide flexible support to young people with significant complex needs and barriers, and over 160 new DWP Youth Hubs co-located in partner premises alongside local organisations. These use a 'one stop shop' place-based approach, co-delivering employment and skills support with partners across England, Scotland, and Wales. In addition, the Kickstart programme was introduced to fund the direct creation of high-quality jobs for 16–24-year-olds claiming Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment, helping to develop their skills and experience through thousands of six-month jobs. As of the 31st January 2022, over 130,000 Kickstart jobs have been started by young people.

The Government is also dedicated to tackling the longer term, systemic challenges with the skills system, and how well it supports young people into sustainable, skilled employment. We published our Skills for Jobs White Paper in January 2021 which sets out our blueprint to reform post-16 education and training. It is focused on giving young people the skills they need, in a way that suits them to advance their careers, and increase this country's productivity.

We are taking action to improve the education and training offer for young people, so that every young person can fulfil their potential and is well prepared for the jobs of the future. This includes broad based learning until year 11 through the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), followed by greater specialism post 16 through A levels, apprenticeships, vocational qualifications, and new T levels. We have put employers at the heart of our reforms to post 16 technical education, ensuring that young people can access the skills and experience that employers are looking for.

Apprenticeships are more important than ever before in supporting people of all ages into high-quality employment, and we recognise the need to ensure that young people who are

³[Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\) - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/peopleandwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/2021-10-01)

⁴ [A06 SA: Educational status and labour market status for people aged from 16 to 24 \(seasonally adjusted\) - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/peopleandwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/a06saeducationalstatusandlabourmarketstatusforpeopleagedfrom16to24seasonallyadjusted/2021-10-01)

starting out in their careers can access these opportunities. The Government is delivering a range of measures to help young people and employers' benefit from apprenticeships. This includes promoting apprenticeships in schools, creating clear progression opportunities from T-levels and traineeships, and providing additional funding to employers of all sizes taking on younger apprentices. New flexible apprenticeships announced during this year's National Apprenticeships Week will open up more industries to apprenticeships and even more opportunities for young people to secure a great career. We will continue to look at what more we can do to support young people's participation in apprenticeships.

With funding increasing to £2.7 billion by 2024-25, the Government is showing its commitment to apprenticeships. We are also continuing to expand traineeships, funding up to 72,000 places over the next 3 years, including more occupational traineeships which are specifically designed to support young people into apprenticeships in key industries.

The Government recognises that some young people can face additional difficulties when looking for work, and we are working to give disadvantaged groups appropriate support, tailored to their specific needs. The Government is investing £560 million in youth services in England over the next 3 years, including the Youth Investment Fund (YIF). YIF is designed to achieve levelling up across the country, to ensure that all children and young people can access the services they need. To create new opportunities and support access to services, the DfE and DCMS have expanded and funded a range of programmes including The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. We are hoping to grow these programmes in more deprived areas, therefore reaching more children and ensuring an equality of opportunities.

Alongside these reforms and investment, we recognise the importance of careers, advice, and guidance in supporting young people to make the best choices and to reduce their risk of unemployment. The Government committed in the Skills for Jobs White paper to rollout careers infrastructure (including Carers Hubs and a network of business volunteers) across England to support schools and colleges to provide comprehensive careers support based on the Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Careers Guidance. We have recently launched a new campaign '*Get the Jump*', to help raise awareness of the different education and training options available. Through DWP Youth Hubs, we are seeking to bring together partners from the employment and skills sectors, youth charities and Government to offer joined up, and place-based, support for young people. The Government appointed Professor Sir John Holman as Independent Adviser on Careers to advise on the development of a cohesive careers system for the long term and he is due to make recommendations in the summer.

We have also launched Skills Bootcamps, which offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. Since April 2021, we have been supporting any adult who does not have A-level equivalent or higher qualifications to access over 400 fully funded level 3 courses, with the Free Courses for Jobs offer. We have also established the Unit for Future Skills which aims to transform how Government uses jobs and skills data to inform a responsive training system that ensures that learners have the skills employers need and can get good, well-paying jobs.

The Government have closely considered the 88 recommendations from the House of Lords across a wide range of education and skills issues, including digital skills, the growth of green jobs, work experience and industry placements, qualifications reform,

apprenticeships, Kickstart and youth services. This document presents our response which we believe will result in positive improvements for young people, reducing the risk of youth unemployment.

Shortages of skills and their impact on young people

Recommendations 1, 2 & 3

1. Skills gaps and shortages are clearly a major driver of youth unemployment and damage labour market productivity. Given this, there is a startling lack of central accountability for collecting and publishing definitive data on them. The future economy will offer a range of opportunities for young people, not least in the digital and green sectors, but the skills shortages it will need to fill are not measured or planned for at a national level. (Paragraph 49)

2. The Government has introduced initiatives for addressing skills mismatches, but many are intentionally short-term and do not address the structural nature of youth unemployment. For example, it is a missed opportunity that Kickstart did not align with the green or digital skills agenda by channelling young people into these sectors. Many of the proposals in the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill are welcome, but it is unlikely that they will achieve the transformation needed in the skills system to help the young workforce and skills system adapt and live up to the Government's 'levelling up' ambitions. (Paragraph 50)

3. The Government must develop a long-term national plan for identifying, measuring and addressing skills mismatches with a focus on anticipating and meeting the needs of emerging and growth sectors such as those of the digital and green economy. It must update and publish this strategy annually. Bodies producing Local Skills Improvement Plans should do the same at the local level and be responsible for securing an adequate local supply of training places for young people. As part of the Government's plan, it must:

- Make public the findings of the Skills and Productivity Board and commit to publishing data on skills gaps and shortages on an annual basis;***
- Support the promotion of places available in training courses for those sectors identified as experiencing existing and emerging shortages; and***
- Review the teaching of sustainability, climate change and green technologies as part of the Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy promised in the Net Zero Strategy and recently published in draft, with a view to ensuring that the skills needed to support the development of the green economy are established from an early stage. The commitments set out in the draft strategy are welcome but more concrete measures are needed to ensure skills development in the green economy is properly embedded in the education and training system. (Paragraph 51)***

Improving the collection, analysis and dissemination of labour market information to support decision making by actors across the skills system, including the Government and providers is a key priority for the Secretary of State for Education. DfE will produce better, more accessible information to assist learners and employers looking for valuable training and underpin a responsive skills system.

DfE plans to continue a regular cycle of Employer Skills Surveys. Among other topics, these will gather insight on employer skills needs and employer engagement with the education and skills system.

The Skills and Productivity Board (SPB) has been working on analysis to examine current skills mismatches at a granular level and is exploring using data to understand future shortages. All of the analysis and reports from the SPB will be published and available to the public in Spring 2022.

Building on this work and the advice of the SPB, the Department for Education will work with other Government departments to provide information on national and local skills needs. This will be used to assist learners and employers looking for valuable training and support a responsive skills system.

This includes establishing the Unit for Future Skills, which aims to transform how Government uses jobs and skills data to support a responsive training system that ensure that learners have the skills employers need and can get good, well-paying jobs. This Unit will be a key part in underpinning the broader Post-16 Education Reform agenda to expand the numbers of students and adults taking advanced technical courses in high-value subject areas. The core objective of the unit will be to bring together data from across government and make it publicly available to enable interrogation and open to multiple uses.

The Unit will build on the work of the Skills and Productivity Board (SPB) which has been working on analysis to examine current skills mismatches at a granular level and is exploring using data to understand future shortages. All the analysis and reports from the SPB will be published in Spring 2022. After this, the SPB remit will be subsumed within the unit and the board will be disbanded.

Each local area has its own distinctive strengths and different ways to capitalise on the opportunities created by greener growth, emerging technologies, and new global markets. DfE is also introducing Local Skills Improvement Plans that will be developed by local employer representative bodies, starting with eight trailblazer areas in 2021-22. These plans will set out priorities for change to make technical skills provision more responsive to current and future local labour market skills needs. This will help provide young people with the best chance of securing a good job locally.

As the Committee notes, DfE recently published a draft Sustainability and Climate Change strategy at COP26, which includes Climate Education and Green Skills and Careers as two of its five key Action Areas. Between now and final publication in April, DfE will be engaging with stakeholders across the education sector to build on the commitments of the draft strategy and to help ensure that the knowledge and skills needed for the green economy are embedded in education and training systems.

Government is committed to supporting green skills across the country and a crucial part of this is ensuring schools and further education providers have the best quality teachers and lecturers to teach the next generation workforce.

At the recent Spending Review, we set out investment of £3.8bn in further education and skills over the course of the Parliament as a whole, to ensure people can access high-quality training and education that leads to good jobs, addresses skills gaps, boosts productivity and supports levelling up. This includes funding for programmes to support

green skills crucial to the net zero transition.

In November 2020, we launched the Green Jobs Taskforce, working in partnership with business, local areas, skills providers, and unions, to ensure we have the skilled workforce to deliver net zero and our Ten Point Plan. Following that, and building on the Skills for Jobs White Paper, the Net Zero Strategy was published in October 2021 and set out how the Government's skills reforms will support teachers understanding of sustainability, strengthen links between employers and providers, support workers in high carbon sectors with the transition, and help to build a pipeline of future talent. Government is taking a number of steps to ensure the FE teacher workforce supports the transition to net zero.

We have worked with employers to develop a refreshed apprenticeship standard for further education teaching (Level 5 Learning and Skills Teacher), which came into effect in September 2021. For the first time, all further education teachers training via an apprenticeship will be required to integrate sustainability into their teaching, including through modelling sustainable practices and promoting sustainable development principles in relation to their subject specialism. This standard will in future underpin all publicly funded further education teacher training qualifications and programmes, so that all teachers across all subject areas will be able to embed and promote sustainability in their teaching.

The 'Teach in FE' service which launched in January this year, provides a new online service to raise awareness of FE teaching and encourage and support new teachers into the profession. It is supported by a campaign to bring potential teachers to the new service.

And our FE teacher training bursaries worth up to £26,000, are available to support those who want to train in a range of subjects including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM), and computing that can contribute to the expansion of green jobs

To support subject-specific professional development in STEM subjects across all key stages, the Government is funding 'Enthuse Bursaries', available to science teachers and technicians from English state-schools and colleges to attend residential Continuous Professional Development (CPD) at the National STEM Learning Centre in York. Delivered by STEM Learning and joint-funded with the Wellcome Trust, the bursaries provide access to CPD in order to improve the quality of science education in primary and secondary schools. The bursaries are targeted at those schools most in need, including those with poor levels of progress in science and low numbers of specialist science teachers. We are also offering a £24,000 tax-free bursary or a prestigious scholarship worth £26,000 tax-free for trainee teachers in chemistry, computing, mathematics, and physics.

Furthermore, Oak National Academy, an online classroom that has served millions of children throughout the pandemic, provides teachers and pupils with video lessons in a broad range of subjects from Reception up to Year 11. These lessons and accompanying resources include coverage of the environment, climate change and wider sustainability topics, in line with the National Curriculum requirements.

We are also working with industry, through programmes such as the Tomorrow's Engineers Code, to showcase the diversity of roles and people that make up the STEM sector, encouraging more young people from different backgrounds to choose a career in the sector.

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring that benefit claimants, including young claimants, are supported to upskill in preparation for employment. DWP Train and Progress provides Jobcentre Plus with a framework to support the consistent and robust identification and recording of skills information. This will enable work coaches to match claimants with the necessary skills to local vacancies and/or to refer those with skills needs to provision.

Through DWP Train and Progress, the length of time Universal Credit claimants across Great Britain can participate in full-time, work-focused training has been extended to 16 weeks; this includes Skills Bootcamps in England. This has opened up access to new courses for claimants to gain the skills that employers value locally.

The Government acknowledges the importance of looking at emerging and growth sectors, such as the green economy. Green Skills Bootcamps include Net Zero Retrofit, Agri Tech Woodland Management, Green Transport and Logistics and Solar Energy Decision Software. DWP also supports people into green jobs through work coach interventions and targeted provision including Kickstart and Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs). This is an increasingly important referral routeway for claimants who will benefit from traineeships, apprenticeships, and other skills provision funded by DfE and the Devolved Administrations to enter employment and progress in their careers. This will ensure jobseekers are able to develop skills to match the needs of the local labour market.

Taken together, and alongside the wider suite of reforms to the skills system being implemented by government in partnership with industry, these measures will help to ensure more people can get the skills they need to enter and progress within green jobs.

Recommendations 4 & 5

4. Digital skills are crucial to the life chances of young people both now and in future and are constantly changing. It should not be assumed that young people necessarily have ‘digital confidence’ even if they have some digital skills; skills and knowledge vary considerably among young people, as does access to technology. No young person should be left behind, and all should have the opportunity to continue to learn and develop digital skills throughout their lives to ensure they can fulfil their aspirations and be prepared for the workplace of the future in the “science and technology superpower” that the Government is seeking to create. This will require a step change in provision both in educational settings and in wider society. The minimum expectation should be that all students who leave school and college at 18 should have the necessary digital skills to succeed in the modern workplace. (Paragraph 52)

5. The Government must therefore urgently introduce a package of measures to significantly strengthen the teaching of digital skills at all ages and stages. This package should include:

- Embedding digital skills as a core component of schooling from primary age, both within the national curriculum and within schools that are not bound by it. Digital skills should also be included within Ofsted’s framework for evaluating young people’s readiness for work. No more than two years from now, from the age of 11, all students must study computing as a distinct subject for a minimum duration each week. Provision must then increase in their second and third years of secondary school and continue up to the age of 16. This expectation should be set for all schools, regardless of their adherence to the national curriculum.**
- Digital provision should also be enabled in other parts of the national curriculum, to ensure an all-round development of digital skills, and similar expectations should again be set for schools that are not bound by the national curriculum. The nature of digital skills is, of course, constantly changing and so specifications must be frequently reviewed to take account of this.**
- Including digital skills as an essential component of all accredited teacher training programmes. These programmes must be constantly updated to reflect changing needs. They must also be designed to ensure they help relieve capacity constraints that limit schools’ ability to fulfil expectations in relation to digital skills teaching; and**
- Increasing incentives, including financial incentives such as bursaries and salary uplifts, to identify, recruit and retain more qualified computer science teachers, including encouraging working professionals into teaching.**
(Paragraph 53)

Computing is a compulsory subject within the National Curriculum (NC) following its introduction in 2014 (across all key stages, excluding post 16). It is a foundation subject and Local Authority-maintained schools must teach it until Key Stage 4. Academies and Free Schools are free to design their own curriculums, however they may use the NC as an

exemplar. All state schools (including academies and free schools) must offer a school curriculum which is broad and balanced, to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of later life.

The new computing curriculum, which replaced the outdated ICT curriculum in 2014, is not overly prescriptive and is designed to reduce the risk that the content will become outdated given the speed of innovation in the field of digital skills and technology. The curriculum content includes computational thinking, understanding how computers work and connect with each other, algorithms, and programming. It also incorporates the use of digital media and ICT (basic networks and security).

E-safety is embedded into the computing curriculum up to Key Stage 4. From early primary, children are taught how to use technology safely, respectfully, and responsibly, recognise acceptable and unacceptable content and identify a range of ways to report concerns. This goes through all the way to age 16 when they are taught how changes in technology affect their safety, and new ways to protect their online privacy and identity. Schools may also choose to teach digital literacy to their pupils, as part of a whole-school approach as some do with online safety. The Department for Education published non-statutory guidance in November 2021, teaching a broad and balanced curriculum for education recovery, which outlined how schools should prioritise teaching digital literacy to their pupils through the computing curriculum.

The Department for Education accredits individual providers to offer Initial Teacher Training (ITT) leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), rather than individual programmes. Since September 2020, all courses offered by accredited ITT providers has been aligned to a mandatory core content framework, which was published in November 2019. The framework sets out a minimum entitlement for all trainee teachers. However, the CCF is not a curriculum and ITT providers are free to decide whether they wish to incorporate digital content onto their courses. Providers are accountable to Ofsted regarding the quality of their ITT, and Ofsted's new ITT inspection handbook, published September 2020, encourages the use of innovation where it enhances the quality of education and training.

This Government wants every child in England to receive a world-class computing education. That is why the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) was created, backed by £84m of Government funding, to improve computing teachers' subject knowledge and build confidence.

34 Computing Hubs across England deliver the Computer Science Accelerator Programme, which supports teachers to gain increased confidence in teaching the computing curriculum. This provides a highly personalised professional development programme to assist, identify and remedy any gaps in teachers' subject knowledge. In addition, certification is available for all teachers of computing from primary through to KS4.

At post-16 DfE is introducing T Levels as a new, high quality technical offer. Three T Level subjects in Digital are now being taught; Digital Production, Design and Development, Digital Support Services and Digital Business Services. Digital content is also embedded in subject content for T Levels, where appropriate.

Comprehensive support is delivered to teachers and students in England for AS/A Level computer science through the Isaac Computer Science platform. This includes online

activities/workshops and affordable resources for students, in partnership with leading computer science departments in universities. Teachers have reported time savings of up to 3 hours teaching per week.

The Government has put in place a range of measures, including bursaries worth £24,000 tax-free and scholarships worth £26,000 tax-free, to encourage potential teachers to train to teach computing. These incentives are available to career changers as well as more recent graduates completing ITT courses.

Additionally, the Government Levelling Up Premium has been announced – worth up to £3,000 tax-free for computing teachers in years 1 to 5 of their careers. This will support recruitment and retention of specialist teachers in these subjects and in the schools and areas that need them most.

In all subjects – including computing – Ofsted would expect a school's curriculum to be planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and towards clearly defined end points. Schools will be evaluated on the ambition of those end points, as well as the wider quality of education.

We are also directly supporting training for adults to provide the essential digital skills needed for life, work and further study. Our digital skills reforms alongside the introduction of the digital entitlement in August 2020, underpinned by primary legislation, mean that adults with low digital skills can study high quality Essential Digital Skills qualifications for free, and from August 2023, reformed digital Functional Skills qualifications.

Digital qualifications are also a key focus of our new adult provision as part of the National Skills Fund. This includes numerous digital courses under the Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs offer and as part of Skills Boot camps, with a number of Digital Skills Boot camps across the country. Provision under both these programmes is wide, covering a multitude of different roles including Cyber Technician, Data Engineer, Coding and Software Development.

DWP is working closely with DCMS & DfE to understand and address barriers to entry and progression in high demand digital jobs. Barriers can include applicants not having the right skills and confusion over how to engage with the digital skills provision landscape. The Government is also aware that some groups feel the sector is 'not for them'. DWP continues to work closely with employers and training providers, including Amazon Web Services, Code Your Future and Google to identify and maximise training opportunities that lead to jobs for claimants. For example, DWP is currently working in partnership with Google to offer DWP customers 9,000 Google Certificate Scholarships. These offer online learning focused on the skills of shortage areas, such as data analytics or UX design, and are particularly focused on attracting under-represented groups to the sector such as women, ethnic minority communities and older workers. The certificate does not require any previous experience or qualifications and is recognised by industry experts and employers.

Recommendation 6

6. The Government must publish its plans to continue support for closing the digital divide, including a long-term strategy for access to technology and connectivity for the most deprived young people. This should include:

- A long-term programme to fund free connectivity (data and Wi-Fi) and physical access to technology (laptops and monitors) for young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds;***
- Plans to make relevant provision to ensure that educational resources and websites are available to all young people regardless of data connectivity or broadband accessibility; and***
- A requirement that all secondary school students have access to a laptop, desktop or tablet and a broadband connection, and that any necessary measures to support this requirement should be introduced as soon as possible. (Paragraph 54)***

COVID-19 crystalised awareness of the digital divide in education. The Department for Education has announced that they will this year provide an additional 500,000 devices for disadvantaged children and young people, on top of the 1.35m delivered already. This brings the Government's total investment to support remote education and social care to over £520m, as well as delivering a high-quality computing curriculum and helping adults develop digital skills for work.

DfE has previously announced funding to support schools and colleges in providing internet access for disadvantaged pupils whose face-to-face education is disrupted which remains available. The ordering of 4G routers for schools and colleges has also been enabled.

Devices are owned by the institutions they were allocated to. They are responsible for maintaining the devices and ensuring they are put to good use, and they may have valid reasons for restricting their devices to onsite use when face-to-face education is not disrupted. DfE are supporting schools to move to an effective and sustainable use of their device allocation through free peer to peer support from the EdTech Demonstrators Network.

DfE are looking at what a technology-enabled education system could look like following the leap forward in the use of technology by schools and colleges during the pandemic – and will continue to work with stakeholders and across Government to ensure plans consider the needs of all learners. This will include supporting schools to help children have access to devices and to get online for access to resources at school.

DfE will evaluate the impact of the “Get Help with Technology” intervention and take this into account when developing its future policies on digital inclusion and use of technology in education and children's social care.

DfE may need to prioritise its interventions and will take an evidence-based and user-centred approach in collaboration with the sector and with industry. The Committee's recommendation will be taken into account as the department develops its approach.

In September 2021, the Government body, the Inclusive Economy Partnership (IEP), partnered with industry leaders to launch the Digital Inclusion Impact Group to tackle digital exclusion. One of the pilot programmes is Dell Donate to Educate, which will support children across England with the right access to technology at school and at home. DCMS's Digital Lifeline fund provided tablets, data and free digital support to over 5,000 people with learning disabilities who would otherwise find it difficult to get online.

Working closely with Ofcom and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), DWP has engaged with internet service providers (ISPs) to encourage the sector to introduce voluntary, social tariffs for low-income households⁵. Following engagement, BT, Virgin Media, Hyperoptic, Community Fibre and KCOM have launched new social tariffs, providing superfast speeds and unlimited data at a more affordable price for those on Universal Credit as well as other, legacy, means-tested benefits such as Pension Credit, Income support, Housing Benefit, and Income-related Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA). These discounted tariffs are available to eligible households in 99% of the UK. This is a significant improvement as social tariffs have previously (before the end of 2020) been available to out of work claimants only. DCMS continues to work with other providers to encourage them to consider how to support those struggling with their bills.

Public libraries are a vital component in providing access to the internet. There are around 2,900 public libraries in England providing a trusted network of safe and accessible locations offering free Wi-Fi, computers, and other technology, enabling people who are not connected at home to access the internet. Even during lockdowns, public libraries had exceptions to allow people to use their public PCs to access critical services. This kit and connectivity is heavily used by jobseekers to make applications, and can be complemented by other employability initiatives run via libraries, such as job clubs and cv writing sessions.

Library staff, often supported by volunteers, can provide library users with digital support, to build skills and confidence. A local public library can help users get started and be confident to be online. They can also help build higher level digital skills via access to code clubs, free access to digital academy courses, etc. Some have makerspaces with free or affordable equipment such as 3D printers, etc which can be used to build skills to boost employability, or by budding entrepreneurs, eg to prototype product ideas. Many library services operate schemes to loan out tablets, etc, to extend the benefits of digital to more people.

⁵ [Affordability of Communications Services: Summary of research findings](#)

Recommendations 7 & 8

7. While there is uncertainty around how to properly define and measure skills development, young people, school leaders and employers agree that young people do not have the essential skills needed for work by the time they leave the school gates. The national curriculum does not clearly set out which skills should be prioritised, and how school leaders can best develop them within existing subjects. We are particularly concerned that this may disadvantage young people who do not have access to extracurricular activities. While this lack of skills is a barrier to them securing their first job, it also presents a further concern for the future economy. In an age of technology, these interpersonal, human-level skills will become more highly valued as they are less able to be replicated by advanced technologies. (Paragraph 63)

8. It is essential that the skills expected to be developed from Key Stages 1 to 4 are reflected both in the design of the national curriculum and in the standards set for all schools, including those not required to follow the national curriculum but who are still required to provide a 'broad and balanced' curriculum. (Paragraph 64)

The national curriculum, which focuses on the key knowledge that schools should teach, should enable children to acquire a secure understanding of key concepts and provide them with the understanding they need to participate fully in society. Maintained schools in England are legally required to follow the national curriculum, whilst academies and free schools have greater curricular freedom and autonomy. They are expected to teach a curriculum that is comparable in breadth and ambition to the national curriculum, and many choose to teach the full national curriculum to achieve this.

In addition, 16-19 funding enables students to participate in either a study programmes, which include qualifications (such as A Levels or technical qualifications) with other extracurricular activities, for example tutorials or work experience; or a T level, which includes a technical qualification (specialism), other activities such as employment, enrichment and pastoral and an industrial placement. Study programmes and T levels are designed to enable students to progress to employment; an apprenticeship; or further study including higher education.

Under Ofsted's recently revised inspection framework there is a strong emphasis on schools providing a broad, balanced, and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, as exemplified by the national curriculum. Inspectors will look to see that the school's curriculum helps to provide pupils with the knowledge and skills they need in order to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. As well as assessing the quality of education provided for pupils, inspectors also evaluate the school's support for pupils' personal development, and within that, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

Recommendation 9

9. The Government must undertake a review of the citizenship course in all secondary schools and colleges in England to ascertain whether provision is sufficient to set young people up with the life skills to become active, informed citizens. (Paragraph 65)

The DfE wants all children to leave school with the knowledge, skills, and values that will prepare them to be citizens in modern Britain. There are no current plans to review the citizenship curriculum which has been designed to prepare pupils to play a full and active part in society, and is organised around core knowledge about democracy, government, how laws are made and upheld, the need for mutual respect and essential life skills to prepare pupils for adulthood.

Within citizenship, pupils will learn about Parliament, the importance of voting and elections; the role of police, courts and justice; free press, human rights and international law; and the governments of other countries. Active citizenship is also a key concept that underpins the citizenship programme and includes opportunities for pupils to undertake school and community-based volunteering, encouraging young people to come together to tackle the local issues they care about within school and in the wider community. Citizenship teaching should equip pupils to explore political and social issues critically, to weigh evidence, to debate, and to make reasoned arguments.

Economic and financial education form important aspects of a broad and balanced curriculum and provide the essential knowledge to ensure that young people are prepared to manage their money well, make sound financial decisions and know where to seek further information when needed. Financial education is covered within both the citizenship and the mathematics curricula. The statutory primary mathematics curriculum has a strong emphasis on essential knowledge and understanding of arithmetic concepts; and the statutory secondary citizenship curriculum covers the importance and practice of budgeting, managing risk; and important concepts related to credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions.

DfE does not specify how schools should teach the curriculum; the citizenship programme of study⁶ in the national curriculum is a framework setting out the content of what the department expects schools to cover in each subject. The curriculum does not set out how curriculum subjects, or topics within the subjects, should be taught. DfE trusts schools to use their professional judgement and understanding of their pupils to develop the right teaching approach for their particular setting, drawing on the expertise and support of subject associations and other organisations that produce and quality assure resources.

There is a wide range of support available – for instance, The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS), a Department for Work and Pensions' sponsored arm's length body, recently published financial education guidance⁷ for primary and secondary schools in England, to support school leaders and education decision makers to enhance the financial education currently delivered in their schools. The guidance points to a range of financial education

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-citizenship-programmes-of-study>

⁷ <https://maps.org.uk/2021/11/11/financial-education-guidance-for-primary-and-secondary-schools-in-england/>

services and resources to help schools, including those targeted at children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities.

Recommendation 10

10. The Government must more effectively promote avenues for developing skills outside mandatory education, including extracurricular activities and voluntary work. These activities must be accessible to all so that disadvantaged young people do not miss out. (Paragraph 66)

The government recognises the importance of out-of-school activities in promoting the development of young people. DCMS is responsible for out of school youth provision and is focussed on two core aims: to develop young people's skills for work and life; and to support their mental and physical health and wellbeing. As part of the 2020 Spending Review, HMT announced a Youth Review which concluded in May. The Youth Review set out to ensure that DCMS' longer-term spending and programmes achieve maximum benefit, meet the changing needs of young people, and level-up opportunities across the country.

Grounded in the findings from the Youth Review, DCMS is investing £560 million in the new National Youth Guarantee, announced in the Levelling up White Paper, so that every young person in England will have access to regular clubs and activities, adventures away from home, and volunteering opportunities by 2025. This will transform the government's offer for young people, level up opportunities right across the country and ensure every young person, no matter where they're from, gets the best start in life.

- £368 million of our investment has been dedicated to the Youth Investment Fund, which will provide up to 300 new or redeveloped youth facilities in deprived areas across the country, plus an additional £10 million in the current financial year.
- £171 million for the National Citizen Service (NCS) to provide a year-round offer that supports young people's wellbeing and helps them to develop life skills that improve their confidence and employability. NCS is open to all young people, no matter their background or life circumstances, and enabling social mixing is core to its strategy and to deliver social cohesion. Young people who are eligible for free school meals and who are living in Opportunity Areas are overrepresented on the NCS programme, as are those from BAME communities and those who have special educational needs or disabilities. The NCS programme has shown to have a greater positive impact on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
- The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, non-military uniformed youth groups and the #iwill Fund will receive £22 million:
 - It will allow the DofE Award to be offered to every secondary state school in England for the first time. It will particularly benefit schools in deprived communities that may have previously faced barriers to taking part.
 - Uniformed youth groups such as Scouts and Guides will also be able to tackle waiting lists so teenagers are no longer turned away, creating thousands of more spots with the help of more adult volunteers.
 - The #iwill Fund will be able to continue getting young people involved in social action projects, which is expected to trigger tens of thousands of new volunteering opportunities. One of the investment drivers which underpins the #iwill Fund is a focus on reaching young people from less socio-economically affluent communities. Participation in social action gives young people vital

skills for life and work and has a positive impact on local communities, which is why Government has committed to providing further youth social action opportunities through this investment in the #iwill Fund.

DfE is already working closely with NCS on the delivery of the Skills Booster programme, offering non-academic support to schools, colleges, and other educational institutions and content focused on skill development, citizenship, and social action. Almost 400 schools have been helped by the programme and the initiative has reached over 60 000 young people since 2020". DfE will strengthen the links with NCS and explore how it can plan an active role in expanding participation and engagement in NCS.

The Government recognises that education settings have a key role to play in providing children and young people with access to high quality and varied extra-curricular activities. DfE acknowledges that these can provide additional opportunities for development of skills and knowledge and, in the context of the pandemic, have a positive impact on education and social recovery and will be particularly important for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

This is why DfE has:

- Expanded the Duke of Edinburgh scheme to expand into more deprived areas, therefore reaching more children and ensuring an equality of opportunities.
- Funded a Cadets programme in schools, FE colleges and academies. Cadet units can improve young people's life chances and prepare them for the challenges and responsibilities of employment and adult life.
- Prioritised supporting children and young people's wellbeing over the summer holidays, by putting £200m into Summer Schools, giving secondary pupils access to enrichment activities, such as games, music, drama and sports that they have missed out on over the pandemic.
- Invested up to £220m in the Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has now been expanded across England.
- Updated the pupil premium guidance; allowing schools to use their pupil premium grant to offer a flexible, broad range of extracurricular activities.
- Invested £1.6bn in primary PE and sport since 2013 through the PE and Sport Premium and taken a range of actions with DCMS and DHSC to deliver on the School Sport and Activity Action Plan, which we will be updating in 2022.
- Worked to deliver on the nearly £30 million announced in October 2021 towards improving and opening up school sport facilities in England, as well as to improve the teaching of physical education at primary school.
- Funded £320 million Primary PE and sport premium, which continues for the 2021/22 academic year.
- Ensured active citizenship is at the heart of the national curriculum for citizenship. This includes opportunities to participate in school-based activities, community volunteering, as well as other forms of responsible activity.

Given their importance in enriching life skills, DfE will continue to keep support for extra-curricular and voluntary activities under review.

Recommendations 11, 12 & 13

11. We are concerned at the Government's approach to educational priorities for young people in the context of persistently high youth unemployment. We heard a considerable amount of evidence indicating that, while the national curriculum plays an important role in guaranteeing minimum common provision and rigorous standards, it is too narrowly focused to ensure that it prepares all young people for the modern labour market and the essential, technical and creative skills it requires, in particular for the creative, green and digital sectors. These views were shared by employers and young people alike. (Paragraph 82)

12. The current specifications of the English Baccalaureate and Progress 8 also result in a narrowing of focus which further inhibits skills development: we heard overwhelming evidence that the expectation to teach eight basic academic subjects and to judge schools on this requirement has led to a significant decline in the teaching of creative and technical subjects. (Paragraph 83)

13. As a Committee, we hold differing views on the current composition of the national curriculum but are agreed that some basic reforms are needed as soon as possible that enable the development of a broader range of skills through the education system, without detracting from the core subjects. (Paragraph 84)

The national curriculum focuses on the essential knowledge which pupils should be taught; this encompasses both 'knowledge and skills'. The published programmes of study for national curriculum subjects demonstrate how knowledge and skills are intertwined by outlining examples of both knowledge and the 'skills, matters and processes' that are to be taught at each key stage.

We have reformed the national curriculum to set world-class standards across all subjects, to ensure the best that has been thought and said is delivered to pupils. The programmes of study as outlined by the 2014 reforms are flexible enough for teachers to be able to plan their own lessons, which enables them to adapt to take account of new developments, societal changes, or topical issues, usually without there being a need for us to review the national curriculum. This includes the flexibility for teachers to incorporate activities into each subject that may focus on a particular skill for their pupils' needs. As such, there are no plans to change the curriculum framework for England.

Unpicking knowledge and skills as separate entities does not reflect the large body of evidence that shows fluency of knowledge acts as the building block for the development of skills. Teachers can use their professional judgement to decide how best to ensure that their pupils develop skills, as part of a broad and balanced school curriculum which encompasses, but is not limited by, the national curriculum.

Recommendation 14

14. It is right that core components of the national curriculum such as English, maths and the sciences remain central to the education system and are measured rigorously; we are agreed that computing is an especially important part of this. However, it is clear that providers feel restricted in their flexibility to offer additional subjects that can provide their students with a broad and balanced curriculum. It is inappropriate for providers to be constrained in this way. (Paragraph 85)

The school curriculum comprises all learning and other experiences that each school provides for its pupils. Maintained schools in England are legally required to follow the statutory [national curriculum](#)⁸ which sets out in programmes of study, on the basis of key stages, subject content for those subjects that should be taught to all pupils. All state schools must publish their school curriculum by subject and academic year online.

In addition to meeting their statutory duties, schools are also free to include other subjects or topics they deem relevant for their pupils, as part of the school's wider curriculum: The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term, and year to go beyond the national curriculum specifications, which provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum.

The Government agrees that English, maths and the sciences and computing are central to the education system, which is why they remain statutory in the national curriculum from Key Stages 1 to 4.

At Key Stage 4, it is important to remove the barriers to success and ensure that all young people are given similar opportunities in the qualifications that they study, regardless of their background. An important part of this is ensuring that most young people study a core of academic subjects at GCSE set out in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) suite of subjects.

These GCSE subjects – made up of English, maths, the sciences (including computer science), history or geography, and a language – are considered essential for many degrees and open lots of doors. They provide a sound basis for a variety of careers beyond the age of 16. They can also enrich pupils' studies and give them a broad general knowledge that will enable them to participate in and contribute to society.

Studying the EBacc subjects up to the age of 16 is right for most pupils, which is why the Government's ambition is for 90% of Year 10 pupils to study these GCSEs by 2025 (examination in 2027). There will be a small minority of pupils for whom taking all the EBacc subjects at GCSE will not be appropriate, and it will be for schools to decide which pupils will not be entered for the EBacc.

The five subject pillars of the EBacc are designed to be limited in size to allow pupils time to study other subjects, including other GCSEs and Technical Awards.

⁸ [National curriculum in England: framework for key stages 1 to 4 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The wider suite of headline secondary school accountability measures are designed to encourage schools to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, with a focus on a strong academic core. Two of these measures, Progress 8 and Attainment 8, allow scope for pupils to pursue their personal interests, by counting up to three further “open” subjects, alongside English and maths and three other EBacc subjects. These “open” subjects can be GCSE qualifications (including additional EBacc subjects) or Technical Awards from the DfE approved list.

Ofsted’s education inspection framework has a strong emphasis on schools providing a broad, balanced, and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, as exemplified by the national curriculum.

Recommendation 15

15. The Government must therefore reform progress indicators so that schools that wish to focus on courses of practical, technical, cultural, business and work-related skills alongside the core are able to do so without being downgraded on Government performance measures. This would not involve a removal of any key subjects, but rather a refocusing on those which are essential to a good education, increasing school autonomy beyond this and therefore facilitating the development of a wider range of skills. (Paragraph 86)

The headline key stage 4 progress measure, Progress 8, is designed to encourage schools to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, with a focus on a strong academic core. It also allows scope for pupils to pursue their personal interests, by counting up to three further “open” subjects, alongside English and maths and three other EBacc subjects. These “open” subjects can be GCSE qualifications (including additional EBacc subjects) or Technical Awards from the DfE approved list.

Technical Awards are broad, high-quality level 1 and level 2 qualifications in non-EBacc subjects. They are intended to equip 14-to-16-year-olds with applied knowledge not usually acquired through general qualifications (for example GCSEs). They are intended to focus on a sector or occupational group and enable the development of knowledge as well as associated practical skills where appropriate, but they are not intended to focus on any specific occupation.

DfE keep the suite of headline secondary school performance measures under review, as part of ongoing work on school accountability measures, to ensure they continue to encourage schools to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, with a focus on a strong academic core, whilst retaining flexibility for schools to offer additional, high value qualifications as they consider appropriate.

Recommendation 16

16. The Government must similarly recalibrate the compulsory components of the national curriculum, taking into account its capacity to deliver essential skills alongside technical, cultural, creative and professional subjects outside its scope. Skills development and the tackling of skills shortages should be central to curriculum development and associated performance measurements. In each of these cases, the Government must keep requirements under constant review to ensure they are meeting needs for existing and emerging skills. For example, we suggest that schools might use either Progress 8 or a new Progress 5 as an alternative (see figure 15). (Paragraph 87)

The Government wants pupils to leave school prepared, in the widest sense, for adult life. Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The national curriculum should enable children to acquire a secure understanding of the key concepts and provide them with the understanding they need to participate fully in society. DfE has reformed the curriculum and qualifications so that they match standards set in the highest performing jurisdictions internationally.

Increasing the number of young people that study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects is important if the Government is to address the STEM skills shortage and support the UK economy and its growth. To ensure a strong pipeline of qualified students into STEM careers, the Department for Education has committed substantial spending on mathematics, digital and technical education to increase take-up and better teaching of STEM subjects in schools

Mathematics has a critical role to play in the future of the UK economy, with mathematical and quantitative skills being important for a wide range of careers. The 2014 mathematics curriculum focuses on building firm foundations and is benchmarked against expectations in high performing jurisdictions. It sets out the learning needed to enable pupils to become fluent in the fundamentals of maths, reason mathematically and apply maths to solve problems. DfE are also continuing to support and enhance mathematics teaching, including for example through a national network of 40 school-led Maths Hubs which are helping local schools improve the quality of their mathematics teaching based on best practice.

Now, more than ever, digital skills are essential to supporting a successful economy. By investing in digital education, The Government is building a diverse pipeline of talent for the future. DfE replaced the outdated ICT curriculum with a new computing curriculum in 2014, which is not overly prescriptive and has been designed to reduce the risk that the content will become outdated given the speed of innovation in the field of digital skills and technology. DfE created the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE), backed by £84m of Government funding, to improve computing teachers' subject knowledge and build confidence. The NCCE has established 34 computing hubs across England, that are championing computer science, providing face to face and remote delivery of CPD and localised support to schools.

As part of ongoing work on school accountability measures, DfE keep the suite of headline secondary school performance measures under review, to ensure they continue to

encourage schools to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, with a focus on a strong academic core. Two of these measures, Progress 8 and Attainment 8, allow scope for pupils to pursue their personal interests, by counting up to three further “open” subjects, alongside English and maths and three EBacc subjects. These “open” subjects can be GCSE qualifications (including additional EBacc subjects) or Technical Awards from the DfE approved list.

Recommendations 17 & 18

17. The rapid transition of the UK economy and the demands this will place on the workforce means there will be a greater need for provision for reskilling and upskilling. Putting initiatives in place to address this need should be seen as a positive endeavour, driven by the aspirations of young people to have fulfilling careers in the jobs of the future, as well as to help address skills gaps and shortages that are already known to exist. (Paragraph 97)

18. The Government must expand the Lifetime Skills Guarantee so that it supports qualifications below level 3, without which some young people may not be able to access the opportunities made available by the Guarantee. The Guarantee must be widened to include a right to a fully funded additional level 3 qualification where a person already has one, in order to take account of the changing needs of the economy. This should form part of a new statutory right for people to be able to upskill and retrain throughout their lives through access to affordable and relevant lifelong learning opportunities. This would give the Lifetime Skills Guarantee real meaning. (Paragraph 98)

Through the Adult Education Budget (AEB), the Department for Education provide full funding for adult learners aged 19 and over who need English and maths skills to undertake a range of courses in GCSEs, Functional Skills, and other relevant qualifications from entry level to level 2. Learners aged 19-23 are also eligible for a fully funded first full Level 2 and/or first full Level 3 qualification.

And from August 2020, DfE introduced a new digital entitlement for adults with no or low digital skills to undertake new improved digital qualifications, up to Level 1, free of charge. These are based on new employer supported national standards which set out the digital skills people need to get on in life and work.

The Free Courses for Jobs offer, which was launched in April 2021, gives eligible adults the chance to access their first Level 3 qualifications for free. From April 2022, DfE is expanding eligibility for the Free Courses for Jobs offer so that any adult in England who is earning under the National Living Wage or is unemployed will also be able to access these Level 3 qualifications for free, regardless of their prior qualification level. The existing cohort – i.e. those without a Level 3 qualification – will still be eligible.

Recommendation 19

19. The Government must also move to alleviate financial and debt burdens on young people taking level 4 and 5 qualifications, especially where these qualifications are helping to address critical skills shortages and boost productivity. This should include reviewing the fee regime for such qualifications and linking any such reassessment to wider assessments of skills shortages discussed earlier. A grant regime for disadvantaged students should also be considered. The Government must also undertake a wider study of barriers to level 4 and 5 take up and how they can be addressed. (Paragraph 99)

The Government is committed to growing the provision and uptake of high-quality level 4/5 provision. Higher technical education (HTE) which makes up most classroom-based level 4 and 5 provision can lead to high skilled, highly paid jobs and offers an attractive alternative to the traditional 3-year degree. However, too few people are currently getting the opportunities HTE can offer, and employers are struggling to get the higher technical skills they need.⁹

The programme of reforms to HTE published in July 2020 – which were informed by a review of the level 4 and 5 market - will help to ensure that there are more high-quality higher technical courses for learners at level 4 and 5.¹⁰ Central to these reforms is the introduction of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), qualifications approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to deliver the skills employers need.¹¹

On 24 February we announced that we are addressing financial barriers for learners by putting the student finance package for HTQs on a par with degrees. From academic year 2023/24 we will be extending student finance access for these qualifications¹² and allowing learners studying them part time to access maintenance loans, as they can with degrees, delivering on the PM's commitments in his skills speech.¹³ The latter change will help learners fit study around work and other commitments, allowing more people to upskill and retrain throughout their lives, moving towards the flexibility envisaged by the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (set out below).

Furthermore, since January 2022, HTQs have featured as part of a new cross-government communications campaign aimed at raising awareness and prestige around technical education options, and ultimately driving uptake among our key learner audiences.¹⁴ DfE are also improving the availability of information, advice and guidance for learners and employers as part of efforts to raise the profile and prestige of level 4 and 5 qualifications.

As part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) will be introduced from 2025, providing individuals with a loan entitlement to the equivalent of four

⁹ [Employer Skills Survey 2019](#) (DfE 2020).

¹⁰ [Higher technical education government response, July 2020](#).

¹¹ We launched a [prestigious endorsement brand \('the quality mark'\)](#) for HTQs in summer 2021.

¹² This extension will cover those qualifications not already eligible for HE student finance, and HTQs will need to be a minimum of one academic year in length to qualify for funding (in the same way as other designated qualifications).

¹³ [PM's skills speech: 29 September 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁴ DfE are also supporting providers. In summer 2021 we launched the Provider Growth Fund, an £18m investment that will ensure more people can gain high level skills in sectors of the economy the country needs to thrive. On 24 February we announced that we are providing a further iteration of the Growth Fund (details to be announced in due course).

years of post-18 education to use over their lifetime. It will be available for both modules and full years of study at higher technical and degree levels (levels 4 to 6), regardless of whether they are provided in colleges or universities.

Also, under the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, Skills Bootcamps offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, at levels 3-5. They are co-designed with employers to respond to skill shortages, and give people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer.

In November 2021 the Department for Education issued new guidance to the Office for Students (OfS) on the future of access and participation. The Government has tasked the OfS to rewrite their national targets and renegotiate access and participations plans with providers. The department considers it important that providers set themselves ambitious, measurable targets to significantly increase the proportion of students on higher and degree apprenticeships, Level 4 and 5 courses and part time study.

In addition to this, an investment of up to £75 million in a National Scholarship Scheme will support high achieving disadvantaged students to reach their full potential aiming to alleviate financial concerns, widen provider and programme choice, and allow students to focus their time on their studies, rather than part-time employment. We are consulting on how the eligibility for a national scholarship scheme should be set.

Finally, apprenticeships are another route by which young people can train at levels 4 and 5, with over 140 high-quality apprenticeship standards at these levels¹⁵. Individuals benefit from fully funded apprenticeships training and assessment, and from earning whilst they are learning.

¹⁵ [Apprenticeship standards / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#)

Recommendation 20

20. The Government must extend the period a young person can claim Universal Credit (UC) whilst enrolled in a full-time education or skills programme in order to avoid disincentivising take up of reskilling and upskilling opportunities among young people claiming UC. (Paragraph 100)

The Government recognises the importance of supporting young people to improve their skills. Under current regulations support for those in full-time study or training comes from the system of student loans and grants designed to meet their specific needs. Universal Credit does not – and is not intended to – duplicate this support, meaning that students in full-time education cannot normally satisfy the entitlement conditions.

There are exceptional circumstances where a Universal Credit claim could be made by a full-time student. These circumstances are outlined on gov.uk¹⁶ and include those who are living with a partner who is eligible for Universal Credit, those responsible for a child (as a single person or as a couple) and those who are disabled and entitled to certain benefits. The rules broadly mirror those in the legacy means-tested benefits.

Universal Credit claimants are able to take on part-time training for any level of course as long as they meet their work-related requirements, and their work coach is satisfied it will fill a skills gap and will improve their prospects of moving into work more quickly. Where this is the case, time spent on the course can be deducted from the hours the claimant is expected to carry out work search activity. There is no limit on the length of part-time training claimants can undertake, in agreement with their work coach.

Where claimants are taking part in education/training (other than an apprenticeship), they will still be asked to fulfil all the usual conditionality requirements. Their priority goal – whilst claiming Universal Credit – is to find work, more work or increase their earnings. Any possible adjustments to the work-related requirements will need to be agreed between a claimant and their work coach and accepted as part of their Claimant Commitment.

Through the DWP Train and Progress policy initiative the Government has extended the period for which Universal Credit claimants in the All Work Related Requirements regime can undertake full-time work-related training from 8 to 16 weeks across Great Britain. The Government has recently announced¹⁷ that this additional training flexibility will be extended until April 2023, to enable claimants, with agreement from their work coach, to enhance their existing skills or gain new skills that employers need.

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-and-students>

¹⁷ [Written statement - 22nd February 2022 - Expansion of DWP Train and Progress](#)

Recommendation 21

21. The Government must extend incentives and support mechanisms to promote a higher level of employer retraining of existing employees. This should include consideration of training tax credits for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and other options to support small businesses with reskilling and retraining. (Paragraph 101)

The Government notes the suggestion for training tax credits for SMEs. The Government regularly receives proposals for tax reliefs, and keeps all tax policy under review. Over the Parliament, the Government is spending an additional £3.8bn on skills by 2024-25, equivalent to a cash increase of 42% compared to 2019-20. This funding boosts opportunities for adults to upskill and retrain and increases the funding available for apprenticeships. Adults across the whole of the UK can also benefit from the Multiply programme, worth £560 million across the SR period, which will give people the opportunity to develop their numeracy skills. We have also given employers the flexibility to use apprenticeships to re-train or upskill their existing employees, as well as to recruit and train new employees. Government is increasing funding for apprenticeships to £2.7 billion by 2024-25; this funding will support apprenticeships in non-levy paying employers, often SMEs, where the government will continue to pay 95% of training costs.

Recommendation 22

22. The Government must undertake a fuller review of the decline of workplace training in recent decades, the underlying causes of this, and what steps need to be taken to remedy this, with a particular focus on employer incentives. This should include an assessment of the role of SMEs in retraining and upskilling the workforce, and how their potential can be fully realised. (Paragraph 102)

Whilst the professional development and training of employees is a matter for individual employers, the Government is committed to supporting employers to equip staff with the skills they need.

Through apprenticeships, employers of all sizes are being supported to equip their staff with the skills they need now and in the future. Apprenticeship's funding will grow to £2.7 billion by the 2024-25 financial year. Apprenticeships are a great way for employers in all sectors to upskill or retrain existing employees at all levels of their organisations, as well as to support new employees including those starting out in their careers. Skills Bootcamps offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. For employers wanting to train their own employees through Skills Bootcamps, the Government funds 70% of the cost.

Complementing this, the Free Courses for Jobs offer, which was launched in April 2021, gives eligible adults the chance to access their first Level 3 qualifications for free. Employers can encourage their staff to take up courses available under this offer to upskill and access new opportunities in their current place of work. In addition, from April next year, any adult in England earning under the National Living Wage annually or unemployed, will also be able to access these qualifications for free, regardless of their prior qualification level.

Finally, T Levels have been developed in conjunction with employers and they enable young people to develop the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that they need progress into employment, further study, or a higher apprenticeship. This close employer engagement throughout their development has ensured that T Levels offer an opportunity for businesses to build their skills pipelines. At the heart of each T Level is an industry placement, which enables students to put the skills learned in the classroom into practice in the workplace and gives employers early sight of the new talent coming into their industry. Offering T Level placement opportunities allows employers to gain extra help with projects whilst assessing the ability and attitude of a potential future employee or apprentice, to fill skills gaps both now and in the future. Employers who engage with T Level industry placements have the opportunity to build a more diverse and creative workforce, with fresh ideas and approaches. The positive experiences will help employers to see the wider benefits of training.

Careers guidance and work experience

Recommendation 23

23. Careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) must be recognised as a critical component of a young person's education up to Key Stage 4 and beyond in all schools. Given that career-defining views develop from an early age, beginning CEIAG provision at 16 is too late. The Gatsby Benchmarks are a welcome intervention; they must be rolled out to primary schools and be more effectively embedded in the national curriculum so that all young people learn about the myriad opportunities that are open to them from an early age. This must be supported by more rigorous enforcement of the Baker Clause to ensure parity of esteem for technical and academic routes. School leaders must receive support to help them deliver this change, including by continuing the rollout of Careers Hubs so that young people who do not benefit from personal or familial networks have the same access to information and opportunity as their peers. CEIAG is a fundamental part of education and should be treated as such. (Paragraph 119)

The Government agrees that young people should have access to high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance throughout their secondary education. Schools have a legal duty to secure independent careers guidance for year 8-13 pupils. For pupils of compulsory school age, this must include information on the full range of 16-18 education and training options, including apprenticeships. The Government supports the [Education \(Careers Guidance in Schools\) Bill](#)¹⁸, introduced by Mark Jenkinson MP, which passed Commons Committee Stage on 27 October 2021. The Bill is seeking to extend the careers duty to all pupils in state-funded secondary education and to establish consistency across education settings by extending the duty to academy schools and alternative provision academies in England.

Schools are required to have regard to statutory guidance that underpins the duty. This is structured around what schools need to do to achieve the world-class Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Careers Guidance, the framework adopted by the Government for careers provision in secondary schools.

The Government believes that formal careers guidance is not appropriate for primary-aged children, but that primary schools should provide activities that help younger children to explore the world of work. There are local areas that have adapted the Gatsby Benchmarks for use in primary schools. For example, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership recently published findings from their 'North East Ambition Career Benchmark: Primary Pilot' scheme. The scheme took place over two years and involved 70 primary schools. It will now be made available to all primary schools in the area.

The pilot scheme was shown to have improved children's understanding of the range of future possibilities open to them, and enhanced teachers' careers-related knowledge and skills. While the Government has no formal plans to roll out the benchmarks to all primary schools, local areas with an interest in adapting the benchmarks for use in primary education settings, are encouraged to learn from the findings of the North East pilot.

¹⁸ [Education \(Careers Guidance in Schools\) Bill publications - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)

The provider access law, often referred to as the Baker Clause, introduced in January 2018, requires all maintained schools and academies to publish a policy statement setting out opportunities for providers of technical education and apprenticeships to visit schools to talk to all year 8-13 pupils, and to make sure the statement is followed. A January 2019 report by the Institute for Public Policy Research found that only 40% of schools were complying with the provider access legislation.¹⁹ DfE are determined to act so that all young people can learn about the exciting, high-quality opportunities that technical education and apprenticeships can offer. Through the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, DfE aim to strengthen the legislation so all schools must offer at least three encounters with providers of technical education and apprenticeships for year 8-13 pupils. This is part of the 3-point-plan, announced in the Skills for Jobs white paper. DfE will also take tougher enforcement action and make careers support, funded through The Careers & Enterprise Company, conditional on compliance with the provider access law.

The Government agrees with the Committee that support for schools is important to help bring about the step-change in careers provision for young people that is needed. The Government is investing £29.6m in 2021-22 to support schools and colleges to improve their careers programmes for young people. This includes £28m for The Careers & Enterprise Company to continue the rollout of Careers Hubs across the country and deliver support to schools and colleges to implement the Gatsby Benchmarks.

The Government is committed to going further and ensuring that high quality careers information, advice and guidance is available to everyone at all stages of their career. Professor Sir John Holman has been appointed as the Independent Strategic Careers Adviser on Careers Guidance. He is currently preparing recommendations for how the Government's careers delivery services can best support an all-age careers system; ensuring that both young people and adults are effectively supported to take the first and next steps in their career. He is due to present his recommendations to Ministers in summer 2022.

DWP recognises the importance of ensuring young people have the skills employers need. To complement the careers advice provided in schools by the Careers & Enterprise Company, Jobcentre Plus School Advisers deliver early interventions to raise awareness of the vocational routes young people can take to meet their future ambitions and improve their life chances. Jobcentre Plus Schools Advisers provide information on traineeships, apprenticeships and other vocational routes to work, and engage employers to deliver work experience opportunities.

¹⁹ Institute for Public Policy Research (2019) [The Baker Clause One Year On](#)

Recommendation 24

24. The Government must make CEIAG a compulsory element of the curriculum in all schools from Key Stage 1 to 4 alongside religious education, and sex and relationships education, as part of a Career Guidance Guarantee. The Guarantee must ensure that every disadvantaged young person has access to tailored, one-to-one careers guidance. It should be assessed by Ofsted with reference to the Gatsby Benchmarks and how well they are being applied. (Paragraph 120)

While careers education is not a mandatory part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), the Government wants to support the high-quality teaching of careers education in all secondary schools, which complements the national curriculum and meets the ambitions of the Government's careers strategy. The careers statutory guidance expects schools to use the Gatsby Benchmarks to improve their careers programmes. The first benchmark makes it clear that every school should have an embedded programme of careers education and guidance that is known and understood by students, parents, teachers, governors and employers.

Many schools will choose to comply with the careers statutory guidance by continuing to teach careers education as part of a wider programme of PSHE, alongside the compulsory content. Schools are encouraged to teach work skills, careers, and jobs in order to meet the needs of their pupils, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, which aims to prepare children for the world of work. Schools can draw on a range of quality learning materials, including the PSHE Association's programme of study and the CDI framework for careers, employability and enterprise education.

Many primary schools plan learning about careers and the world of work, particularly at key stage 2 where career learning is part of the citizenship framework. Rather than making separate provision, primary schools may wish to integrate careers, employability and enterprise learning into existing subjects, thematic learning, celebratory events and everyday life of the school.

The Government agrees with the Committee that all young people should have access to tailored, one-to-one careers guidance. The Gatsby Benchmark on personal guidance advises that all young people should have a careers interview by the age of 16, and the opportunity for one further such interview by age 18. This continues to be the strongest performing benchmark among schools. The latest data shows that 80% of secondary schools and 65% of special schools reported providing personal guidance interviews to most students.²⁰ DfE are continuing to extend careers infrastructure to schools across England that is proven to accelerate performance against the benchmarks.

DfE agreed that Ofsted has a role in looking at how schools apply the Gatsby Benchmarks. Careers information, education, advice, and guidance continues to be an important part of Ofsted's personal development judgement. On all graded inspections, Ofsted inspectors assess the quality of CEIAG and how well it benefits pupils in choosing and deciding on their next steps. This includes the school's use of the Gatsby Benchmarks, how the school ensures access for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils to Year 8

²⁰ The Careers & Enterprise Company (2021). Trends in Careers Education 2021. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

to 13 and how the school provides good quality, meaningful opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work. Inspectors also examine how schools support pupils' readiness for the next phase of education, training, or employment, so that they are equipped to make the transition successfully.

Ofsted updated its inspection handbook for September 2021 to stress the importance of CEIAG and to be clear that they expect all secondary schools to provide effective CEIAG that encourages pupils to make good choices and understand what they need to do to succeed in careers to which they aspire. It also clarifies that inspectors must report if a school does not meet the provider access law requirement.

Careers information, education, advice, and guidance continues to be an important part of Ofsted's personal development judgement. On all graded inspections, Ofsted inspectors assess the quality of CEIAG and how well it benefits pupils in choosing and deciding on their next steps. This includes the school's use of the Gatsby Benchmarks, how the school ensures access for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils to Year 8 to 13 and how the school provides good quality, meaningful opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work. Inspectors also examine how schools support pupils' readiness for the next phase of education, training, or employment, so that they are equipped to make the transition successfully.

Ofsted updated its inspection handbook for September 2021 to stress the importance of CEIAG and to be clear that they expect all secondary schools to provide effective CEIAG that encourages pupils to make good choices and understand what they need to do to succeed in careers to which they aspire. It also clarifies that inspectors must report if a school does not meet the Baker Clause requirement.

Recommendation 25

25. The Government must issue guidance to the CEC to develop resources to help schools and colleges to deliver CEIAG and ensure that each one is invited to become part of a Careers Hub, to ensure that the burden does not fall disproportionately on school leaders to deliver change. (Paragraph 121)

The Department for Education is providing funding to CEC during this financial year so that they can fulfil the important role given to them, continuing to make progress on the ambitious 2017 careers strategy. CEC's Grant Funding Agreement sets out the objectives the Government asks CEC to deliver in 2021-22, including:

- Building Networks by linking schools and colleges with employers and other external careers providers.
- Supporting Career Leaders, including providing Careers Leaders with training and support
- Backing the Gatsby Benchmarks and supporting the implementation of a best practice standard for careers support.

The Government is investing over £18.5 million to support the full rollout of Careers Hubs across England, as recommended by the Augar report²¹.

Careers Hubs are a key driver of system change and support schools and colleges to use the Gatsby Benchmarks to drive accelerated improvements in careers education and improve skills and opportunities for young people.

Careers Hubs build on the support the Enterprise Adviser Network provides and the tried and tested model of partnership and collaboration. Hubs lead partnerships of secondary schools, colleges, employers, Local Enterprise Partnerships, local authorities, and careers providers to help young people connect closely to local skills and economic needs through a responsive careers education programme.

²¹ Independent panel report to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding (2019), recommendation 2.11, pp.55-56.

Recommendation 26

26. The Government must update Ofsted criteria to withhold awarding an ‘Outstanding’ judgement to any institution failing to adhere to the requirements of the Baker Clause. The Government must also urgently bring forward its consultation on strengthening the Baker Clause. (Paragraph 122)

As set out in the school inspection handbook, to be judged outstanding for personal development, schools must meet all the criteria that applies for good. That criteria include whether all pupils receive unbiased information about potential next steps and high-quality careers guidance; the school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause; and the school provides good quality, meaningful opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work.

Ofsted updated its inspection handbook for September 2021 to clarify that inspectors must report if a school does not meet the Baker Clause requirement, even where it does not affect the overall grade.

Through the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, the Department for Education are determined to take action so that all young people can learn about the exciting, high-quality opportunities that technical education and apprenticeships can offer. DfE aim to strengthen the provider access legislation so all pupils will have the opportunity to have encounters with providers of approved technical education and apprenticeships. DfE has committed to consult on the underpinning statutory guidance to make sure that the legislation is implemented in a way that works for schools, providers, and – most importantly – young people.

This is part of the 3-point-plan, announced in the Skills for Jobs white paper. DfE will also take tougher enforcement action and make careers support, funded through The Careers & Enterprise Company, conditional on compliance.

Recommendations 27 & 28

27. We heard of many positive examples of employer engagement with education providers to help support youth employment. The best of these should be seen as a model for the future, and we applaud the work of the CEC as well as the forthcoming Local Skills Improvement Plans, which offer a real prospect of embedding this sort of engagement across the country on a permanent basis. However, there is more to be done. (Paragraph 123)

28. The Government must update guidance and legislation on employer participation in CEIAG and curriculum design, ensuring clearer advice to employers on how to engage with education providers, and the benefits this may bring. This guidance must include a focus on support for SMEs to engage with education providers' CEIAG offer such as careers fairs via the CEC and other bodies. (Paragraph 124)

As set out in the Skills for Jobs white paper, the Department for Education will accept the Post-18 Review Panel recommendation to complete the national rollout of Careers Hubs, digital support, Careers Leader training and the Enterprise Adviser Network to all secondary schools and colleges in England. This will continue to accelerate the progress of all schools and colleges towards achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks so that all young people are equipped to make informed career and learning decisions.

We will also deliver improvements to the National Careers Service website to enhance our offer; bringing together all the learning and careers routes available to aid the development of the White Paper commitment to create a single source of government-assured careers information and data to support high quality careers guidance.

DfE want to create quality interactions between schools and businesses, and so secondary schools are expected to provide pupils with at least one meaningful interaction with employers per pupil per year, with a particular focus on STEM employers. The Careers & Enterprise Company connects schools and colleges with employers to provide meaningful encounters with the world of work for young people. They do this through their Enterprise Adviser Network, delivered in partnership with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) who provide local tailoring aligned to skills and local labour market information.

As part of the Network, full-time Enterprise Coordinators are co-funded with LEPs and work with local clusters of up to 20 schools and colleges to help them build careers plans. They use these plans to make connections to local and national employers and businesses. A vital part of the Enterprise Coordinator role is to simplify the offer locally and help coordinate access for employers and providers into schools and colleges.

The Network is operating in all 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships and has grown rapidly. 4,000 senior business volunteers, Enterprise Advisers, have been recruited to work with schools and colleges to develop their career strategies and employer engagement plans.²² Employers engaging in careers provision are making a difference to young people. 3.3 million young people are now having regular encounters with employers - up 70 per cent in 2 years²³.

The Government will continue to consider what future investments could be made to support

²² CEC 21-22 Q2 data

²³ [CEC Careers Education in England report 2020](#)

employer encounters. This would be based on evaluation of existing investment and alongside other priorities for careers policy.

As already set out, we are establishing the Unit for Future Skills which will transform how Government uses jobs and skills data to lead to a responsive training system that ensure that learners have the skills employers need and can get good, well-paying jobs. This Unit will be a key part of the broader Post-16 Education Reform agenda to expand the numbers of students and adults taking advanced technical courses in high-value subject areas, and support delivery of CEIAG.

Recommendation 29

29. The Government must issue guidance that schools and colleges should promote governorship opportunities to local businesspeople with the ambition that all governing bodies should have at least one employer, so that career pathways are central to schools' focus and understood by school leaders and businesses alike. (Paragraph 125)

Governing bodies have a key role in making sure schools meet their legal requirements and equip their pupils with the tools and knowledge to make informed choices about their futures.

It is recommended that schools appoint a Link Governor for careers. The Link Governor should take a strategic interest in careers education and guidance and encourage employer engagement for careers - making sure the school, as a minimum, meets its statutory requirements for the provision of careers guidance and regularly reviews its practice.

DfE recommend that the Link Governor meets regularly with the Careers Leader, Enterprise Coordinator and Enterprise Adviser to make sure there is a coordinated approach to careers and implementing the Gatsby benchmarks across the school. The Careers & Enterprise Company has published a guide for secondary school governors which is available at: https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/1246_guide_for_governors_digital_2.pdf

Further Education (FE) colleges commonly liaise closely with local employers and already have employers on their boards. In the Skills for jobs white paper, we set out our intention to strengthen FE governance. This includes more support for governing bodies to identify ways in which those with the right skills and experience for effective governance, including industry professionals, can continue to be encouraged to join boards.

Like schools, FE colleges must follow statutory guidance on careers guidance. We highlight the role of governors in this respect in our FE governance guide and will look to strengthen this section when the guide is updated (by the summer).

Recommendation 30, 31 & 32

30. London Councils recommended that young people should have taken 100 hours of work experience by the age of 16. This could be achieved by allocating one day a term for work experience to all children from ages 11 to 16, tailored or weighted by age as appropriate. Each day comprising seven hours will result in 21 hours per year over five years, totalling 105 hours. (Paragraph 131)

31. We have heard overwhelming evidence that work experience is of great importance in supporting career pathways for young people due to the understanding a young person gains of the skills needed and expected by employers. There are many laudable initiatives for promoting work experience in the education system and among young people in general, but more could be done both on a statutory basis and in relation to wider support to ensure that as many young people as possible have the opportunity to take up work experience during education. While we recognise the challenges for small businesses in offering work experience, medium and large businesses should do more. (Paragraph 135)

32. The Government must revise its view on the value of quality work experience for young people aged 16 and under. It must reintroduce statutory requirements for all students in all schools to do mandatory, high quality work experience between the ages of 14-16 and consult on the allocated time for work experience from Year 7 upwards, bearing in mind the burden to schools and employers. As part of this, it must consult on the feasibility of London Councils' proposal that young people should have taken 100 hours of work experience by the age of 16. (Paragraph 136)

The Department for Education recognises that activities involving employers, such as careers insights, mentoring, work tasters and work experience, provide opportunities that are essential for young people to test out different careers, improve their skills and show their commitment and enthusiasm.

Through the Careers & Enterprise Company, schools and colleges continue to be supported to provide young people with access to meaningful experiences of the workplace - and the evidence suggests this is working. Careers Hubs are accelerating improvements in careers education and guidance, in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks. Schools and colleges that have been part of Careers Hubs for the longest achieved 4.8 Gatsby Benchmarks on average, compared with 3.8 for schools and colleges not in a Careers Hub.

The statutory guidance for schools on careers guidance makes it clear that schools can offer work placements, work experience and other employer-based activities as part of their careers strategy for year 8-13 pupils.

DfE removed the statutory duty in order to allow schools the freedom and autonomy to decide how they provide work-related learning at key stage 4.

The Gatsby Benchmarks also require that secondary schools ensure that every young person has had at least one experience of a workplace by the age of 16 and a further such experience by the age of 18 (Gatsby Benchmark 6).

That is why DfE is funding The Careers & Enterprise Company to help connect schools and

colleges with employers, to provide meaningful encounters with the world of work for young people. They do this through their Enterprise Adviser Network and Careers Hubs.

Recommendations 33 & 34

33. The Government must publish an action plan to tackle barriers to work experience including availability and affordability, for example costs associated with insurance and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. This should include an assessment of the challenges faced by schools and employers, particularly SMEs, in offering placements. This plan should consider how the CEC can better coordinate work experience opportunities. (Paragraph 137)

34. The Government must ban unpaid work experience exceeding four weeks to ensure access to work experience (including internships) is equally accessible to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds as it is to their better-connected peers. (Paragraph 138)

The Government recognises that liability insurance could be a barrier to giving young people work experience. The Health and Safety Executive has published clear and simplified work experience guidance, including advice on employers' liability insurance.²⁴ It confirms that the existing employers liability insurance policy will cover work placements provided the insurer is a member of the Association of British Insurers. This means there is no need for any additional employer's liability insurance if they take on work experience students.

Whilst schools are allowed to decide how they provide work experience opportunities, they are expected to provide pupils with at least seven meaningful employer encounters during their education. The Government funds the Careers & Enterprise Company to support schools and colleges in establishing links with local employers, to meet Gatsby Benchmark 6.

Young people undertaking work experience, or a work placement are not in employment and are therefore not entitled to the National Minimum Wage. Employers are encouraged, but not required, to meet students' expenses such as travel or meal costs.

Providers may also make financial support from the 16 to 19 bursary fund available to students if the cost of attending work experience would be a barrier to their participation.

²⁴ HSE, 'Work Experience Guidance': [Work experience \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/workexperience/)

Recommendation 35

35. The Government must keep under review the industrial placement requirement within T Levels, to ensure that employers have the capacity to offer the required hours and that in doing so other work experience opportunities are not marginalised. (Paragraph 139)

The Government has put in place substantial support for schools, colleges, and employers to help them deliver high-quality industry placements for all T Levels nationally.

The Department for Education has invested over £200m since 2018/19 to support providers in building capacity and networks with employers, leading to tens of thousands of T Level style industry placements being delivered across the country. DfE has also engaged directly with employers through the Department's employer engagement teams to develop a pipeline of industry placements and they are working with key intermediaries to develop innovative ways to stimulate the SME market. This involves targeting specific industries in geographical regions to implement tailored industry placement delivery models to widen access to T Levels nationally.

As T Levels continue to roll out it is important that DfE put in place the right support and infrastructure to ensure there are enough industry placements across the different sectors to meet demand. DfE will continue to monitor the availability of T Level industry placements across the country, and will consider mitigations if there are areas without an appropriate range of placements.

Further education

Recommendation 36

36. For too long successive Governments have failed to give FE the focus and support it deserves. It needs significant funding reform to ensure that it is brought on par with HE. Funding must be demand-led so that students who wish to study an approved course in an FE institution receive automatic funding, supported by a national tariff. This will enable it to increase capacity to deliver on the Government's rhetorical ambitions to 'level up' technical education. The Government's ambitions are welcome, but it is impossible to expect more from FE institutions until this funding imbalance is redressed. (Paragraph 160)

The Skills and post-16 Education Bill underpins the Prime Minister's Lifetime Skills Guarantee, as part of the blueprint for a post-16 education system that will seek to ensure that everyone, no matter where they live or their background, can gain the skills they need to progress in work at any stage of their lives.

As part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) will be introduced from 2025, providing individuals with a loan entitlement to the equivalent of four years of post-18 education (£37,000 in today's fees) to use over their lifetime. It will be available for both modules and full years of study at higher technical and degree levels (levels 4 to 6), regardless of whether they are provided in colleges or universities.

The student finance system currently favours and pushes people towards a three-year full-time degree and is not sufficiently supportive of lifelong and higher technical learning. More radical steps are needed to support lifelong learning.

The Government wants to drive a transformative impact on post-18 study, delivering greater parity between further and higher education.

As the Prime Minister said when he first announced the LLE in September 2020^{[\[1\]](#)}: “Now is the time to end this bogus distinction between FE and HE. We are going to change the funding model so that it is just as easy to get a student loan to do a year of electrical engineering at an FE college – or do two years of electrical engineering – as it is to get a loan to do a three-year degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics”

“I want every student with the aptitude and the desire to go to university to get the support they need, but I also want all young people to be given a real choice in life, and not to feel there is only one route to success.”

The Government is continuing to invest in education and skills training for adults through the Adult Education Budget (AEB) (£1.34bn in 2021/22).

The Government is investing £3.8bn more in further education and skills over the Parliament as a whole to ensure people can access high-quality training and education that leads to good jobs, addresses skills gaps, boosts productivity and supports levelling up. This will support the sector to reform and deliver the technical, skilled education employers want and the economy needs.

We are delivering an extra £1.6bn boost for 16–19-year olds’ education [Note: RDEL annual spending in 2024-25 compared to 2021-22], including maintaining funding in real terms per student and delivering more hours of teaching for T levels so that more 16–19-year-olds get qualifications in high skilled industries that will fuel future growth. This investment also delivers extra time for all 16–19-year-olds – those with the least time left to catch up.

A total investment of £554m by 2024-25 will make sure adults, at any age, can upskill to reach their potential, transforming lives and delivering on the National Skills Fund commitment. This includes:

- expanding Level 3 courses – the equivalent of an A Level – for eligible adults in high value, high demand subjects like engineering and digital skills.
- scaling up bootcamps, which offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up specific skills and with a clear route to a job at the end.

And we will invest £2.8bn in capital [Note: total CDEL spending across the SR21 period] for skills, including to deliver T Levels at over 400 providers, create more post-16 places and raise the condition of further education estates over the next three years.

Apprenticeship funding will increase by £170m to £2.7bn in 2024-25 alongside new improvements to support more small businesses to hire new apprentices and to show employers just how much an apprentice would benefit their business.

There will also be opportunities for adults across the whole of the UK to develop their numeracy skills through £560m across the next three years for the Multiply programme, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The development fund is being piloted in the 2021/22 financial year. Members of the pilot collaborations are being funded through the £65 million development fund (comprising £38m capital and £27m revenue funding) in FY 2021-22. This funding will enable and enhance strategic partnerships between employers and post-16 providers and will test how these alliances will help shape future technical skills provision

The Government is investing £2.5 billion (£3 billion when including Barnett funding for devolved administrations) in the National Skills Fund to help adults learn valuable skills and prepare for the economy of the future.

Recommendation 37

37. The Government must devise a new method of funding for FE. Funding should be determined by student demand, and students accessing the Lifetime Skills Guarantee at levels 2 and 3 in approved institutions should attract automatic in-year funding determined by a tariff. This would help to ensure that there is a place in FE for any suitably qualified person who wants one. It would also result in significant additional funding for FE institutions so that they are able to compete with industry to hire high quality, experienced teachers and obtain the latest industry-standard equipment. (Paragraph 161)

In the Skills for Jobs White Paper, the Department for Education set out a vision to transform Further Education (FE). These changes will enable colleges and other providers to deliver the skills programmes and qualifications to support progression into further learning and respond to employer demand - supporting people to use their learning to enter the labour market, upskill and/or change careers. This will be an integral part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

The first key step to delivering that vision was carrying out a consultation. These proposals are part of a wider set of reforms to transform the skills system so that it better supports young people and adults across the country to acquire the skills they need to get a good job. To simplify funding for adult skills, DfE propose bringing together all adult skills funding provided directly (rather than supported through the apprenticeships or loan system) by the department to colleges into a single Skills Fund. This would incorporate all aspects of the existing Adult Education Budget including community learning, and the National Skills Fund investment. Under the proposals outlined in the consultation document ²⁵ (published in July, all grant funded providers (including Local Authorities) will receive a single stream of funding to support both qualification and non-qualification provision through the Skills Fund once it's established.

The Skills Fund will have a single purpose of funding provision that supports individuals to gain skills which will lead them to meaningful, sustained, and relevant employment, or enable them to progress to further learning which will deliver that outcome. In some cases, a full qualification will not be required to effectively upskill individuals, for example enabling individuals to extend their current skills in a related sector. DfE therefore see the Skills Fund as resourcing a mixture of both qualification-based provision and non-qualification (non-regulated) provision that enables broader learning programmes and innovative skills provision to be developed, thus supporting individuals to acquire these skills.

The new focus on learner outcomes will incentivise colleges and skills providers to ensure their provision leads to meaningful progression and employment for all their learners. The Government appreciates the importance of adult education in improving people's life chances. Through FE reforms, DfE want to ensure the Government is supporting all learners, as best as possible, including those who need the most support to progress to more formal learning or employment.

²⁵ https://consult.education.gov.uk/fe-funding/reforms-to-funding-and-accountability/supporting_documents/Skills%20for%20JobsA%20New%20Further%20Education%20Funding%20and%20Accountability%20System.pdf

Recommendation 38

38. The Government must support socio-economically disadvantaged learners by increasing flexibility in the Lifelong Loan Entitlement to provide for maintenance support in FE, so that it aligns with HE maintenance grants. The Government must reintroduce Education Maintenance Allowance or alternative maintenance support for FE students from disadvantaged backgrounds to ensure that they are financially able to stay in post-16 education or training. (Paragraph 162)

The Coalition Government took the decision in 2010 to replace the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) with the 16-19 Bursary Fund, as the EMA was a poorly targeted way of providing support for disadvantaged young people. Despite 45% of all 16–19-year-olds in education or training receiving EMA, evidence suggested that only 10% of those who received it would not have participated without it.

The current 16-19 bursary fund provides help to young people who need it with the costs of participating in 16-19 education and training, for example for transport, books, trips, and equipment. This includes bursaries of up to £1,200 per year for students in specific vulnerable groups such as care leavers. The rest of the bursary fund is allocated to institutions to use for discretionary bursaries for young people who are assessed as needing help. £133 million was allocated to institutions to use for discretionary bursaries in the current academic year (2021/22).

Beyond the Bursary Fund, the Department also provides a range of other financial support for 16–19-year-old students who need it, to enable them to participate in post-16 education, including free meals and support for childcare and residential costs where required.

Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a 16-19 discretionary Bursary if they are continuing on a study programme, they began aged 16 to 18 (who DfE refer to as ‘19+ continuers’) or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). These groups are not eligible for the vulnerable groups’ bursary.

The Adult Education Budget also funds colleges and providers to help adult learners to overcome barriers which prevent them from taking part in learning. This includes Learner Support to support learners with a specific financial hardship and Learning Support to meet the additional needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Learner Support is available to colleges and training providers to support learners (19+) with a specific financial hardship that is preventing them from taking part/continuing in learning. Providers have discretion to help learners meet costs such as transport, accommodation, books, equipment and childcare.

Learning Support funding helps Colleges and training providers to meet the additional needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and meet the costs of reasonable adjustments as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Learning Support can cover a range of needs including an assessment for dyslexia, funding to pay for specialist equipment or helpers; and arranging signers or note takers.

DfE currently has a record proportion of 16–18-year-olds participating in education or apprenticeships - at 82.3%, this at the highest level since consistent records began.

The Skills and post-16 Education Bill modifies the DfE Secretary of State's existing powers to set the levels of loan available to support more modular provision, which could extend across both tuition fee and maintenance support.

DfE want to ensure that the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) provides value for money to students, the education sector and the taxpayer. DfE are building the LLE on a system designed to support students pursuing both further and higher education and share the cost fairly.

DfE recognise the transformational nature of the LLE and that achieving our ambition will take time. The LLE policy is under development and as part of a planned pathway to delivery from 2025, the detail and scope of the LLE are currently open to consultation. DfE are seeking to better understand the barriers that learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, might face in accessing the LLE, and the potential impact of the LLE on them. DfE remain committed to delivering the LLE from 2025 and will continue to consider what maintenance loans and student support grants would be available for any study. DfE see this engagement as a critical part of delivering a transformation of student finance.

Ahead of the LLE's introduction, to address financial barriers for learners and move towards the flexibility envisaged by the LLE, the Government is putting the student finance package for Higher Technical Qualifications – qualifications approved to deliver the skills employers need – on a par with degrees (set out in more detail in the response to recommendation 19).

The Government already subsidises around 50% of the overall cost of higher education - a conscious investment in the skills capacity, people, and economy of this country.

Unlike commercial alternatives, student loans are available to all eligible students, regardless of background or financial history.

Loan repayments are linked to income, not interest rates or the amount borrowed.

Any outstanding debt, including interest accrued is written off at the end of the loan term at no detriment to the borrower. There are no commercial loans that offer this level of borrower protection.

The Government remains committed to introducing further reforms that will ensure a sustainable student finance system, drive up the quality of higher education provision and promote genuine social mobility.

Recommendations 39 & 40

39. T Levels present an opportunity to develop a high-quality technical alternative to A Levels. While we welcome their introduction and the ambition to streamline choices and declutter the qualifications landscape, we are concerned that the prioritisation of these untested qualifications over other valued options, and generally high entrance criteria for T Levels, will result in a lack of options for young people who either cannot or do not wish to take A Levels. (Paragraph 171)

40. The Government must reconsider its decision to defund tried and tested level 3 qualifications like BTECs, Extended Diplomas and AGQs. We support the amendment to the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill requiring a four-year moratorium on defunding these qualifications and urge the Government to reconsider this policy in its entirety. (Paragraph 172)

T Levels are the centrepiece of the Government's reforms at level 3. They are world-class qualifications developed with employers to the same quality standards as apprenticeships and include a real world 9-week industry placement, setting them apart from many current vocational qualifications. T Level students will gain the knowledge and skills employers need and will be able to progress into employment, apprenticeships, higher technical qualifications, and undergraduate degrees. Feedback from the first T Level providers and students has been highly positive and DfE are confident that T Levels will be as valued as A levels.

The Government is committed to ensuring that T Levels are accessible to all young people. They are challenging but rewarding qualifications and there is a range of additional support in place to allow students to access them, including flexibilities for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The T Level Transition Programme will support young people who are not yet ready to progress to a T Level but have the potential to succeed on it after some further preparation. In addition to this, in November 2021 DfE announced the removal of the English and maths exit requirement for T Levels, removing a potential barrier for young people wanting to access T Levels and allowing more students to successfully complete the programme. This brings T Levels in line with other level 3 qualifications such as A levels and DfE expect providers to set a consistent approach to entry criteria accordingly.

As set out in the final plans for reform of level 3 qualifications in July 2021, DfE believe it is the right thing to do to simplify the market and ensure as many 16- to 19-year-olds as possible benefit from the high quality, breadth and depth offered by T Levels. DfE will therefore remove funding from qualifications that overlap with T Levels for 16- to 19-year-olds and will do so at a pace that allows growth of T Levels and time for providers, awarding organisations, employers, students, and parents to prepare.

Whilst T Levels and A levels will be front and centre of the level 3 landscape, there will be a range of qualifications available for young people to take alongside and as alternatives. Qualifications similar to current Applied Generals, which may include a number of BTECs, will continue to play an important role for young people and adults as they do now. A levels will not be the only option for students who do not want to take T Levels.

Students on the academic route will continue to be able to study qualifications such as BTECs and other AGQs as part of mixed programmes alongside A levels, where they meet new quality standards and support progression to higher education. This could include areas such as engineering, health and social care, applied science and IT. Students will also be able to study alternative qualifications as their full programme of study where there is no A level or T Level, in areas such as performing arts and sports science.

Students on the technical route will be able to take qualifications that support the development of occupational competence in areas where there isn't a T Level, as well as qualifications that develop more specialist skills and knowledge than could be acquired through a T Level alone.

The Government's reform timetable is rightly ambitious. DfE must close the gap between what people study and the needs of employers, and further delay would unnecessarily prolong the skills gaps that needs to be addressed. However, DfE know it would be wrong to push too hard and risk compromising quality. That is why DfE has listened to concerns raised in the debate and across the wider sector and in November 2021 announced plans allowing an extra year before the reform timetable is implemented. This means the earliest point DfE will remove funding approval from qualifications due to overlap with T Levels will be August 2024 – four years after T Levels were first taught, and around two and a half years after the anticipated Royal Assent of the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill.

The extra year will allow DfE to continue to work hard to support the growth of T Levels and gives more notice to providers, awarding organisations, employers, students, and parents so that they can prepare for the changes. Amendments passed during Committee stage of the Bill in the House of Commons will ensure that momentum is maintained as DfE introduce these vital reforms.

Recommendation 41

41. The Government must set out a plan detailing its offer to employers to help them to provide industry placements to ensure that T Levels are a success. It should continue to work with universities who offer STEM subjects to fine tune the T Level course so that they are convinced of its merits and accept it as an entry qualification. (Paragraph 173)

DfE has a clear plan and strategy in place to support employers to help them deliver high-quality industry placements and will continue to promote this to employers.

The Department for Education is directly raising awareness of T Levels with employers of all sizes, as well as with a large range of intermediaries, and has a comprehensive package of support, which offers online guidance, webinars, and direct hands-on support to help employers deliver high-quality industry placements. DfE provides a matching service to help provide the link between providers seeking placements and employers who would like to host T Level students. DfE also runs a T Level employer ambassador network, to enable employers to share experiences, and has a range of communications materials to make sure employers are aware of and understand industry placements and how they align with other work placement schemes.

In addition, DfE has put in place an employer incentive scheme to help employers with the costs associated with delivering placements in the Covid-19 period and will identify what financial support employers need to deliver industry placements going forward.

DfE has introduced a number of different delivery models for industry placements to ensure they're deliverable across all industries and will continue to engage with employers to identify if there are any barriers and mitigations to delivering placements and if so, what mitigations can be put in place to overcome these.

DfE will continue to work closely with higher education providers to ensure they have the right information to set entry requirements for T Levels. The current T Levels in Science and Digital, as well as the upcoming T Levels in Engineering and Manufacturing, will provide opportunities for students to progress into STEM-related subjects in higher education. We will have further information on the destinations that T Level students' progress onto at university at the end of this UCAS cycle. The DfE is also working to raise awareness and understanding of T Levels with Higher Education Institutions (HEI) – and over 100 HEIs, including many universities, [have confirmed they will accept T Levels](#). This figure will continue to grow as this engagement continues.

T Level Awarding Organisations have worked with experts in both the relevant industry and higher education sectors in the development of the content of the technical qualifications and will continue to do so for future waves.

Apprenticeships

Recommendation 42

42. While there is a clear need for older, more experienced workers to have access to opportunities to upskill throughout their careers, apprenticeships should be prioritised for young people who are choosing this route as an entry point to the labour market. We must improve the current spread of apprenticeship starts so that provision is better tailored towards young people and those who would benefit most, which will consequently provide better value for the public purse in the longer term. Reform of the apprenticeship levy must take place to achieve this. (Paragraph 202)

The Government agrees with the Committee that apprenticeships are an important option for young people, offering entry to skilled employment and high quality on and off-the-job training. The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on the employment prospects of young people²⁶, and so support into apprenticeships is more important than ever. The Government is delivering a range of measures to support young people and employers. This includes promoting apprenticeships in schools, creating clear progression opportunities from T-levels and traineeships, and providing additional funding to employers of all sizes taking on younger apprentices.

DfE continue to keep the operation of the apprenticeships system under review to make sure the skills need of individuals and employers are met. While the Government supports the ambition to increase young people's participation in apprenticeships, it does not agree that changes are required to the apprenticeships levy to achieve this. Equally, we do not want to restrict opportunities for individuals of any age to pursue apprenticeships or the choice for employers of which apprenticeships they offer and to whom.

We are doing further work to explore ways of supporting young people's participation in apprenticeships. Engagement with young people, employers, training providers and other stakeholder groups will be undertaken to look at what more we can do to ensure young people can fully benefit from the opportunities offered through apprenticeships. We would welcome the opportunity to write to the Committee about this work in the Spring.

²⁶ [Uneven steps • Resolution Foundation](#)

Recommendation 43

43. Government must require that any employer receiving funding from the apprenticeship levy must spend at least two thirds of that funding on people who begin apprenticeships between levels 2 and 3 before the age of 25. The other third could be spent on older workers and those studying at levels 4 and 5 (Paragraph 203)

The Government announced that apprenticeships funding will grow to £2.7 billion by 2024-25 at Spending Review 2021; this is the first increase to employer-led apprenticeships funding since 2019-20²⁷. This funding will support apprenticeships in non-levy employers, often SMEs, where 95% of apprenticeship training costs will continue to be met.

Age should not be a barrier to opportunities to learn and not be a limiting factor in the Government's ambitions. The opportunity to undertake an apprenticeship should be available at any age and at any level; individual opportunity or employer choice should not be restricted. The Open University and 5% Club found that 82% of employers said that it is important that apprenticeships are available for all ages, and 82% reported that apprenticeships are important at all levels²⁸. The value of the apprenticeships programme is that individuals from the age of 16 upwards can learn new skills that enable them to start and progress in occupations from level 2 to level 7.

Younger people should have a range of opportunities. This may mean starting a level 2 or level 3 apprenticeship, but an 18-year-old with good A-levels should be encouraged to consider a higher or degree-level apprenticeship as an alternative to university. It is positive that a growing number of young people are starting degree-level apprenticeships. In 2020/21 more than 15,000 starts at level 6 or above were undertaken by those under the age of 25, up from 11,000 in 2018/19²⁹.

With 80% of the UK's 2030 workforce already in work, it cannot be right that only one-third of apprenticeships funding should be made available to those who are aged over 25. Older people should be able to use apprenticeships to progress or to retrain. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) estimate that one in six workers (five million people) will go through radical job change and require 're-training' by 2030, while over 25 million will require upskilling as roles evolve³⁰. The independent In-work Progression Commission's report advocates for making apprenticeships accessible and attractive to all workers, not just younger workers, and that used well they could help keep those over 50 in work³¹.

²⁷ [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021: documents - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-budget-and-spending-review-2021-documents)

²⁸ [Build The Future Apprenticeship Survey | Open University](https://openuniversity.github.io/build-the-future-apprenticeship-survey/)

²⁹ [Apprenticeships and traineeships, Academic Year 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/apprenticeships-and-traineeships)

³⁰ [learning-for-life-report.pdf \(cbi.org.uk\)](https://www.cbi.org.uk/learning-for-life-report.pdf)

³¹ [Supporting progression out of low pay: a call to action - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-progression-out-of-low-pay-a-call-to-action)

43. The Government must explore the feasibility of further measures to encourage employers to hire young people as apprentices by:

- **Refocusing the public sector target on new starters under 25;**
- **Introducing a 50% wage grant for apprentices under 25, abolishing the 5% employer co-investment for SMEs when taking on under-25s, and introducing a 10% co-investment rate for all businesses recruiting apprentices over 25;**
- **Supporting SMEs by removing the cap on levy transfer;**
- **Extending the two-year expiry date for use of funds;**
- **Non-financial amendments to the use of levy funds, such as introducing a maximum salary ceiling for levy-funded apprenticeships and removing qualifications at level 6 and above from scope; and**
- **Lowering the threshold for paying the apprenticeship levy to actively engage more SMEs in apprenticeships. (Paragraph 203)**

At Spending Review the Government also set out plans to deliver apprenticeship system improvements for all employers, these include:

- an enhanced recruitment service by May 2022 for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), helping them hire new apprentices.
- supporting flexible apprenticeship training models to ensure that apprenticeship training continues to meet the needs of employers. By April 2022, DfE will consider changes to the provider payment profiles aimed at giving employers more choice over how the apprenticeship training is delivered, and explore the streamlining of existing additional employer support payments so that they go directly to employers.
- introducing a return-on-investment tool in October 2022 to ensure employers can see the benefits apprentices create in their business.

This builds on the Government's commitment at Spending Review 2020 to deliver a package of improvements to apprenticeships, including an easier transfers system and more flexible apprenticeship training. Government is investing £7 million to help employers set up new flexi-job apprenticeships, supporting more opportunities for young people in sectors such as construction and creative. DfE are supporting accelerated and front-loaded apprenticeship training models which will help to speed up training and ensure young apprentices get job-ready quicker. This includes supporting young people to progress from certain T Levels into accelerated apprenticeships which will allow them to complete more quickly by recognising their prior learning. For example, a T Level graduate in digital production, design and development could move into a Level 4 DevOps Engineer apprenticeship and reduce the length of the apprenticeship training by up to 12 months³².

Additionally, DfE are continuing to drive up the quality of apprenticeships and investing in a comprehensive package of professional development available to all apprenticeship providers and their workforces; holding providers to account against a wider set of quality measures; and making a suite of tools and resources available to support apprentices and to help employers and providers give apprentices the support they need to successfully achieve their apprenticeship.

Public sector target

³² [T Level progression profiles / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#)

The statutory public sector apprenticeships target is set to end on 31 March 2022. Since the target was introduced in 2017 there have been over 220,000 apprenticeship starts in the public sector and apprentices have become increasingly popular within the public sector workforce³³. The development of new apprenticeship standards over this time in occupations such as Police Constable, Social Worker and Operational Firefighter are ensuring that apprenticeships are embedded in public sector recruitment. The Government will continue to support public sector employers to benefit from apprenticeships and develop the skilled workforce they need to deliver world-class public services. The new Civil Service apprenticeships strategy will set out a clear plan to improve the quality of apprenticeships in Government departments.

Support for SMEs

The Government is focused on supporting employers of all sizes to access high-quality apprenticeships through access to funding for training and assessment. Employers in England, as in most countries, are required to meet all other costs such as wages. The rate at which the apprentice national minimum wage is set acknowledges the costs for employers and benefits for young people involved in the provision of apprenticeships, whilst not adversely affecting apprenticeship opportunities in the labour market. In 2016 the Government removed the requirement for employers to pay National Insurance contributions for apprentices under the age of 25.

Co-investment is an important part of reforms, ensuring that smaller employers that do not pay the levy are invested in high-quality apprenticeship training. In April 2019, the co-investment rate was reduced from 10% to 5%. The Government pays 100% of apprentice training costs for the smallest employers taking on younger apprentices. In addition, smaller employers in receipt of a levy transfer are not required to co-invest, the transfer covers 100% of training costs. All SMEs can reserve funding for up to 10 new apprenticeships starts in 2021-22 financial year. They can also benefit from further funding through the receipt of levy transfers from larger employers as these don't count towards the reservations limit.

Transfers

In September 2021 a new online service was introduced to make it easier for large employers that pay the levy to pledge unspent funds available for transfer to other businesses. Employers that pay the levy can now advertise their funding pledges on a dedicated gov.uk page, enabling a much wider range of businesses, including SMEs, to browse and apply for available funds. At present employers can pledge to transfer funds to other employers in specific towns and cities, in 2022 this will expand to local authority boroughs. To date, employers including Amazon UK, DPD and HomeServe have pledged to transfer almost £6.5 million to support apprenticeships in businesses of all sizes. The transfer allowance will be kept under review and consider a change should there be growth in demand because of these improvements.

³³ [Apprenticeships and traineeships, Academic Year 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

Expiry of levy funds

The Government wants to see employers continuing to invest in apprenticeships and creating even more high-quality apprenticeship opportunities. Employers can choose from over 640 high-quality standards, which they have developed, across all sectors of the economy. Extending the expiry period of funds could result in fewer opportunities for young people at a time when they are needed the most; therefore, there are no plans to extend the 24-month expiry period.

Use of levy funds

A salary ceiling for apprenticeships or removing funding for apprenticeships at Level 6 is not being considered. It is for employers to determine the salaries of their employees; we do not want to limit employer choice over the apprenticeships they offer, or restrict an individual's access to apprenticeships based on their salary.

Apprenticeships at higher levels are helping to fill skills gaps and provide people, who may not previously have had the opportunity, the chance to upskill. For example, in Nursing, there is a complete apprentice pathway from entry-level through to postgraduate level. This means that someone at Level 2 or 3 as a Healthcare Support Worker could progress onto a Level 5 Nursing Associate apprenticeship, then progress to the Registered Nurse degree apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are no longer limited to traditional fields; the Government's reforms have opened opportunities across all sectors.

The Office for Students has been given a clear steer to ensure Universities set themselves stretching targets on degree apprenticeship starts. DfE are now working with the sector to develop a range of measures to boost growth even more by widening the range of standards offered and improving choice for apprentices and employers. The recent policy changes announced by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, which received strong support from employers when consulted on, will improve degree apprenticeships further. Specifically, the reforms will promote better integration of on- and off-the-job training, ensure full alignment of the degree learning outcomes with the knowledge, skills and behaviours detailed in the occupational standard, and ensure that neither the degree nor the apprenticeship is awarded in isolation of the other by integrating the assessment of both³⁴.

The ability to do an MBA has already been removed from the Level 7 Senior Leader apprenticeship. DfE will also not fund Level 8 apprenticeships as they do not provide value for money, nor are they in the spirit of the reformed apprenticeships system. Government wants to see degree apprenticeships support those who can benefit the most.

Scope of the levy

There are no current plans to broaden the apprenticeship levy to include more employers, but the Government continues to keep this policy under review, as with all tax policy.

³⁴ [Response to the consultation on plans for degree apprenticeships / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#)

Recommendation 44

44. The Government must extend the provision of apprenticeship incentives beyond January 2022. These incentives should be weighted towards under-25s and must be well publicised. (Paragraph 204)

The apprenticeship incentive payments were introduced as part of the Government's Plan for Jobs in recognition of the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had on business, and to support employers to recruit the right people and develop the skills they needed to recover and grow. The Government does not plan to further extend the incentives beyond 31 January 2022 but will continue to support employers with the cost of apprenticeship training.

The £1,000 payments made to both employers and training providers when they take on apprentices aged between 16 and 18 years old, or 19-to-24-year-old apprentices who either have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHC) or have been in the care of their local authority, remain in place. The Government continues to pay 100% apprentice training costs for the smallest employers (those with fewer than 50 staff) who take on apprentices from these groups.

Recommendation 45

45. The Government must place a renewed focus on local solutions to challenges of supply and demand and availability of apprenticeships in particular localities. It must work with local and regional authorities to develop initiatives such as local 'matching' services between levy and non-levy paying authorities and aligning apprenticeship opportunities with Local Skills Improvement Plans. (Paragraph 205)

Government reforms have empowered employers across England to choose the apprenticeship training they need, when they need it, from a range of providers approved to deliver high-quality training. In this way apprenticeships are helping to address local and regional skills gaps, and improvements to apprenticeship levy transfers offer employers even more flexibility to support local and regional skills needs. In developing the new pledge and match transfer service we have worked closely with the West Midlands Combined Authority, for example, to build on the work it was doing to connect smaller employers with levy payers and support apprenticeship starts in those smaller businesses. The new service makes this even easier with employers able to connect both at a local and national level. To ensure that the supply of apprenticeships training provision meets the demand by localities, DfE has introduced an aggregated employer demand service. This enables employers to communicate the need and for training providers to see, and respond to, gaps in the market.

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) have been a major supporter of apprenticeship transfers. They run an established matching service, which has significantly contributed to the number of starts funded through transfers.

We have worked closely with WMCA when designing our new service, which will dovetail with the work that WMCA already do.

Most significantly, DfE are introducing Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), starting in eight trailblazer areas in 2021-22. These plans will be created by employer representative bodies working closely with employers, providers, and key local stakeholders. LSIPs will help providers to understand unmet and future local skills needs better in order to inform curriculum and business planning decisions. For example, a plan may point to apprenticeship standards that providers can start offering, or offer more of, to meet new or changing demand for skills in the local area. This will help provide young people with the best chance of securing a good job locally.

Recommendation 46

46. The Government must also undertake regular reviews of other barriers to take up of apprenticeships. This should include reviewing minimum qualification requirements such as the Grade 4 requirement for GCSE Maths and English. (Paragraph 206)

The Department for Education actively monitor how apprenticeships are working and engage with a wide range of stakeholders to improve the programme for apprentices and employers. This includes working with individual employers, business representative organisations, such as the CBI and FSB, training providers, representative bodies from across the education sector, and third sector organisations, such as Mencap, the Youth Employment Group and the Social Mobility Commission.

Apprentices who do not yet have the required level of English and maths are fully funded to achieve this as part of their apprenticeship, either through the Functional Skills Qualification or GCSEs. Individuals are not required to meet these requirements to start an apprenticeship, they must be supported by their provider and employer to gain these during their apprenticeship. As well as being vital skills, English and maths support an individual's long-term career prospects, with research showing that achieving a level 2 in English and maths correlates to higher earning potential. Most employers (80%) consider that it is important that their apprentices achieve the English and maths requirements by the end of their apprenticeship³⁵.

The Government is expanding traineeships to support young people who are not yet ready for an apprenticeship to get the skills they need to get into employment. Traineeships provide a combination of sector-focussed vocational learning with a high-quality work placement, support to improve English and maths where needed, as well as practical help with applying for jobs. At Spending Review 2021, the Government announced funding for up to 72,000 traineeship places over the next 3 years. The Government has also extended the £1,000 incentive payments for employers who offer traineeship work placements to 31 July 2022. DfE has worked with providers and employers to develop the first-ever occupational traineeships in key industries such as construction, transport & logistics and adult care. These are aligned to apprenticeship standards and have been designed to provide young people with a springboard into apprenticeships.

³⁵ [Apprenticeship evaluation 2018 to 2019: learner and employer surveys - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/84444/apprenticeship-evaluation-2018-to-2019-learner-and-employer-surveys.pdf)

Recommendation 47

47.Apprenticeships, like other routes of technical education, suffer from entrenched negative perceptions, biases and stereotypes in comparison to perceptions of the academic route. This is often unjustified given the positive outcomes that apprenticeships and other technical pathways can lead to for young learners. (Paragraph 221)

There is still some way to go to ensure parity of esteem of technical education routes, including apprenticeships, with academic routes. Apprenticeships offer excellent outcomes for individuals, and we want even more people to benefit from the fantastic opportunities they provide. 91% of apprentices go into work or further training with 89% in sustained employment, many apprentices remain with their employer following their apprenticeship³⁶.

To encourage more young people to consider apprenticeships, DfE are promoting apprenticeships in schools and colleges through the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) programme. ASK has reached over 600,000 students across England in the 2020/21 academic year. DfE are supporting the Young Apprentice Ambassador Network to inspire and inform the young apprentices of tomorrow³⁷. A new campaign to promote technical education choices for young people, National Apprenticeship Week, the National Apprenticeship Awards, and the Top 100 apprenticeship employers listing, all showcase the benefits of apprenticeships and raise their profile.

The Minister for Skills also wrote to all pupils in years 11-13 and their parents as part of National Apprenticeship Week 2022, to celebrate and encourage students to consider apprenticeships. This letter can be read [here](#)³⁸.

³⁶ [Further education: outcome-based success measures, Academic Year 2018/19 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

³⁷ [Young Apprentice Ambassador Network \(amazingapprenticeships.com\)](https://amazingapprenticeships.com)

³⁸ [Letter from the Skills Minister - Amazing Apprenticeships](#)

Recommendation 48

48. The Government must require all large businesses to publish the number of apprentices they hire and their salaries on an annual basis. This should be supplemented by a national campaign focussed on changing attitudes towards technical routes and apprenticeships, focussed on pay and employment outcomes, and in particular targeting and signposting options for under-represented demographic groups such as those from disadvantaged backgrounds, young women and those from ethnic minority backgrounds. (Paragraph 222)

A new campaign, launched in January, will support the ambitions set out in the Skills for Jobs White Paper to help young people make informed decisions about their future, understand the benefits that technical education can offer them and get the best start to their working lives.

The campaign, targeting young people will:

- Raise awareness of the choices available to young people, by showcasing the breadth of work and training opportunities available locally and elsewhere, help them understand where to go for clear, impartial information.
- Increase consideration of technical education options, particularly T Levels, apprenticeships, traineeships, and higher technical qualifications by presenting training/education choices as “for people like me” and helping young people to understand the difference between them.
- Inspire action by prompting young people to look for information to support their education/career decision making, by visiting the National Careers Service website, talking to their teachers or parents.

There are no plans to require all large employers to publish details of the number of apprentices they hire on an annual basis. Employers can choose whether they want to publicise details of their apprenticeship programmes and they are encouraged to share their successes. In October 2022 a return-on-investment tool will be introduced to help employers see the benefits apprentices create in their business.

Recommendation 49

49. The Government must create a single, UCAS-style application portal for technical education and apprenticeships to equalise and raise awareness of opportunities amongst young people. (Paragraph 223)

Applying for an apprenticeship is unlike applying for a place at university as apprenticeships are jobs and these opportunities may arise at any time of the year. Find an Apprenticeship service on gov.uk allows individuals to register for apprenticeship vacancy alerts, search and apply for vacancies, and receive feedback from employers. Around 2.8 million people have registered to use this service, and the Department for Education are working with employers, so they advertise more apprenticeships in this way. Further improvements are being made to the service, drawing on feedback from young people. DfE welcome the work that UCAS is doing to promote apprenticeships to young people, and are working with UCAS so that young people can be directed to the latest apprenticeship vacancies on gov.uk.

Apprenticeships are also promoted to young people through Jobcentre Plus. DWP works in partnership with local stakeholders, including employers and apprenticeship providers, to help work coaches understand the opportunities and skills needs in each area. The wrap-around support offered through the enhanced DWP Youth Offer (including the partnership approach taken in DWP Youth Hubs) helps young people take advantage of such offers.

With the roll out of HTQs (Level 4 & 5 qualifications) DfE are looking to include these qualifications alongside other vocational products in a user-friendly portal especially for young people. Presently they appear both on UCAS and NCS websites dependent on the provider, however work is presently ongoing to look at the possibility of having full coverage on one portal.

Providers offer a range of other technical courses for students of different ages and different stages to reflect the different needs. The government has made clear in statutory guidance that all young people should be given information on the options available to them, including T Levels, Traineeships, Higher Technical Qualifications, and other options.

Tackling disadvantage

Recommendations 50 & 51

50. Young people from low income and other disadvantaged backgrounds face a multitude of challenges in our society. Disparities in attainment first appear in their early years and widen throughout their education. They are significantly less likely to go on to higher education and far more likely to become NEET than their peers, even when they have similar qualifications. Disadvantaged young people face barriers to work, including physical and financial barriers, a lack of financial support to purchase the necessities needed to work and study, and a lack of access to digital equipment and data needed not only to work from home when necessary, but to apply for jobs in the first place. While the Government has brought in welcome support mechanisms for these young people, we are concerned that these measures do not go far enough. (Paragraph 239)

51. The Government must ensure that catch-up funding provided to schools following the pandemic is effectively targeted towards schools with a greater proportion of disadvantaged students, who are most likely to have lost out on learning during the pandemic. Effort must be made to ensure those most vulnerable have access to wraparound care to support their health and wellbeing. (Paragraph 240)

On targeting help to the disadvantaged, the Government agrees with the Committee. The Government recognises that extended school and college restrictions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's learning, particularly the most disadvantaged.

Evidence shows that disadvantaged pupils have experienced more learning loss and are even further behind their more advantaged peers, which is why the Department for Education are targeting recovery programmes towards those pupils, ensuring those hardest hit benefit most and receive the support they need.

DfE has committed nearly £5bn to a comprehensive recovery package to support children and young people to make up for learning lost during the pandemic. This includes an additional £1.8bn of funding announced in the recent Spending Review. This investment is targeted at those that will need it most: delivering a universal uplift of hours for those with the least time left in education, in 16-19 settings, and an additional £1 billion to extend the recovery premium for the next two academic years. This builds on the catch-up and Recovery Premium for academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22 worth £950m, which can be used by schools on evidence-based activities to support those who need it most, weighted so that schools with more disadvantaged pupils and SEND pupils receive more funding. The £1.5bn that DfE has allocated for tutoring enable the provision of up to 100 million tutoring hours for children and young people across England by 2024, expanding high-quality tutoring in every part of country so that small group tuition is available to every child and young person who needs help catching up – not just those who can afford it. The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) supports schools by providing access to high-quality tutoring to help pupils whose education has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The NTP is focused on areas with lower outcomes and in areas with high proportions of disadvantaged pupils, ensuring they receive extra support to catch up from the disruption caused by the pandemic.

The 16-19 Tuition Fund will offer the equivalent of around 2 million 15-hour courses by 2024 to accelerate the progression of lower attaining students. Eligibility in 2021/22 academic year has been broadened to include economic disadvantage in addition to low prior attainment. Including these students allows providers to offer tuition to all disadvantaged students who have been impacted by the pandemic, while still maintaining focus on low prior attainment.

All 16-19 students will receive the equivalent of an extra hour of tuition a week from September 2022 so that they can catch up on skills and knowledge. A universal uplift of 40 hours will help to mitigate learning loss for all 16-19 students. For disadvantaged students, DfE expect the cumulative effect of additional hours on top of existing interventions to be particularly significant.

In addition, to support access to remote education and online social care services, DfE has distributed over 1.35 million laptops and tablets to schools, trust, local authorities and further education providers for disadvantaged children and young people to date, and announced in October 2021 that they will be providing an additional 500,000 devices, which brings the total investment to support remote education and online social care to over £520 million. Additionally, DfE has previously announced funding to support schools and colleges in providing internet access for disadvantaged pupils whose face-to-face education is disrupted during the Autumn term. The programme also provided support for over 110,000 families to get online through uplifts in mobile data and 4G wireless routers. This included partnering with the UK's leading mobile operators to provide free data to help over 33,000 disadvantaged children get online and delivering over 77,000 4G wireless routers for pupils without connection at home.

The Government wants to ensure that children and young people leave education better educated, better skilled, and equipped for successful and productive careers.

Throughout the pandemic the Government has prioritised childcare, including wraparound childcare and out-of-school settings, remaining available for vulnerable children.

As announced by the Chancellor on 27 October 2021, the Government will as part of SR21 (three-year Spending Review) be providing over £200 million a year for the continuation of the Holiday Activities and Food programme, which provides enriching activities and healthy meals for disadvantaged children during school holidays. Local authorities will be able to use the funding for this programme, which is delivered through grants, to arrange childcare provision through a range of settings, including wraparound childcare settings.

The Government is committed to continuing support for school breakfast clubs and are investing up to £24 million to continue the national programme for the next two years. This funding will support around 2,500 schools in disadvantaged areas meaning that thousands of children from low-income families will be offered free nutritious breakfasts to better support their attainment, wellbeing, and readiness to learn.

The focus of the programme is to target the most disadvantaged areas of the country, including the Department for Education's Opportunity Areas. Schools' eligibility for the programme is based on the IDACI deprivation scale – a nationally recognised indicator of need – to ensure provision is directed where it is most needed. Schools will be eligible for

the programme if they have 50% or more pupils within bands A-F of the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) scale.

Following the 2021 Spending Review, the Government is also investing a transformational £560 million in youth services in England over the next 3 years; £368 million of our investment has been dedicated to the Youth Investment Fund, which will see 45 local authorities and around 670 district wards in deprived parts of England eligible to apply, paving the way for up to 300 youth facilities to be built or redeveloped over the next three years. The Youth Investment Fund is looking to level up opportunities across the country, investing in safe spaces for young people in the areas of greatest need, giving young people access to support from youth workers and enabling them to engage in beneficial activities.

This is part of a wider package the Government has provided long term, to support young people facing the greatest challenges, including the £200 million Youth Endowment Fund, which funds prevention and early intervention with young people at risk of exploitation and involvement in serious violence.

Recommendation 52

52. The Government must update its statutory guidance on Post-16 transport to education and training (2019) to ensure that T Level industry placements are included within the scope of support, so that young people who live in hard-to-reach areas or who have poor transport connections have satisfactory access to work, education and training opportunities. (Paragraph 241)

The statutory responsibility for transport to education and training for 16-19-year-olds rests with local authorities. This enables them to make decisions that best match local needs and circumstances. Most young people, including those who live in more rural areas, have access to some kind of discount or concession on bus or train travel, either from their local authority or local transport providers, or from their school or college. The statutory guidance on Post-16 Transport to Education and Training (2019) will be updated at the earliest opportunity to reflect that arrangements to support learners undertaking T Level industry placements should be set out in local authority transport policy statements, although the meeting of travel costs still remains at the discretion of each local authority.

The Government does, however, recognise that the cost of transport can be an issue for some young people, and this is one of the reasons the 16-19 Bursary Fund has been introduced. Awards from this fund support financially disadvantaged young people who need to help with costs such as for travel.

Providers must consider students' travel arrangements for accessing their placement and what support they might need. This might include help with travel costs or involve travel training for those students with special needs. It might involve accessing local transport schemes or working with other providers to secure economies of scale in approaches to travel. Providers can use their T Level industry placement funding, or the 16-19 discretionary bursary funds, for funding individual expenses for eligible students. Providers must refer to the 16-19 Bursary Fund Guide for eligibility criteria and use of funding. Employers may also support students with their costs if they wish.

Providers can draw on their 16-19 bursary allocation to support students, and the methodology for the 16-19 discretionary bursary has been revised with effect from the 20/21 academic year. The revised methodology considers two issues: deprivation levels and students' costs. Part of the costs calculation considers students likely to need additional financial support because they are taking part in an industry placement.

Recommendation 53

53. The Government must run a targeted awareness-raising campaign detailing in plain English the support available to help young people to stay in education, particularly focussing on young people studying in institutions and regions with high rates of disadvantage. (Paragraph 242)

Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and support young people who are not in education, employment, and training. All 16-17-year-olds are entitled to an offer of a suitable place in education or training under the September Guarantee regardless of qualifications gained. Local authorities are responsible for leading the September Guarantee, but the Department for Education has given them freedom to work with schools, colleges, and other partners to agree how best to deliver these requirements locally.

A new campaign was launched in January 2022 - 'Get the Jump' which will help raise awareness of the different education and training options available to young people, signposting them to the National Careers Service for more information that will help them make an informed choice. This brings together, for the first time, all education and training choices for young people in one place. The campaign targets all young people, including those from disadvantaged areas, using a diverse range of real-life stories to bring the options to life.

The DfE's Apprenticeship Support & Knowledge (ASK) for schools and FE colleges programme provides targeted local and regional support on Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) prevention to raise aspirations of cohorts of young people in areas of disadvantage and support their post-education progression.

Recommendation 54

54. In addition to the challenges young people with additional needs may face in their everyday lives, they face greater disadvantage in the labour market than their peers without additional needs. While there are a range of mechanisms in place to support young people with additional needs, the Government's Plan for Jobs included no targeted support for people with disabilities, despite the fact they were disproportionately more likely to be affected than their peers without additional needs. (Paragraph 253)

The Government's Plan for Jobs does offer support to young people with health conditions and disabilities. DWP's core offer is tailored to people's individual needs. Where a disabled young person is required to take steps towards work, tailored support will be provided, taking into account any impacts of their health condition or disability. Central to our offer is the one-to-one support delivered by work coaches and the extra support provided by Disability Employment Advisers through our Jobcentre Plus network. DWP has also introduced the new approach to conditionality, called Tailoring Up. For disabled people and people with health conditions, this aims to enable an honest and open conversation between a person and their work coach about what they can do. The aim is to build commitment to move towards work and into work where possible.

To support disabled young people with the transition from education into employment and to raise awareness of the support available, DWP is piloting a new Adjustments Passport. The passport will provide an up-to-date record of the passport holder's adjustments and an indicative overview for employers of the possible support available from Access to Work. The passport will also help to reduce the time it takes to obtain an Access to Work award by removing the need for an assessment where the individual's needs remain the same. The passport's main aim is to empower young disabled people to have the confidence to have discussions about their disability with potential employers.

A range of key DWP initiatives are supporting disabled people to start, stay and succeed in work:

- Disability Confident is a voluntary, business-led scheme designed to give employers the knowledge, skills, and free resources they need to recruit, retain and develop disabled people in the workplace.
- Access to Work provides funding for the extra disability-related costs of starting work or maintaining employment. In 2020/21 35,990 disabled people and people with health conditions received this tailored and flexible support.
- Disability Employment Advisers offer advice and expertise, via the national jobcentre network, on how best to help disabled people into work.
- Supported Internships provide opportunities for young people with a learning disability or autism, who have an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plan, to get vital on the job experience.

For unemployed disabled people who require more intensive employment support, DWP offers:

- The Work and Health Programme provides up to 15 months of pre-work support tailored to individual needs and up to six months of in-work support. By the end of November 2021, 200,000 people had started on the programme of which 77% of starts were people with a health condition or disability.
- The Intensive Personalised Employment Support (IPES) programme is voluntary provision aimed specifically at disabled people with complex barriers to employment who are more than twelve months from the labour market without this support. IPES aims to address barriers to employment and provide participants with the employability skills they need to either engage with, or move into, employment following participation in the programme. IPES provides up to 21 months of intensive, flexible support, including a minimum of 6 months in- work support.

Employment Advisers are embedded in 40% of the NHS's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services in England – combining psychological treatment and employment support.

2021's Health and Disability Green Paper *Shaping Future Support*³⁹ and the National Disability Strategy⁴⁰ set out action Government will take to improve support for disabled people. Each of these publications' forms part of the Government's holistic approach to supporting disabled people and people with health conditions to live as independently as possible.

³⁹ [Shaping future support: the health and disability green paper - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/shaping-future-support-the-health-and-disability-green-paper)

⁴⁰ [National Disability Strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-disability-strategy)

Recommendation 55

55. The Government must explore the feasibility of offering incentive payments to employers offering supported internships, to provide parity with apprenticeships. (Paragraph 254)

The Department for Education does not see the need for such a payment at present. Supported internships are a key part of the Government's offer to help young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) into employment. As set out in the National Disability Strategy, the Government is committed to strengthening the supported internship programme, and as part of that effort the Department for Education will continue to work with delivery partners and stakeholders, to identify the most effective ways to engage employers in the programme.

Recommendation 56

56. The Government must recruit more Disability Employment Advisors to provide parity with the increase in work coaches, help to meet its target of getting more disabled people into work, and support better awareness of Access to Work. (Paragraph 255)

Every work coach and every jobcentre in Great Britain has access to a Disability Employment Adviser (DEA).

From April 2021, DWP has been increasing the number of Disability Employment Advisers to 1,000 and Disability Employment Adviser Leaders to 115 across Great Britain. By January 2022 DEA numbers had increased to almost 900, almost double the number in place a year earlier; with over 100 DEA Leaders (increased from over 80 a year earlier).

DEAs support work coaches, as well as directly supporting disabled people and people with health conditions. DEAs also work closely with local employers, local third sector providers and local authorities to ensure our claimants are aware of and are supported by a range of services.

Recommendation 57

57. As part of its upcoming consultation on strengthening pathways to employment for disabled people, the Government must consider grant funding for a jobs guarantee for disabled young people—offering six months paid work and training accompanied by wraparound support—for any young person who has SEND and is newly unemployed. (Paragraph 256)

The Government is already providing a wide range of support to prepare young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) for work and enable them to access the 1.3 million⁴¹ vacancies in the labour market. This includes:

- delivering supported internships, structured study programmes based primarily with an employer. They are available for young people with learning disabilities who have an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plan and usually last for 12 months. Supported internships are delivered by DfE but DWP supports them with specialist job coaches and funding through Access to Work where needed;
- providing support from work coaches and Disability Employment Advisors within Jobcentres. Work is underway to make Jobcentres more autism-inclusive, with 15 Jobcentre Plus sites testing an autism framework, designed in partnership with the National Autistic Society. Many aspects of the framework, such as enhanced training for staff, improved signage, quiet areas, and adjustments to visit times to suit particular personal needs, will also have benefits for other SEND young people.
- delivering the Work and Health Programme, and the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, providing longer term, more intensive support for those with more intensive needs;
- working with employers through the Disability Confident scheme, to help them attract, recruit, retain and progress disabled people in their businesses.

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/unemployment/datasets/vacanciesbyindustryvacs02> - ONS Data as of 15/02/2022, excludes Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing vacancies.

Recommendation 58

58. The Government must clearly set out how it plans to monitor and publish its progress towards achieving the ambitions set out in the National Disability Strategy. (Paragraph 257)

The Government is committed to transforming the everyday lives of disabled people. The National Disability Strategy was published in July 2021 setting out a wide-ranging set of practical actions to improve the lives of disabled people including in the fields of education, transport, housing and jobs.

Work is ongoing across multiple departments to ensure disability is well understood, that the needs and experiences of disabled people are central to policy making and that these needs are always taken into account by frontline staff.

At the request of the Prime Minister, a set of Ministerial Disability Champions was appointed in summer 2020, to drive the development and delivery of the National Disability Strategy.

Now the strategy is published, the Minister for Disabled People chairs quarterly meetings of this group to sustain momentum and track progress against the commitments. The full list of Ministerial Disability Champions is set out on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

The strategy included the Government's pledge to publish an annual report in summer 2022, which will detail the progress made against the commitments.

Recommendations 59 and 60

59. Many young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, particularly those from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Caribbean, and African backgrounds, face a range of challenges accessing the labour market. Despite improvements in the gap in unemployment between ethnic minority groups and their white peers, their success in education is still not being translated into success in the labour market. They are still subject to discrimination on the part of some employers, are over-represented in precarious types of work, are less likely to benefit from the same social networks and professional connections as some of their white peers, and are more likely to have been harder hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, young people from disadvantaged groups in the white community also face challenges that must be considered as part of any strategy to achieve equality. (Paragraph 276)

60. The Government must launch an Education and Workplace Race Equality Strategy as a matter of urgency given the impact that COVID-19 has had on ethnic minority youth. This should focus on removing barriers including through mandating regular collection of data. The strategy should be intersectional given many of the issues concerning race and ethnicity are cross-cutting with socio-economic background, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and migration status. It should also be tailored so that it considers differences between ethnic groups, with specific recommendations for youth from ethnic groups most at risk such as young people from a Black Caribbean, Pakistani or Bangladeshi background, and those from white disadvantaged groups such as those from GRT communities. The proposed Youth Commissioner (see Chapter 7) should have a significant role in the development and implementation of the Education and Workplace Race Equality strategy, which should:

- Mandate the DWP to carry out an assessment on why the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on ethnic minority youth in relation to unemployment, insecure contracts, and precarious work conditions;**
- Introduce workforce monitoring for large employers, like that successfully introduced to tackle gender discrimination in the workplace, and new legislation to mandate ethnicity pay reporting;**
- Provide guidance to encourage name-blind CV recruitment practices in the private sector to ensure a person's skills, qualifications and attributes alone are recognised by hiring teams and targeted support programmes that will help ethnic minority youth overcome issues such as a lack of access to networks;**
- Focus on finding and tackling the causes of disparities, especially for at-risk ethnic minority groups in education;**
- Introduce additional academic support such as targeted funding for catch up lessons and extra tutoring in core subjects such as English and Maths as well as more resources to ensure all pupils have good access to digital devices;**
- Launch an investigation into the cause of high exclusion rates for Black Caribbean and GRT pupils, and publish regular, disaggregated data on school exclusions more broadly;**

- ***Evaluate the potential impact of having more ethnic minority teachers and school governors on exclusion rates of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds; and***
- ***Launch a database of national mentors as part of the CEC offer, particularly focussing on recruiting mentors from ethnic minority backgrounds as well as—for example—those with SEND and women in sectors commonly thought of as atypical, such as STEM industries. (Paragraph 277)***

The Government is committed to building a fairer Britain and ensuring that equality and opportunity is available for all. That is why the Prime Minister established the independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities which published its independent report on March 31st 2021.

There were 4.26 million individuals from an ethnic minority background in employment in October-December 2021, which is a record high and an increase of 237,000 on the year.

Alongside Plan for Jobs, which provides employment support to young people from all backgrounds, DWP operates a national programme of mentoring circles through which employers offer support to unemployed, young ethnic minority jobseekers. Mentoring circles provide ethnic minority mentees with an opportunity to share their experiences and the challenges they face with their peers, as well as offering the opportunity to engage with a diverse range of employers and industries. In turn, mentors help the young people understand what employers are looking for, help build their confidence and raise their aspirations.

Work coaches are working with voluntary sector organisations around the country (including The Prince's Trust) to support young people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Some examples of partnership activities taking place include:

- In Merseyside, the Department for Work and Pensions has funded an ethnic minority outreach role as part of the Youth Hub Flexible Support Fund grant to Merseyside Youth Association. The role addresses barriers to employment for young people from disadvantaged ethnic minority communities by working closely with partner organisations.
- In Leicester work coaches have been placed in local libraries in three wards with large ethnic minority communities, in partnership with Leicester City Council. These work coaches work in partnership with local providers to offer wrap around support with skills, training and employment provision, as well as a range of dedicated local services such as, mental health support, debt management and housing support, to support ethnic minority customers with their claim and to progress them towards employment.

More broadly, the Government is influencing employers, working with specific sectors to improve opportunities for individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds and promoting name-blind recruitment and the benefits of a diverse workforce.

The Ethnicity Pay Reporting framework is considerably more challenging than was the case

for Gender Pay Gap Reporting where the Government requirement is for employers with 250 or more employees to publish their gender pay gap. The picture is complex, and outcomes vary substantially between ethnicities and by gender within ethnic groups. There are genuine difficulties in designing a methodology that provides accurate figures and one that allows for interpretation and meaningful action from employers.

Having considered this complexity, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report contains a specific recommendation in relation to ethnicity pay gap reporting and suggests a voluntary approach. The Government welcomes the opportunity to consider the Commission's findings in relation to this issue, and to consider them in light of the work that has already taken place within Government – including the BEIS consultation which closed in 2019. As well as consulting on ethnicity pay gap reporting, the Government has met with businesses and representative organisations to understand the barriers towards reporting and what information should be published.

The government is now considering the Commission's findings in detail, assessing the next steps for future government policy, and will publish its response setting out the proposed way forward in due course.

Given this, the Government does not feel that an Education and Workplace Race Equality Strategy is necessary at this time. The Government continues to monitor this important area and take steps to address concerns where necessary.

On the question of higher school exclusion rates for Black, Caribbean and GRT pupils, for example, DfE is aware that there are longstanding national trends, which show that particular groups of children are more likely to be excluded from school, both for a suspension or permanent exclusion. Current statutory guidance on suspensions and permanent exclusion is clear that all schools should consider what extra support might be needed to identify and address the needs of children from groups with disproportionately high rates of exclusion, to reduce their risk of being excluded.

The Department for Education will be consulting shortly on a revised version of the School Suspension and Exclusion guidance. This will include information on how schools, local authorities and local partners should work together to understand what lies behind local trends. It is important to note that local leaders will be best placed to effectively plan and put in place additional and targeted action based on their own context. If they identify any trends, they are also in the position to act to ensure those who work with children have the training, services and support they need to address these.

The levels of permanent exclusions and suspensions by pupil characteristic, school type, including information on reasons for permanent exclusions and review panels can all be found online at [Statistics: exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/statistics/exclusions)

Recommendation 61

61. The Government must ensure it publishes Equality Impact Assessments in a timely fashion, alongside the publication of new policy papers and legislation. It should explore whether the Equality Act 2010 could be amended to require a statutory duty on public authorities to produce Impact Assessments and whether guidance can be issued to employers about positive levers they can take under the Equality Act. (Paragraph 278)

On the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Government respectfully draws the attention of the Committee to responses the Government has recently made to the second report of Session 2021-22 of the Liaison Committee of the House of Lords (HL 60), concerning legislative changes to the Duty, and to the first report of Session 2021-22 of the Women & Equalities Committee of the House of Commons (HC 702), concerning publication of equality impact assessments.

On legislative change, the Government said:

“The public sector equality duty is [. . .] a cross-cutting duty in the Equality Act, applicable to all public settings - employment, the provision of public functions, transport, housing, education and so on. Any change to the main duty set out in the body of the Act would therefore require opening up the Act as a whole to amendment, including every protected characteristic and every legislative exception to unlawful discrimination.

Nor is there necessarily any consensus among stakeholders about whether and how the duty itself should change, as the relevant recommendations in the Policy Exchange’s analysis of how the Equality Act 2010 has worked in practice over 10 years - issued a few days after the publication of the Committee’s report - illustrate.

The Government therefore takes the view that amendments to the public sector equality duty at S149 of the Equality Act should in due course be considered if and when any more general decision is taken to revise or replace the Act in the future.”

On publication of equality assessments, the Government said:

“As with Government policy and legal compliance documents generally, there is no assumption that duty assessments ought to be published or made publicly available as a matter of course.”

The [letter from the Minister of State for Equality](#)⁴² referred to in the Government response to the Women & Equalities Committee has now been published on [GOV.UK](#).

The Government also notes the Committee’s recommendation to consider issuing guidance about employers’ use of positive action under the Equality Act 2010. Guidance⁴³ is already available from the Equality & Human Rights Commission ([guidance on positive action in the](#)

⁴² [Letter to ministers on Public Sector Equality Duty assessments - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴³ [Employers: what is positive action in the workplace? | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](#)

[workplace](#)) and the Advisory, Conciliation & Arbitration Service ⁴⁴([guidance to employers about making decisions based on protected characteristics](#)). The guidance applies to every protected characteristic, including age.

⁴⁴ [Helping a disadvantaged or under-represented group: When an employer may make a decision based on age, race or another protected characteristic - Acas](#)

Recommendation 62

62. Young people who have been in care face a range of challenges in their personal lives that may make achieving success in the labour market more difficult to achieve. They are likely to have faced significant disruption to their education and face challenging financial circumstances. They are underrepresented in high tariff HE participation and are disproportionately represented in NEET statistics. While support mechanisms are in place to help them move into work, the Government must consider whether these are working effectively and are properly targeted and fully resourced to address the challenges these vulnerable young people face. (Paragraph 288)

The Government recognises that care leavers are three times more likely than their peers in the general population to be NEET; and are far less likely than their peers to go to university. That is why the cross-Government care leaver strategy (Keep on Caring), identified ‘increasing care leavers’ participation in EET’ as a key outcome and set out a range of additional measures to increase care leavers’ engagement in EET. Support includes:

- a duty on local authorities to appoint a Personal Adviser (PA) to support care leavers up to age 25. PAs help care leavers to make the transition from care to independence, including support to engage in EET;
- a duty on local authorities to provide financial support to help care leavers to engage in EET, including a £2,000 bursary for care leavers who go to university. Care leavers who start an apprenticeship are entitled to a £1,000 bursary; and care leavers are a priority group for the 16-19 bursary if they are studying in FE (up to £1,200 per year).
- three care leaver social impact bonds (£5m over 4 years), which use ‘payment by results’ contracts to support care leavers into education, employment or training. An evaluation of the SIBs will be published in Autumn 2022.
- the Civil Service care leaver internship scheme, which in 2020/21 appointed over 250 care leavers to paid jobs in over 20 Government Departments/Agencies across the UK. The Government is looking at how it can provide similar opportunities in other large public sector employers, such as the NHS and Police.
- guidance to Higher Education Institutions (HEI) on how they can ensure care leavers have the support they need to succeed at university, using case studies from across HEIs to illustrate best practice.
- the care leaver covenant, which provides a way for businesses to show their commitment to care leavers through providing concrete offers of support.

A range of provision is available for young people aged 16-24 to equip them with the skills and experience they need to progress, which care leavers have access to. This includes traineeships which prepare young people for apprenticeships and work through a combination of sector-focused skills development and work experience; and Supported Internships which offer tailored support for young people with SEND.

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to identify and support young people who are not in education, employment, and training.

The Department for Work and Pensions provides additional support for care leavers aiming to simplify and improve their interaction with the benefit system. For example:

- **The Second Chance Learning Scheme** supports care leavers aged 18 to 21 who wish to catch up on the education they may have missed out on when they were younger. This makes Universal Credit and Housing Support or Housing Benefit available to those who take up full-time study in non-advanced education (secondary level education).
- **The Exemption from the Shared Accommodation Rate** allows care leavers to claim the higher local Housing Allowance one-bedroom rate of either Housing Benefit or Universal Credit until their 25th birthday if they are living in the private rented sector. Normally the Shared Accommodation Rate would apply to single people without dependants aged under 35.
- **The Advanced Claim Preparation facility** is available from Jobcentre Plus, supporting care leavers during the transition from Local Authority financial support to DWP welfare support.
- **The care leaver single points of contact** are available in Jobcentres to support the needs of care leavers and colleagues if required. They also act as a point of contact for the Local Authority Leaving Care Teams.
- Early access to the **Work and Health Programme** is available to care leavers, as they are recognised as a priority group for this support. This programme offers a personalised approach to support people into employment.

In February 2022 DWP introduced an optional identifier to the Universal Credit system that enables the department to better identify care leavers and ensure they receive the support they are entitled to.

Recommendation 63

63. The Government must ensure that the needs of young people who have been in care are considered central to the design of policy intended to improve the opportunities for disadvantaged young people in the labour market. There must be specific, targeted support available for these young people to ensure their needs are taken into account. (Paragraph 289)

The Government recognises that improving care leavers' outcomes requires a cross-Government approach and has established the Care Leaver Ministerial Board. This is co-chaired by DfE Secretary of State and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and brings together Ministers from key Departments to consider how Government policies and services can best support care leavers to achieve their full potential, including in relation to participation and achievement in EET.

There are a range of ways in which care leavers' circumstances have been taken into account in wider policies aimed at improving opportunities for young people at a disadvantage in the labour market. For example, DfE provides £1000 to both employers and providers when they take on younger apprentices under the age of 25 that have been in care, in recognition of the additional support they may need. The Government also pays 100% of apprenticeship training costs for the smallest employers (fewer than 50 staff) taking on these apprentices.

As described above, care leavers are also eligible for early access to DWP's Work and Health Programme.

Recommendations 64, 65 & 66

64. Children and young people in the criminal justice system, many of whom are already disadvantaged in many ways, face several barriers to employment. They have limited access to many of the educational resources available to those outside, and as a result their ability to effectively rebuild their lives and obtain good work is severely hampered. (Paragraph 301)

65. This lack of support for personal and professional development often results in a carousel of release, instability and ultimately reoffending. We received limited evidence on prison education and therefore recommend the Government consider the recommendations of the current House of Commons Education Select Committee's inquiry into education in prisons, and Ofsted and HMIP's joint review into prison education. (Paragraph 302)

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) look forward to receiving the report from the House of Commons Education Select Committee's inquiry into education in prisons and will consider each of their recommendations.

The Government has recently set out big ambitions for Prison Education in our Prison Strategy White Paper, published on 7 December 2021 which sets out actions to deliver the Prisoner Education Service manifesto commitment. There will be a strong focus on improving numeracy and literacy as well as ensuring prisoners get the qualifications and training they need to get work on release.

66. The Government must commit to improving the provision of education and employment support for young people who are in custody or have been engaged with the criminal justice system. This must be a central pillar of Ofsted and HMIP's upcoming review of prison education. Specific initiatives must include:

- **The Government must adapt the Prison Apprenticeship Pathway to allow for the work experience portion of an apprenticeship to start either while in custody or during release on temporary licence (ROTL). This should also cover traineeships;**
- **The Government must ensure digital skills are integrated into learning in custody so that young people in custody are not left behind. It must increase the availability of monitored devices in prisons so that young people can access learning resources; and**
- **The Government must commission a pilot to test how the Gatsby Benchmarks and careers guidance could be adapted for those learning while in custody, focussing on independent, tailored advice and guidance. (Paragraph 303)**

The government fully supports preparing prisoners for employment upon their release and recognise how important this is. Ex-prisoners can already begin apprenticeships upon their release and large employers who take on ex-prisoners as apprentices can use their levy funds to cover the costs of training and assessment.

The Department for Education and Ministry of Justice (MOJ) are working together to look at introducing apprenticeships for those in prison. Currently, serving prisoners are not able to

undertake an apprenticeship because MOJ policy prohibits them from entering contracts of employment. DfE and MOJ are looking at whether it is possible to create an arrangement for an alternative English apprenticeship through secondary legislation. There would still be operational and logistical issues to work through to implement apprenticeships for prisoners and the quality of the apprenticeship would need to be ensured for both the prisoner and the employer.

MOJ and DfE are also working together to develop a pre-employment programme for prisoners, learning lessons from DfE successful traineeships pre-employment offer.

As set out in the Prison Strategy White Paper HMPPS/MOJ will be developing new digital content and expanding the use of secure laptops to make education more accessible and enable prisoners to continue and enrich their learning outside of the classroom. The teaching of digital skills is part of the core curriculum in prisons and HMPPS also work with training partners like Code4000 who teach software development skills to prisoners and provide support for them find them work in the technology sector upon release.

MOJ are currently refreshing careers guidance policy following a comprehensive review undertaken by the Ministry in 2020. We consider recommendations of a pilot to test how the Gatsby Benchmarks and careers guidance could be adapted for those learning while in custody as part of planned improvements to the commissioning of careers services in prisons.

Prior to April 2018, the National Careers Service provided careers information, advice and guidance in prisons, on behalf of Ministry of Justice/HM Prisons and Probation Service (MoJ/HMPPS). From April 2018 MoJ/HMPPS took the decision to devolve responsibility and decision making for careers guidance provision to individual prison governors.

The National Careers Service contractors work with a range of partners, including National Probation Service/Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs), to provide careers information advice and guidance to ex-offenders.

While the service is a universal service there are priority groups who are likely to be most in need of intensive help. Ex-offenders may fall within these groups, which are:

- adults aged 50 and over and who are unemployed, or at demonstrable risk of unemployment;
- low-skilled adults without a qualification at level 2 or above;
- people with learning difficulties and disabilities;
- adults who have been unemployed over 12 months;
- 18–24-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET);
- Single parents with at least one dependent child living in the same household.

The Gatsby Benchmarks are based on international best practice and have been tested in a pilot in schools and colleges in the North East of England. This learning has informed current guidance and support materials which can be used by institutions, including prisons and young offender institutions, to adapt the benchmarks for use with young people in a variety of education settings.

Governmental initiatives and responsibilities

Recommendation 67 & 68

67. While there is clearly strong positivity around what Youth Hubs could provide, Laura-Jane Rawlings, CEO of Youth Employment UK, told us that even Youth Hubs struggle with the problem of ‘too many cooks’. She called for a leader with national accountability for Youth Hubs. (Paragraph 310)

68. There is no individual within senior UK Government with sole responsibility for youth unemployment. There is a need to better connect the key Government departments on this issue including Work and Pensions; Education; Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy; Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; and HM Treasury, so that young people do not fall through the cracks. If properly resourced, Youth Hubs could streamline the variety of provisions in place for young people and deliver them more effectively. (Paragraph 311)

DWP Youth Hubs are a central part of the Department's Youth Offer, allowing work coaches to establish vital links in the community between young people and the range of dedicated organisations ready to support them. They are a joint endeavour, bringing together partners from employment and skills sectors, training providers, youth charities, DWP and others within local communities to support the transition of young people into work. The Government sees the benefits of sharing of best-practice between Youth Hubs, however, it is important that they retain the flexibility to respond to place-based challenges.

The Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions already work closely together to support young people across the country. More widely, both departments also have strong working relationships in place across Government. This includes with DCMS on their Youth Review and with the Home Office on their serious violence agenda. Departments also work with the Devolved Administrations to ensure that no young person is left behind.

Recommendation 69, 70 & 71

69. While we understand calls for a minister for youth unemployment, we are concerned that this would not best serve the interests of young people given that the factors influencing youth unemployment are spread across departmental responsibility by their nature. A Governmental reorganisation may only add another artificial divide. An authority that is independent, representative of young people and can challenge the Government in public will be best placed to hold them publicly to account, as was demonstrated by the role played by Sir Kevan Collins. (Paragraph 312)

70. The Government must appoint an independent Young People's Commissioner for youth aged 16 to 24 with specific reference to youth unemployment, education and skills, including the new Youth Hubs. The purpose of this role should be to interrogate Government policy and be the voice of young people, in a similar role to that of the Children's Commissioner, whose remit covers those aged 18 and under. At the point of overlap in their proposed remits, between the ages of 16 and 18, the Government must consider how they can work together to ensure the best outcomes for young people undertaking FE or training. (Paragraph 313)

71. The role of Young People's Commissioner should be designed on similar principles to that of the Children's Commissioner: the Office of the Commissioner should be established as a non-departmental public body, largely independent from ministers and accountable to the public directly via Parliament, for which the Commissioner should produce an Annual Report. (Paragraph 314)

The Government does not agree that an independent Young People's Commissioner is required.

The Minister for Employment in DWP currently has responsibility for departmental strategy on the labour market, unemployment and in work progression, with a focus on under-represented groups, young people, and skills across Great Britain. The Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills in DfE has responsibility for reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment, or training.

Ministers work with cross-Government ministerial colleagues and partners to explore and identify what more needs to be done to address youth unemployment. This is a complex and multi-faceted issue, which is why ministers also work closely with external stakeholders, including the Youth Employment Group, who rightly provide scrutiny and challenge.

Separate to ministers, the Children's Commissioners for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are advocates for children and young people, so that policymakers and the people who have an impact on their lives take their views and interests into account when making decisions about them.

Grounded in the findings from DCMS's Youth Review, the Government is also investing £560 million for the National Youth Guarantee, announced in the Levelling up White Paper, so that every young person in England will have access to regular clubs and activities,

adventures away from home, and volunteering opportunities by 2025. This will transform the Government's offer for young people and level up opportunities right across the country.

- £368 million of our investment has been dedicated to the Youth Investment Fund, which will provide up to 300 new or redeveloped youth facilities in deprived areas across the country, plus an additional £10 million in the current financial year.
- £171 million for the National Citizen Service to provide young people from all backgrounds with opportunities to become 'work-ready and world-ready'
- And £22 million funding for youth services: offering The Duke of Edinburgh's Award to every secondary state school, tackling teenager waiting lists in non-military uniformed youth groups (such as Scouts and Guides), and funding the #iwill youth volunteering programme.

Recommendation 72

72. The Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions should work together on the creation of a consolidated ‘toolkit’ guide for employers on the types of opportunity they can provide for young people, the costs and benefits that they provide, and the pathways they can progress towards. This should include work experience opportunities like traineeships, apprenticeships, T Level industry placements and SWAPs. A version of this guide should be developed in an accessible format for young people. (Paragraph 315)

To support the new joined up campaigns for employers and young people, new web pages on gov.uk and the National Careers Service have been developed to bring together the relevant education, skills and training offers for each audience. This includes the [Get the Jump](#)⁴⁵ campaign site for young people, the [Skills for Life](#)⁴⁶ campaign site for adults, and the site for [employers](#)⁴⁷. These new websites will be promoted through the new campaigns and have been developed using user insights to insure they meet information and accessibility needs and provide effective signposting to further information on how to take up opportunities.

⁴⁵⁴⁵ [Get the Jump: explore your education and training choices | National Careers Service](#)

⁴⁶ [Unlock a better way ahead - Skills for Life \(campaign.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴⁷ [Find training and employment schemes for your business \(employers-options.herokuapp.com\)](#)

Recommendation 73

73. The Government must work with businesses to create an Opportunity Guarantee, offering all young people aged 16 to 24 the guarantee of a job, education or training. This should be extended to every young person, not just those claiming Universal Credit, to ensure that nobody misses out. Youth Hubs could be the primary vehicle to deliver this. (Paragraph 316)

The Department for Education's September Guarantee is a process that aims to ensure that all 16-17-year-olds receive an offer, by the end of September each year, of a suitable place to continue in education or training. The Guarantee enables schools and Local Authorities (LAs) to identify young people who do not have an offer of a place for the next academic year so that they can offer additional support to these young people through the summer. It can also help LAs to identify any emerging gaps in provision and work with the Education and Skills Funding Agency to address these.

More widely, the Government's Plan for Jobs provides a guaranteed foundation of support for young people. This package includes specific measures to support them into work, including the DWP Youth Offer. On 4 October 2021 the Government announced a further £500 million to expand Plan for Jobs. For young people this includes extending the Youth Offer until 2025 (with widened eligibility so 16-17-year-olds searching for work can now access this support alongside 18-24-year-olds).

The Government recognises that young people's labour market outcomes were negatively impacted by the pandemic and that challenges remain. There are 1.3 million⁴⁸ vacancies in the labour market and the Plan for Jobs as a whole includes £1.6bn investment to scale up employment support schemes and training across DfE and DWP initiatives, to support people to move into these vacancies. This includes over £500m (DfE spend) in a package of support to ensure young people have the skills and training to go on to high quality, secure and fulfilling employment.

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/unemployment/datasets/vacanciesbyindustryvacs02> - ONS Data as of 15/02/2022, excludes Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing vacancies.

Recommendation 74 & 75

74. Kickstart is a welcome initiative that has supported the provision of opportunities for work experience to thousands of young people, but it is currently due to end in March 2022. It could be improved, expanded and potentially made permanent so that it reaches those who could benefit most from the support it offers. It could also be more clearly aligned with further training opportunities such as traineeships. (Paragraph 325)

75. The Government must extend Kickstart beyond the immediate crisis. Its eligibility should be broadened to include those from disadvantaged backgrounds who are not accessing Universal Credit. When able to do so, it should publish outcomes data broken down by demographic groups, with an emphasis on those with protected characteristics. To fully meet the needs of these groups, the Government must ensure that CEIAG and training support are core components of any placement by linking employers to local organisations and intermediaries who are able to provide one-to-one wraparound support for Kickstart participants who may require more support. (Paragraph 326)

The Kickstart Scheme has always been a time-limited scheme designed to combat the economic effects of the pandemic on young people.

Kickstart jobs were required to be additional jobs in order to meet the Government's Value for Money test. There are now around 1.3m open labour market vacancies across the economy.

DWP also appreciates that while Kickstart is a suitable option for many, it is not the right option for everyone – including those who could secure work for more than 25 hours per week. There is a range of local and national offers of support to get young people into work, beyond Kickstart. This includes Sector-based Work Academy programmes, traineeships, work experience, Mentoring Circles, apprenticeships, DWP Youth Hubs and Youth Employability Coaches.

Work coach discretion is core to targeting employment services, including for Kickstart. Where the scheme is a suitable option for an eligible young person work coaches will refer them to the opportunity regardless of their background. It is then up to that young person to apply for the job. Advice, guidance, and training is provided to work coaches to reinforce suitability requirements and referrals.

Recommendation 76

76. The Government must explore whether the removal of the recommended ratio of three employees to one Kickstart participant would enable microbusinesses to access the scheme if there is appetite to do so. The Government must consider a 'bonus' incentive provided to the employer if a Kickstart participant goes into a permanent role following their placement. (Paragraph 327)

The Kickstart scheme has closed for applications.

The recommended 'ratio' referred to above forms part of DWP's due diligence, which the Department carries out on organisations requesting Kickstart grant funding. The intention of this is to ensure young people have the right support while employed through the Kickstart scheme. Smaller organisations or sole traders have been able to access the scheme through one of over 900 gateways, which act as intermediaries for employers that lack the infrastructure to provide the necessary employability support for young people. Gateway Plus organisations were established for sole traders and organisations that could not provide a PAYE system, thereby giving smaller organisations an opportunity to support young people into Kickstart jobs.

To support progression, the Government has made special provision to allow employers taking on Kickstarters as apprentices to be eligible for the apprenticeship incentive payments, worth up to £3,000.

Recommendation 77

77. More widely, the Government must also undertake a rigorous assessment of take up of Kickstart places and the barriers to this, so that appropriate lessons are learned and opportunities for the disadvantaged are maximised, regardless of whether the scheme is extended or replaced with a longer-term programme. (Paragraph 328)

The Department for Work and Pensions will monitor and evaluate the Kickstart scheme throughout and after its implementation. This will continue with an evaluation of the longer-term outcomes for Kickstart participants after they have completed their six-month jobs.

Recommendation 78 & 79

78. Brexit has resulted in a loss of access to EU funds that have supported youth unemployment initiatives. The Government has announced new funding streams in place of these EU funds. However, there is no guarantee that they will continue to fund youth unemployment initiatives at the same level, if at all. (Paragraph 333)

79. The Government must ensure that due consideration is given to the potential of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Community Renewal Fund to continue to deliver finance to programmes that support youth employment, particularly targeting the NEET group, at an equivalent or increased level to that of the European Social Fund. (Paragraph 334).

The UK Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF) is helping local areas prepare for the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The UKCRF will see over £200m invested in skills, communities, and local businesses, supporting people into employment across the UK. The £200m package will support areas most in need⁴⁹.

Funding has been allocated to each UKCRF investment theme as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| • Investment in skills | 25% |
| • Investment for local business | 23% |
| • Investing in communities and place | 20% |
| • Supporting people into employment | 32% |

A number of UKCRF projects are targeted towards young people, include supporting them into employment, developing entrepreneurial skills in preparation for self-employment and even providing intensive, one-to-one support to help support young people with multiple and complex needs increase their chances of securing work.

From 2022, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will help people access opportunity across the UK. Places will be empowered to identify their needs and build on their strengths at a local level, with a focus on building pride in place and increasing life chances. UKSPF will be delivered through three investment priorities: a) communities and place, b) local businesses, and c) people and skills.

The Fund's interventions will be planned and delivered by local authorities across England, Scotland and Wales, working closely with local partners. In Northern Ireland, the UK Government will have oversight of the Fund.

As announced in Levelling Up the United Kingdom⁵⁰, UKSPF will include investment in 'people and skills'. One element of this investment will be employment interventions to reduce levels of economic inactivity and move those furthest from the labour market closer to employment, through investment in bespoke employment support tailored to local need. Investment will facilitate the join-up of mainstream provision and local services, through the use of one-to-one keyworker support. Depending on local priorities, this could include

⁴⁹ [UK Community Renewal Fund: prioritisation of places methodology note - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prioritisation-of-places-methodology-note)

⁵⁰ [Levelling Up the United Kingdom - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom)

programmes that support youth employment.

UK-wide, funding for the UKSPF will ramp up to £1.5 billion per year by March 2025. Alongside commitments to support regional finance funds across the UK via the British Business Bank, this upholds the UK Government's commitment to matching EU structural fund receipts for each nation.

The Government recognises the role that EU structural funding plays in supporting jobs and growth, and disadvantaged people and those furthest from the labour market. This will continue in many areas until 2023.

Leaving the European Union enables the UK to identify UK-specific priorities and target funding where it is needed most. UKSPF is not a direct replacement for EU structural funds. It improves these funds by:

- Focusing on UK priorities rather than policies dictated by the EU. For example, as a first priority, UKSPF will invest in a £560m adult numeracy programme, 'Multiply'.
- Giving local areas a greater say in investments, through a redefined relationship with the Government working in direct partnership with local areas.
- Cutting burdensome EU bureaucracy by giving more direct accountability to elected local leaders.

Recommendations 80, 81 & 82

80. Without high quality data, collected and published on a regular basis, the Government, policymakers and third parties cannot properly assess the impact of its employment interventions on young people from a range of vulnerable groups. This limits understanding of how effective any intervention is at reaching the most in need, and the capacity to which it can be improved. (Paragraph 349)

81. The Government must work with the ONS to improve the quality and quantity of employment data collected on specific groups of young people, in particular those from disadvantaged (such as FSM-eligible) and ethnic minority backgrounds. This data must be published at more regular intervals than is presently the case so that it can be interrogated by policymakers. (Paragraph 350)

82. The Government must take a more uniform approach to publishing detailed data on takeup and outcomes from its employment support schemes. This information should be able to be split by local authority area, demographic group and disadvantage. (Paragraph 351)

The Government publishes a wide range of data which is all subject to robust quality assurance processes. Different Plan for Jobs programmes have different methods of data collection and there are differences in the robustness of the data available.

For some programmes, data is not published on a regular basis for several reasons, including:

- Need for further work on quality assurance processes to sufficiently underpin statistical releases (particularly where large-scale recording systems have been set up quickly, possibly leading to inherent inaccuracies).
- Difference in data collection methods between DWP and providers.
- Cost and resource intensive data collection requirements.

Cross-Government analysts have a close working-relationship with their counterparts in the Office for National Statistics, collecting data and publishing statistics on topics related to their departmental responsibilities. Officials from DWP and other Government departments are formally part of governance meetings and processes for existing sources of labour market data (e.g. Labour Force Survey, Annual Population Survey) and new sources of data (e.g. the Labour Market Survey). They provide ONS with expert analytical advice on decisions related its survey design/delivery and the publication of regular statistics from its survey data. As part of this work officials provide ONS with input to ensure that the data collected, and statistics published are able to provide a robust evidence base to inform and influence departmental business.

The government agrees that high quality employment data is crucial and that is why it is establishing the Unit for Future Skills. The aim of the Unit is to transform how Government uses jobs and skills data to lead to a responsive training system that ensure that learners have the skills employers need and can get good, well-paying jobs. This Unit will be a key part of the broader Post-16 Education Reform agenda to expand the numbers of students and adults taking advanced technical courses in high-value subject areas.

Recommendation 83

83. The Government must, so far as possible, ensure that the destinations of school leavers in the summer they leave school are recorded so that their effectiveness can be better monitored. We recognise, however, that any mandatory requirement in this respect may impose a disproportionate burden on school administration which they may not have the capacity to manage. Instead, the Government must assess how best schools can be supported to achieve the relevant Gatsby benchmark in this area and allocate appropriate resources if necessary. (Paragraph 352)

The Department for Education agrees that destinations data can help schools and colleges understand how well they are working to prepare their students to make the transition from school or college to the next phase of their life, whether this be in education, training, or employment. Results from Compass (a tool developed by The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) to help schools and colleges to assess the effectiveness of their careers provision) show that a number of schools and colleges already make effective use of data to track student destinations and use the results to inform the development of their careers programme.

The CEC delivers training and provides resources to Careers Leaders within schools and colleges to equip them with the appropriate skills and experience to deliver a successful careers programme. DfE is rolling out Careers Hubs to promote collaboration and sharing of good practice. Additional resources are also available on the CEC's website. DfE also produces a guide to support schools, colleges and local authorities to meet their obligations with regards to the destinations of their pupils and provide examples of how destinations data can be used effectively to improve the school's provision.

As mentioned, Government is also establishing the Unit for Future Skills, which aims to transform how Government uses jobs and skills data to lead to a responsive training system that ensure that learners have the skills employers need and can get good, well-paying jobs. This Unit will be a key part of the broader Post-16 Education Reform agenda to expand the numbers of students and adults taking advanced technical courses in high-value subject areas.

Recommendation 84

84.As an interim measure, the Government must take steps to reduce the lag between collection and publication of destination data, publish more data over a longer period of time, and explore the possibility of extending support for schools and FE institutions to access and interpret Longitudinal Educational Outcomes data on the destinations of their students. (Paragraph 353)

The Department for Education collects and publishes data on sustained destinations (whether students maintain their destination for at least six months, or two terms). While this does increase the length of time before destinations information can be published, DfE are committed to using sustained destinations data, because a fundamental test of whether or not the previous provider has prepared students for the next phase of their life is whether they can sustain the destination they go into - be it an apprenticeship, a job, or a degree - not just start it. DfE will therefore explore further whether they can reduce the time-lag for a sustained destinations measure, for example through data processing. It will only be possible to reduce the lag to a certain point as timescales depend on data availability and the need to determine if pupils have sustained a destination for 6 months.

The Department for Education already produces a longer-term destinations statistical release, which contains experimental statistics showing the number of students that have continued in education, an apprenticeship or employment for at least 6 months, at one, three and five years after finishing key stage 4. The Government will explore further ways these statistics could be developed.

A wide range of destinations data is published at institution level through the Performance Tables website (Compare School and College Performance) and through Department for Education official statistics releases. The Government will explore how to further promote this data and investigate providing further guidance on how schools and colleges can access and interpret the measures.

One of the key roles of the newly established Unit for Future Skills will be looking to improve the information on skills, producing more data, faster and in a more accessible way for different audiences. This will underpin a responsive training system that ensure that learners have the skills employers need and can get good, well-paying jobs. This Unit will be a key part of the broader Post-16 Education Reform agenda to expand the numbers of students and adults taking advanced technical courses in high-value subject areas.

Recommendations 85, 86, 87 and 88

85. We heard a range of positive case studies of local and regional initiatives to combat youth unemployment, including positive evidence of the employment and skills initiatives being undertaken by the recently established Mayoral Combined Authorities. We remain concerned at the evidence that there is a lack of local coordination of national funding streams, and of the work of national agencies. It is clear that longer-term solutions to the issue will only be found when they are locally driven and attuned to local needs. The Government must bear this in mind when developing and implementing initiatives to address the challenge. (Paragraph 370)

86. The Government must consider adopting the Local Government Association's 'Work Local' model, by which groups of councils and their local partners would receive funding and support to plan, commission and oversee a joined up system of employment support at a local level. (Paragraph 371)

87. The Government must ensure that youth employment initiatives such as Kickstart should, as far as possible, be delivered on the basis of local and regional collaboration, to ensure that opportunities are visible and accessible, and that young people have the largest range of opportunities to meet their aspirations. (Paragraph 372)

88. The Government must review the powers and resources devolved to Mayoral Combined Authorities with a view to extending them where appropriate, to ensure they have the capacity they need to support youth employment in their areas. (Paragraph 373)

Young people's needs vary depending on where they live and their own individual circumstances. Both DWP and DfE have established regular engagement with employment and skills leads in the Mayoral Combined Authorities, Greater London Authority, the Local Government Association and the Local Enterprise Partnership network.

The Department for Work and Pensions already recognises the importance of a place-based approach. DWP has local teams that specialise in partnership work, creating links to communities to understand each area's needs and provide or tailor relevant provision for the local labour market. This includes strong relationships with local partners, such as mayoral and local authorities.

DWP also has an extensive and evolving programme of contracted employment provision. This includes the Work and Health Programme, where commissioning and management of the contracted programme is delegated to Greater London and Greater Manchester authorities.

Jobcentres and DWP Youth Hubs are located across the country – using the knowledge of staff from the local area to provide young people with the most suitable provision. DWP Youth Hubs are a central part of the Department's Youth Offer, providing vital links in the community. They help to reach young people by providing access to support in a trusted space away from the typical Jobcentre environment which some young people can find intimidating. There are now over 160 DWP Youth Hubs open across England, Scotland and

Wales, bringing together partners from employment and skills sectors, training providers, youth charities, and others within local communities to support the transition of young people into work.

The Department for Work and Pensions engaged local stakeholders in the development of the Kickstart scheme from the outset, understanding that successful delivery is based on products and processes accessible to employers and deliverable on the ground at a local level. From the beginning of Kickstart this included proactive engagement with Mayoral Combined Authorities, Local Authorities and Local Employment Partnerships to ensure the provision of as many opportunities to create locally based Kickstart jobs as possible. This engagement continues.

The Department for Work and Pensions holds regular meetings with key stakeholders, including the British Chambers of Commerce, the Scottish Chambers of Commerce, the Confederation of British Industry, the Employment Related Services Association, Youth Employment Group, employment agencies (e.g. Adecco and Manpower), as well as the Devolved Administrations. This engagement has helped to shape the Kickstart scheme, maintain strong working relationships, and allowed DWP to ensure that organisations can provide updates to their members and networks about Kickstart.

Many organisations with whom DWP engages went on to become early adopters of the scheme with over 100 Local Authorities approved to be Kickstart gateways.

There was collaboration with Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) on the Restart commercial process to assess providers, as well as with local leaders to ensure the Kickstart scheme could help as many young people as possible. In addition, Restart providers will work with employers and local partners to identify skills gaps and growth sectors to develop the right package of support to help each participant succeed in their local area. Robust customer service standards have been put in place to ensure that all participants receive a quality, personalised service. Providers set reasonable expectations in line with the claimant's circumstances as agreed in their claimant commitment.

The Government values the expertise and knowledge of local labour markets that these stakeholders bring, reflecting their feedback in the design and implementation of future employment programmes. The Government also recognises the importance of collaboration to align services and offers and will implement the commitment in the Levelling up white paper⁵¹ to offer Mayoral Combined Authorities a new devolution deal, which may give MCAs a role in the design and delivery of future contracted employment programmes.

⁵¹ [Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)