HOUSE OF LORDS

Youth Unemployment Committee

Report of Session 2021–22

Skills for every young person

Ordered to be printed 16 November 2021 and published 26 November 2021

Published by the Authority of the House of Lords

HL Paper 98

Select Committee on Youth Unemployment

The Select Committee on Youth Unemployment was appointed by the House of Lords on 28 January 2021 to consider youth unemployment, education and skills.

Membership

The Members of the Select Committee on Youth Unemployment were:

Lord Baker of Dorking
Baroness Blower (from 22 July 2021)
Baroness Clark of Kilwinning (until 26 May 2021)
Lord Clarke of Nottingham
Lord Davies of Oldham
The Bishop of Derby
Lord Empey
Lord Hall of Birkenhead
Lord Layard
Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall
Baroness Newlove
Lord Shipley (Chair)
Lord Storey
Lord Woolley of Woodford

Declaration of interests

See Appendix 1.

A full list of Members' interests can be found in the Register of Lords' Interests: http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests

Publications

All publications of the Committee are available at: https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/506/youth-unemployment-committee/publications/

Parliament Live

Live coverage of debates and public sessions of the Committee's meetings are available at: http://www.parliamentlive.tv

Further information

Further information about the House of Lords and its Committees, including guidance to witnesses, details of current inquiries and forthcoming meetings is available at: http://www.parliament.uk/business/lords

Committee staff

The staff who worked on this Committee were Simon Keal (Clerk), Francesca Crossley (Policy Analyst) and Abdullah Ahmad (Committee Operations Officer).

Contact details

All correspondence should be addressed to the Youth Unemployment Committee, Committee Office, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW. Telephone 020 7219 2228. Email hlyouthunemployment@parliament.uk

Twitter

You can follow the Committee on Twitter: @LordsYouthUnemp

CONTENTS

Page

Summary of conclusions and recommendations 4

Executive summary 19

Chapter 1: Introduction 31
Figure 1: Estimated cost of youth unemployment in 2022 32
Key themes and report structure 34
Key statistics 35
Table 1: Labour market status of young people aged 16 to 24, Q2 2021 35
Figure 2: Proportion of 18-year-olds not in full-time education or work-based training, Q2 2021 36
Figure 3: NEET young people aged 16 to 24 in the UK between April and June 2021 37
Figure 4: Youth unemployment for young people age 16 to 24 in the UK between July and September 2021 38
Figure 5: Youth unemployment rates (%) in OECD countries, Q2 2021 39
Figure 6: Destinations of 18-year-olds at the end of compulsory education or training in England in 2019/20 40
Figure 7: Spending at different stages of education (2020–21 prices) 41

Chapter 2: Shortages of skills and their impact on young people 42
Figure 8: Defining skills 42
Box 1: How do the basic skills of our young people compare internationally? 42
Figure 9: Percentage of all adults aged 20 to 45 who held a level 4 to 5 qualification as their highest in the UK, Germany and Canada 43
Skills mismatches - background 44
Figure 10: Estimated under-skilling in the workforce in 2030 44
Table 2: Highest qualification held by 19–64-year-olds in the UK in 2019 45
Box 2: Digital skills initiatives 50
Government initiatives 51
Box 3: Young people's views on essential skills 56
Box 4: Life skills 57
Pre-16 secondary education 58
Figure 11: EBacc and non-EBacc subjects in GSCE entries f rom 2017 to 2021 (%) 59
Figure 12: National curriculum for secondary education in 1904 and today 60
Figure 13: 70% decline in GCSE entries in Design & Technology 62
Figure 14: 40% decline in GCSE entries in creative subjects 63
Box 5: The Curriculum for Wales 64
Figure 15: Possible recalibration of progress measures 66
Box 6: Assessment reform 66
Reskilling and upskilling 66
Box 7: Claiming benefits whilst studying 68

Chapter 3: Careers guidance and work experience 71
Careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) 71
Box 8: The Baker Clause 72
Box 9: The Gatsby Benchmarks 74
Figure 16: The Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance 74
Work experience 79
Chapter 4: Further education 83
The pressures on FE funding 83
Figure 17: Funding for FE has fallen over the last decade 84
Figure 18: Public spending on 16-18 and post-18 FE in £billion in England 84
Support for learners who are disadvantaged 86
The reputation of FE institutions 87
T Levels 89
: Composition of T Levels 89
Box 10: Defunding of 'competing' qualifications 90
Figure 20: Proposed timeline for the reconsideration of funding for qualifications that overlap with T Levels 93
Chapter 5: Apprenticeships 94
Apprenticeships: Key statistics 94
Figure 21: Total apprenticeship starts by age since 2002/03 95
Figure 22: Proportional (%) apprenticeship starts by age since 2002/03 95
Figure 23: Apprenticeship starts by age and level during the pandemic in England 96
Supply of apprenticeship places 97
The apprenticeship levy 97
Lack of incentives 99
Other factors 101
Barriers to take up 103
Misconceptions about apprenticeships 103
Figure 24: Graduate under- and unemployment 105
Demographic stereotypes 105
Figure 25: Apprenticeship starts by females in STEM subjects in 2019/20 105
Systemic barriers 106
Chapter 6: Tackling disadvantage 108
Socio-economically disadvantaged young people 108
Figure 26: The disadvantage gap for young people 108
Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) 112
Figure 27: Young people with SEND face significant challenges in education 113
Figure 28: Disability employment gap between 2015 and 2020 for those aged 16 to 64 in October to December 114
Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds 117
Figure 29: Percentage of young people in the UK aged 16 to 24 who were NEET by ethnicity and gender between 2017 and 2019 (combined) 118
Figure 30: Increase in unemployment rates for young people by

ethnic group during the COVID-19 pandemic 119
Box 11: Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 124
Young people who have been in care 126
Young people who have been in custody 128
Table 3: Adult (18+) FE and skills participation (2019/20) in prison education 129
Chapter 7: Governmental initiatives and responsibilities 133
Current cross-departmental approach 133
Figure 31: Key departmental responsibilities 134
Box 12: Scotland's Youth Employment Minister 135
Kickstart 138
The UK Shared Prosperity Fund 141
Data collection and publication 143
The Labour Force Survey (LFS) 143
Figure 32: Local variations in the NEET rate for 21-year-olds in the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area at March 2017 144
Government interventions 146
School leaver destinations 147
Local and regional policy implementation 149
Appendix 1: List of Members and declarations of interest 153
Appendix 2: List of witnesses 155
Appendix 3: Call for evidence 162
Appendix 4: Glossary of terms 165
Appendix 5: Engagement session notes 168
Appendix 6: Youth unemployment indicators 199
Appendix 7: A recent history of youth ALMPS 200
Appendix 8: The Gatsby Benchmarks 205
Appendix 9: Examples of qualifications by level 207
Appendix 10: Apprenticeship starts by age and level 209

Evidence is published online at https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/506/youth-unemployment-committee/publications/ and available for inspection at the Parliamentary Archives (020 7219 3074).

Q in footnotes refers to a question in oral evidence.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 2: Shortages of skills and their impact on young people

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

Chapter 3: Careers guidance and work experience

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

Chapter 4: Further education

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

Chapter 5: Apprenticeships

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)

43. The 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. 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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

Chapter 6: Tackling disadvantage

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)

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)

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)

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)

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

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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 (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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

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)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Unemployment[1] amongst young people aged 16 to 24 has long been a blight on our society. Today 800,000 young people (12.6% of 16 to 24-year-olds) are neither working nor in full-time study.[2] 631,000 (9.3%) are not in any form of education, employment or training (NEET).[3] 475,000 (7%) are unemployed and 163,000 (2.4%) of them have been unemployed for at least six months. Many who are in work do not report receiving any training. For example, 21.8% (141,000) of 18-year-olds are neither in full-time education nor employment with training.[4]

The UK's youth unemployment rate[5] (currently 11.7%) continues to be worse than other comparable countries including Japan, Germany, the Czech Republic, Israel, Mexico and Switzerland.[6] The impact of youth unemployment can endure for years, damaging individuals' life chances and work prospects. It could potentially cost the economy £10 billion in 2022 in lost productivity, tax revenue, and additional welfare costs.[7]

Despite this, total funding for post-18 further education (FE) has fallen by over 50% since 2009–10, while spending per student in colleges is 11% lower than a decade earlier.[8] The supply of opportunities for young people to take on apprenticeships[9] continues to lag behind demand, and long-running biases against technical education continue to persist. At the same time, economic changes, technological advances and the drive towards the green agenda have resulted in skills shortages in the jobs market that our young people are not being effectively prepared to meet.

---

1 Defined as those who are without a job, have actively been seeking work in the past four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks; or who are out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start it in the next two weeks

2 Written evidence from Office for National Statistics (YUN0085)

3 Office for National Statistics, 'Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: August 2021': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/latest#measuring-the-data [accessed 10 November 2021]

4 Office for National Statistics, 'Labour Force Survey; Office for National Statistics, Labour market overview, UK', November 2021: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/educationalstatusandlabourmarketstatusforpeopleagedfrom16to24seasonallyadjusteda06sa [accessed 16 November 2021]; House of Commons Library, *Youth unemployment statistics*, CBP 5871, 16 November 2021

5 The unemployment rate is calculated by dividing the unemployment level for an age group by the total number of economically active people in that age group.

6 Office for National Statistics, Labour market overview, UK: November 2021, https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/educationalstatusandlabourmarketstatusforpeopleagedfrom16to24seasonallyadjusteda06sa [accessed 16 November 2021]; House of Commons Library, *Youth unemployment statistics*, CBP 5871, 16 November 2021

7 See Prince's Trust, Learning and Work Institute, HSBC, 'Facing the future: Employment prospects for young people after Coronavirus', (March 2021): https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-policies-reports/2021-facing-the-future-employment-prospects-for-young-people- [accessed 10 November 2021].

8 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Further education and sixth form spending in England*, (18 August 2021), pp 2 and 11: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R333-Further-education-and-sixth-form-spending-in-England.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]; Institute for Fiscal Studies, *2020 annual report on education spending in England* (November 2020), pp 93–94: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R183-2020-annual-report-on-education-spending-in-England%20%281%29.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

9 A form of 'earn and learn' study where 20% of a young person's time is spent studying, with the rest spent on practical work in a job.

In the face of these challenges, the House of Lords Youth Unemployment Select Committee was appointed in January 2021 to consider youth unemployment, education and skills in England. The report focuses on England as many of the matters we consider are devolved in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales; however, we have drawn on good practice from other parts of the UK where relevant and some recommendations may have UK-wide application where they concern reserved matters.

Alongside speaking to Government ministers, experts, charities and businesses, we were particularly keen to hear and emphasise the voices of young people. We held four meetings including with young people who had experience of unemployment, as well as representatives from the organisations that support them. In the first of these sessions we heard from young representatives from across the country; during the second and third we heard from young people in the East Midlands and the Bolton and wider Lancashire area respectively; and the final session focused on young people from ethnic minority backgrounds based in and near London.

The longstanding drivers of youth unemployment

The underlying drivers of the UK's high youth unemployment rates in comparison both to the wider population and internationally are many, complex, and widely debated. We recognise the most important issues as follows:

- Skills gaps affecting young people: the prevalence of low skill and the related shortages of skill including those needed for the future; the role of the national curriculum in supporting digital, essential and life skills (see Chapter 2)
- Careers education and work experience: the Gatsby Benchmarks, adherence to the Baker Clause, the availability of work experience opportunities and barriers to take up (see Chapter 3)
- Further education (FE): the role of FE in tackling youth unemployment, parity of esteem with higher education (HE), and its role in skills provision including the Government's new Lifetime Skills Guarantee (see Chapter 4)
- Apprenticeships: the shortage of apprenticeship opportunities for young people, the impact of the apprenticeship levy, and obstacles to take up (see Chapter 5)
- Tackling disadvantage[10]: identifying disadvantaged groups, addressing ongoing employment disparities, addressing discrimination and prejudice, and targeted programmes (see Chapter 6)
- Government initiatives and responsibilities: departmental coordination, existing and future initiatives, and reforms needed to improve delivery (see Chapter 7)

10 Young people are defined as disadvantaged if they are known to have been eligible for FSM in the past six years (from Years 6 to 11), if they are recorded as having been looked after for at least one day or if they are recorded as having been adopted from care.

Skills gaps affecting young people

There are skills gaps and shortages[11] (see Chapter 2) in a variety of existing sectors of high importance, which has a hugely damaging impact on productivity. Recent news coverage bears this out. For example, the Road Haulage Association estimates there is now a shortage of over 100,000 qualified HGV drivers in the UK. Before COVID-19, there was a shortage of 60,000.[12] Brexit has played a role in this; in the year to March 2021, there were 28,000 EU nationals working as HGV drivers, down from 44,000 the previous year, and 39,000 the year before.[13] Equally, social care employers were unable to fill 8% of roles before the pandemic, which has risen to 8.2%. The adult social care vacancy rate has risen 2.3 percentage points since 2012/13.[14] With an ageing population, this issue is likely to increase.

This is a challenge facing a number of key growth areas of crucial importance for the future economy such as the green and digital economies. The green economy could provide more than a million new jobs in low-carbon sectors by 2050.[15] These include those in electricity generation, low-emission vehicles, manufacturing, hydrogen and retrofitting.

Digital skills are a near-universal requirement today and will remain so in future as the digital economy grows. There is no universal definition of these skills; broadly, they are skills needed to use computers and other digital technologies to carry out activities and achieve outcomes.[16] This includes a broad range of skills from basic use of word processing packages, to proficiency in computer science or 'computing', which focuses on information, computation, digital systems and programming.[17] We have heard that there is a huge expansion in the number of employers looking to fill posts in in cyber security, artificial intelligence (AI), computing, coding, electrification, and data analysis. 76% of businesses told the Learning and Work Institute that a lack of digital skills would affect their profitability.[18] This is a critical issue because the nature of digital skills in demand is constantly changing as technology develops.

---

11 Skills gaps happen where there is a percentage of the workforce not proficient at their job. Skills shortages occur when vacancies cannot be filled because applicants lack the requisite skills, experience or qualifications. Collectively, they can be referred to as skills mismatches i.e. an imbalance in the supply and demand of skills.

12 'How serious is the shortage of lorry drivers?', *BBC News* (13 October 2021): https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/57810729 [accessed 10 November 2021]

13 Office for National Statistics, 'HGV drivers by age and nationality': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/adhocs/13636hgvdriversbyageandnationality [accessed 10 November 2021]

14 Skills for Care, *The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England 2021*, (October 2021) p 71: https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/adult-social-care-workforce-data/Workforce-intelligence/documents/State-of-the-adult-social-care-sector/The-State-of-the-Adult-Social-Care-Sector-and-Workforce-2021.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

15 Ecuity Consulting and Local Government Association, *Local green jobs - accelerating a sustainable economic recovery* (2020): https://gemserv.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Local-green-jobs-accelerating-a-sustainable-economic-recovery_final-1.pdf [accessed 16 November 2021]

16 Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, *Developing essential digital skills*, PN0643

17 Department for Education, 'National curriculum in England: computing programmes of study', 11 September 2013: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-computing-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-computing-programmes-of-study, [accessed 10 November 2021]

18 Learning and Work Institute, *Disconnected? Exploring the digital skills gap* (March 2021): https://learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Disconnected-Report.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

Despite this pressing need, there is no official body responsible for reporting and forecasting skills needs. This role was once carried out by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), but this organisation was disbanded in 2017. As part of the Government's 'levelling up' agenda, the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill ('the Skills Bill') is intended to reform technical education, not least by asking employers to work with FE colleges on Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) to better align courses with employers' needs. The ambitions of some of the reforms laid out in the Skills Bill are welcome; however, it does not go far enough towards anticipating the needs of the future economy, nor does it influence the thousands of young people who attend mainstream secondary schools.

We have received evidence that there is a mismatch between what schools and colleges teach, and what skills and knowledge employers expect students to have learnt. We heard that the national curriculum is often restricted by the expectations set through the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and Progress 8, and is too reliant on high stakes written examinations. This system does not help many young people to demonstrate that they have the digital, technical, green or creative skills the economy needs, nor does it enable them to demonstrate essential skills such as problem-solving, teamworking, adaptability or oracy. While acquiring skills for work is not the sole purpose of education, it is a fundamental one. Equally, it does not prepare young people with the life skills they need such as financial literacy, which is more important than ever given the growing 'gig economy'.

Careers guidance and work experience

Access to high quality careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) enables young people to understand all the possible careers open to them and the routes they can choose to take to reach their goals. Significant progress has been made since the creation of the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) and the rollout of the Gatsby Benchmarks[19], but more could be done. Despite its benefits, CEIAG is not a compulsory element of the curriculum in all schools and given that career-defining views develop when children are in primary school, we believe that beginning CEIAG provision in secondary school is too late.[20]

We have heard that provision of high quality CEIAG is patchy across the country, proving a challenge for both young people and employers.[21] It is paramount that young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds who do not have access to networks, connections and familial advice to rely upon, have access to targeted, one-to-one careers advice and guidance at school or college. Employer engagement is critical to ensuring quality.[22]

Furthermore, more could be done to target CEIAG towards sectors of high and emerging skills needs in the economy as it transitions towards a green and ever more technologically advanced future (see Chapter 2). We have heard that the Baker Clause, which allows providers of technical education (including T levels

19 A series of steps to improve provision of CEIAG developed by the Gatsby Foundation. See Department for Education, *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers* (October 2018): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748474/181008_schools_statutory_guidance_final.pdf [accessed 4 June 2021].

20 Q 157 (Professor Ewart Keep)

21 Written evidence from the CDI (YUN0018)

22 Written evidence from Barclays (YUN0060)

and apprenticeships) to speak to students in secondary schools, is not being rigorously enforced in all schools.[23] This is despite appetite from young people to hear about these options.

Further to classroom-based careers education, work experience enables young people to understand the workplace and the skills they need to be successful. The removal of the statutory duty on schools to ensure 14- to 16-year-olds undertook work experience at Key Stage 4 has had a devastating impact on this. We heard that a third of employers are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied by the amount of relevant work experience young people have.[24]

There are many laudable initiatives for work experience in the education sector, including formal programmes like traineeships, the T Level industry placement and Kickstart. However, we recognise that there are challenges for both small businesses in offering work experience, and schools in co-ordinating the available opportunities, and not enough is being done to tackle these issues.[25]

Further education (FE)

FE (see Chapter 4) is a fundamentally important component of post-16 education provision but for many years it has been undervalued and significantly underfunded. Its providers—including FE Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges and specialist colleges such as Land-based or Art, Design and Performing Arts Colleges—sit between secondary and tertiary education, offering 1.7 million learners in England opportunities to study for a range of qualifications at a range of levels. It is a crucial springboard into employment for many young people.

The post-18 FE sector has faced severe funding cuts of over 50% since 2009–10.[26] The sector has suffered real cuts of around 11% per pupil (aged 16 to 18) compared to other types of post-16 education.[27] Analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) shows that cuts to FE and sixth forms are only partially reversed by the Budget and will still be 10% down on their 2010 levels in 2024.[28] In fact, most of the funding announced in the Budget is capital expenditure to be used on improving the infrastructure of colleges and FE institutions (£2.8 billion). While important, this will not be enough to deliver the wholescale changes the sector needs to meet to the Government's 'levelling up' ambitions.

FE is held back by a system of funding student places that is no longer fit for purpose. This has limited the sector's capacity to support its students, many of whom come from the most disadvantaged groups in society. There is no pupil premium to support these students as exists in primary and secondary schools, nor is there adequate additional support outside tuition fees such as exists in HE via maintenance loans.

---

23 Youth Employment UK, *Youth voice census report 2021* (September 2021) p 38: https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/themes/yeuk/files/youth-voice-census-report-2021.pdf [accessed 23 September 2021] and written evidence from the NFER (YUN0049)

24 Written evidence from the Youth Futures Foundation (YUN0022)

25 Q 66 (Mike Cherry)

26 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *2020 annual report on education spending in England* (November 2020), p 93–94: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R183-2020-annual-report-on-education-spending-in-England%20%281%29.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

27 Written evidence from the Association of Colleges (YUN0057)

28 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Spending Review 2021: austerity over but not undone* (28 October 2021): https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/Autumn-Budget-2021-Austerity-over-but-not-undone-Ben-Zaranko.pdf [accessed 29 October 2021]

Furthermore, despite the benefits it can offer, FE is often regarded by schools, parents and students as a less prestigious and less desirable option than HE. Some young people told us that they were encouraged away from FE colleges in favour of sixth forms and routes of study considered more academic.[29]

Together, these factors are limiting the potential of the FE sector to contribute as much as it could, and should, to the ambitious plans laid out by the Government in the Skills Bill, not least in relation to apprenticeship provision and the rollout of T Levels.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships (see Chapter 5) are highly valued by learners and employers and are a crucial pathway for young people who do not want to go to university, who want to earn a wage whilst learning, or who want to take on practical, technical work. We have heard that there are simply not enough apprenticeships available for young people who want to take them. Data from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) shows that in the year to mid July 2021, a total of 142,124 candidates under 25 years old submitted at least one application using the Find an Apprenticeship service, of whom just 9,587 had an application marked as 'successful'.[30]

The apprenticeship levy[31] is intended to fund apprenticeships, but it does not properly incentivise the recruitment of young people aged 16 to 24. Systemic faults within the levy have resulted in employers converting existing roles into apprenticeships, benefitting older, more experienced workers. Furthermore, a number of the terms of the levy restrict businesses' capacity to recruit younger workers. The IFS calculates that the number of 16- and 17-year-olds taking apprenticeships fell by 30% between 2019 and 2020 to just 3% of young people of that age, the lowest level since the 1980s.[32]

There are also not enough incentives, particularly for smaller and medium sized employers (SMEs), for businesses to recruit apprentices. The £3,000 incentives introduced during the pandemic were not targeted by age to increase the recruitment of young people.

We have also been told that young people are not properly supported or encouraged to take up apprenticeships for a number of reasons:

- Long-term developments in education policy have resulted in an over-reliance on academic routes, a focus on getting young people into university over and above all other pathways, and snobbery against technical routes and the outcomes and pay returns they can provide.
- Some young people might feel that they are not suited to an apprenticeship due to their gender, ethnicity or background. Young women in particular are not encouraged enough to take up apprenticeship roles in science,

29 Engagement session with young people, 13 April 2021 [See Appendix 5].
30 Department for Education, *Apprenticeship vacancies: demand and supply* (July 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004624/HoL_ad-hoc_Template_July_2021.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]
31 The levy was introduced in April 2017 and paid by all employers who have annual pay bills over £3m.
32 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Further education and sixth form spending in England* (18 August 2021), pp 5 and 13: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R333-Further-education-and-sixth-form-spending-in-England.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). We heard that women make up 12% of the engineering workforce, and people from ethnic minorities just 9%.[33]

- Unlike completing university applications, which take place via UCAS, there is no central application portal for apprenticeships. This makes it more difficult for young people to know how to apply for an apprenticeship and see all the options available to them.
- CEIAG in schools and colleges is improving due to the Gatsby Benchmarks and Careers & Enterprise Company's (CEC) Careers Hub networks. However, the Baker Clause, which provides for technical education providers to go into schools to explain the routes available, is not being rigorously enforced. Youth Employment UK's 2021 Youth Voice Census found that many young people say they have never had traineeships (65.6%), T Levels (72.7%), or apprenticeships (14.2%) discussed with them at school.[34]

Tackling disadvantage

On top of wider issues affecting the labour market and economy, some groups of young people face additional barriers to work (see chapter 6). Identifying these groups is a challenge in itself due to difficulties in data collection methodology, and addressing the disparities the data highlights is even more complex.

However, the evidence we heard and data we saw makes absolutely clear that some Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, including Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Caribbean, African and Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities, are extremely disadvantaged in key areas of employment and education.

Bearing this in mind, we heard that there was a severe lack of programmes targeted specifically at some of the groups likeliest to face disadvantage, such as young people from BAME backgrounds. We heard that specific groups are at significant additional risk, often facing multiple disadvantages. Evidence revealed that:

- Children who are disadvantaged by their socio-economic background and who receive free school meals (FSM) do significantly worse in education than their more affluent peers.[35]
- Systemic challenges are faced by those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They were largely ignored in the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.[36]
- Many young people from ethnic minority backgrounds face institutional and systemic racism, which impacts their experience in the labour market.[37]

33 Written evidence from EngineeringUK (YUN0044)
34 Youth Employment UK, *Youth voice census report 2021* (15 September 2021), p 38: https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/themes/yeuk/files/youth-voice-census-report-2021.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]
35 Q 117 (Neil Bates)
36 Written evidence from the Shaw Trust (YUN0026) and Disability Sub-Group of the Youth Employment Group (YUN0056)
37 See Q 195 (Dr Jason Arday and Dr Gurleen Popli).

- Young care leavers face a lack of support, opportunities and social networks, and have an increased likelihood of suffering from mental health problems and breaks in their education.[38]
- People who have spent time in custody often experience poor employment outcomes on release. There is a lack of attention given to prison education, and work, training or study during release on temporary licence (ROTL) is underused.[39]
- There are systemic issues with formal provision for those whose first language is not English, which means some young people are at a disadvantage in seeking employment or HE due to a lack of proficiency in English.[40]
- Swathes of young people face mental health challenges, particularly those in their final years of education who may have left school during periods of social isolation and disengagement during the pandemic. This may continue to have an impact on their experience of education and training.[41]
- Regional differences in employment and education availability mean that some young people face geographical disadvantages—for example, because they live in remote rural or coastal areas with weak transport links, or in deprived urban areas.[42]
- Parents aged 25 and under face specific challenges including gaps in their CV and structural barriers like lack of access to childcare.[43]
- Young women may face sexism at work and struggle to access childcare, leading to financial stress and limitations to their job prospects.[44]

Government initiatives and responsibilities

The issue of youth employment sits uneasily between a variety of government departments including the Department for Education (DfE), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) (see Chapter 7). This results in policy created in siloes with a lack of accountability at the top. It also results in a confusing landscape of policies intended to tackle the multiplicity of issues.

During periods of economic turbulence, past and present governments have introduced active labour market policies (ALMPs) to get young people into work or training. Examples include the Youth Training Programme of the 1980s and the Future Jobs Fund following the financial crash.

The present Government has introduced a series of welcome measures including Kickstart, Careers Hubs and Youth Hubs, and an expansion in the numbers of Jobcentre Plus (JCP) work coaches by 13,500 (see Appendix 7). This work has been supplemented by initiatives introduced by local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). Many of the Government's schemes have had

38 Written evidence from Access Generation CIC (YUN0036)
39 Written evidence from Prisoner Learning Alliance (YUN0014)
40 Written evidence from The Bell Foundation (YUN0010)
41 See joint written evidence from the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) and the Centre for Cultural Value (CCV) (YUN0023) and written evidence from the Prince's Trust (YUN0039).
42 Q 134 (Michelle Rainbow and Meredith Teasdale)
43 Written evidence from the University of Lincoln (YUN0013)
44 Written evidence from Young Women's Trust (YUN0021)

some success; however, while youth unemployment has decreased since its peak of 14.8% during the COVID-19 pandemic, it still sits at an uncomfortably high 11.7%.[45] Government schemes must be improved, expanded and extended, and better connected to reach those most in need. Key concerns include the following:

- Restricting initiatives to Universal Credit (UC) recipients is limiting their potential. Kickstart is a welcome initiative for those aged 16 to 24 to get work experience and earn a wage. However, many 16 and 17-year-olds are not eligible for UC and therefore cannot access the scheme.[46]
- Limitations of publicly available data confine the extent to which we can fully understand the extent of the unemployment problem and how it differs from group to group and place to place. Furthermore, evaluation of the long-term potential of the Government's initiatives relies on robust data collection and analysis. The speed at which these schemes were rolled out in response to the pandemic has made this difficult. For example, data on skills bootcamps outcomes is "incomplete" according to the DfE's own analysis.[47] It is imperative that data on gender, ethnicity and regional take up is recorded and published so the impact of initiatives can be properly assessed.
- Questions remain about to what extent the forthcoming UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will replace lost funding previously covered by the EU's structural funds, specifically the European Social Fund (ESF).
- Local policy implementation can vastly differ from place to place. Local areas face different problems, leading to varied local economies, skills and unemployment rates. This has knock on effects for 'brain drain'. We have heard that more effective local and regional coordination of policies is the most effective way of addressing the issues facing those most in need.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

On top of these longstanding problems, the COVID-19 pandemic was a perfect storm for youth unemployment.[48] Between January to March 2020 and June to August 2021, employment levels for 18- to 24-year-olds fell by 184,000. 70% of employee job losses between March 2020 and May 2021 were amongst under-

45 Office for National Statistics, 'Labour market overview, UK: November 2021': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/educationalstatusandlabourmarketstatusforpeopleagedfrom16to24seasonallyadjusteda06sa [accessed 16 November 2021]

46 While Kickstart is intended for those claiming UC, we note that the Chancellor has emphasised that work coaches have discretion as to whom they put forward for placements whether they are claiming UC or not. See oral evidence taken before the Economic Affairs Committee, 2 November 2021 (Session 2021–22), Q 10 (Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP).

47 Department for Education, *Skills Bootcamps process evaluation* (October 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1027163/Bootcamps_wave_1_final_evaluation_report.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

48 Written evidence from the Youth Futures Foundation (YUN0022)

25s.[49] Nearly one in five (19%) young people who were working prior to the pandemic had lost their job by January 2021, compared to just 4% for those between the ages of 25 and 54.[50] This was in part because they were more than twice as likely to work in a sector that was shut down than other age groups—for example, the arts, entertainment and recreation sector (12% fall in payrolled employees) and accommodation and food service sector and other services activities (5%).[51]

The situation for young people from ethnic minority backgrounds was even more severe. At the height of the pandemic, the unemployment rate for young black people increased by 17.1 percentage points to 41.6%, compared to just 2.3 percentage points (12.4%) for young white people.[52] For many young people from disadvantaged[53] groups, the pandemic simply exacerbated existing challenges. Latest data shows a slight decline to 36% and 13% respectively.[54]

Young people who were studying have faced two years of disruption to their education, training and social development. Children in England have missed 115 days of face-to-face learning, the biggest loss in education in a generation.[55] This may affect their prospects, as well as further impacting on their mental health and wellbeing.

While our report focusses on the most disadvantaged young people, who are less likely to attend HE, we note that the situation for graduates remains challenging; graduate opportunities in June 2021 were 8% lower than before the pandemic.[56]

The route forward

No two young people in England are the same, and they all deserve equal support to prepare them for a job they aspire to, no matter their background, gender, ethnicity, whether they have additional needs, where they grew up, or which route they choose to take. Their pathway might include a traineeship, apprenticeship, Kickstart placement, T or A Level, GCSE, BTEC, university degree or degree

49 House of Commons Library, *Coronavirus: impact on the labour market*, CBP 8898, 13 October 2021 and Office for National Statistics, 'Earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information, seasonally adjusted': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/realtimeinformationstatisticsreferencetableseasonallyadjusted and 'A05: Employment, unemployment and economic inactivity by age group (seasonally adjusted)': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/employmentunemploymentandeconomicinactivitybyagegroupseasonallyadjusteda05sa [accessed 8 November 2021]

50 Resolution Foundation, *Double trouble: Exploring the labour market and mental health impact of Covid-19 on young people*, May 2021, pp 13 and 31: https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/05/Double-trouble.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

51 See Institute for Fiscal Studies, 'Sector shutdowns during the coronavirus crisis: which workers are most exposed?': https://ifs.org.uk/publications/14791 [accessed 10 November 2021]; and House of Commons Library, *Coronavirus: impact on the labour market*, CBP 8898, 13 October 2021

52 National Audit Office, *Employment Support: Department for Work and Pensions* (7 June 2021), p 14: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Employment-support.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

53 Young people who have been eligible for free school meals (FSM) in the past six years, who have been in care or who have been adopted from care.

54 House of Commons Library, *Unemployment by ethnic background*, Research Briefing Number 6385, 28 September 2021

55 Q 67 (Sir Kevan Collins)

56 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Job opportunities during the pandemic* (20 September 2021), p 14: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN355-Job-opportunities-during-the-pandemic.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

apprenticeship. What is best for them must be equally understood, supported and valued, and youth employment policy must be designed around their needs.

The measures we propose in this report are intended to help ensure that all young people are supported into education, employment or training, equipped with the skills they need to get good jobs, and can avoid becoming NEET.[57] Our priorities are as follows:

- The Government must develop a long-term national plan for identifying, measuring and addressing skills gaps and shortages with a focus on anticipating and meeting the needs of emerging and growth sectors such as the digital and green economy. It must update and publish this strategy annually. Bodies responsible for the new Local Skills Improvement Plans should do the same at local level and be accountable for securing an adequate local supply of training places for young people.
- The Government must recalibrate the compulsory components of the national curriculum, taking into account its capacity to equip young people with essential knowledge and the technical, cultural, creative and professional skills the economy demands. Skills development and the tackling of skills shortages should be central to curriculum development. The Government must also recalibrate progress indicators so that schools wishing to focus on practical, technical, cultural, business- and work-related skills alongside core subjects are able to do so without being downgraded on Government performance measures. This would not involve removing key subjects, but rather refocusing on those that are essential to a good education, increasing school autonomy and facilitating the development of a broad range of skills.
- 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 and experienced teachers and obtain the latest industry-standard equipment.
- The 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.
- The Government must launch an Education and Workplace Race Equality Strategy as a matter of urgency given the already longstanding employment disparities experienced by BAME youth, exacerbated by the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health restrictions have had on their prospects. This should focus on removing barriers including through mandating regular collection of data. The strategy should also be intersectional given many of the issues concerning race and ethnicity are crosscutting with socio-economic background, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and migration status.

57 Q 79 (Sir Kevan Collins)

- The Government 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.
- 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.

Skills for every young person

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Youth unemployment[58] has long blighted UK society. Its drivers are many, complex and fiercely debated. Skills gaps and shortages, and global economic shifts have led to falling productivity relative to other economies, while rapid technological advancements have increased pressure on businesses. Equally, awareness of climate and sustainability issues has projected the green economy into the forefront. In the last few years, Brexit has exacerbated pressure on the jobs market and skills demands in several sectors.

2. More recently, young people bore the brunt of the initial economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; one in three young people were furloughed compared to one in six adults.[59] Sectors that disproportionately employ young people, such as hospitality and the creative industries, were hit particularly hard. Young people in England saw significant disruption to their education, training, work experience and social development, losing 115 days of face-to-face learning.[60] By summer 2021, disadvantaged[61] pupils were an additional two months further behind in reading than their more advantaged peers, while pupils in the north of England suffered more learning loss than in the south.[62]

3. Today 800,000 young people (12.6% of 16 to 24-year-olds) are neither working nor in full-time study.[63] 631,000 (9.3%) are not in any form of education, employment or training (NEET).[64] 475,000 (7%) are unemployed and 163,000 (2.4%) of them have been unemployed at least six months. And many who are in work do not report receiving any training. For example, 21.8% (141,000) of 18-year-olds are neither in full-time education nor employment with training.[65]

---

58 Defined as those who are without a job, have actively been seeking work in the past four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks; or who are out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start it in the next two weeks.

59 Resolution Foundation, *Young workers in the coronavirus crisis* (19 May 2020), p 1: https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/05/Young-workers-in-the-coronavirus-crisis.pdf [accessed 28 September 2021]

60 Q 67 (Sir Kevan Collins)

61 Young people who have been eligible for free school meals (FSM) in the past six years, who have been in care or who have been adopted from care.

62 Department for Education, *Review of time in school and 16 to 19 settings*, (November 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1031290/Review_of_time_in_school_and_16_to_19_settings.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

63 Written evidence from Office for National Statistics (YUN0085)

64 Office for National Statistics, 'Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK: August 2021': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/latest#measuring-the-data [accessed 10 November 2021]

65 Office for National Statistics, Labour Force Survey; Office for National Statistics, Labour market overview, UK: November 2021: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/educationalstatusandlabourmarketstatusforpeopleagedfrom16to24seasonallyadjusteda06sa [accessed 16 November 2021]; House of Commons Library, *Youth unemployment statistics*, CBP 5871, 16 November 2021

4. The overall youth unemployment rate[66] is 11.7%, although this figure can vary significantly between and within regions.[67] For example, in London the youth unemployment rate between July 2020 and June 2021 was 21.9% (up from 14.6% in the same months of 2018–19), while in Yorkshire and The Humber it was 12.5% (up from 11.3%).[68] It can also vary between different groups of young people. Young black people faced unemployment rates of 41.6% during the winter of 2020 (up from 24.5% pre-pandemic), compared to 12.4% among young white people (up from 10.1%).[69] The UK's youth unemployment rate also fares considerably worse in comparison with other OECD countries (see Figure 5).[70]

5. The conclusion of the furlough scheme not long before the publication of our report means the economy is now in a post-pandemic transition. During this period, it is critical that the needs of young people are at the forefront of our thinking. If we fail to address youth unemployment now, the impact of unemployment will endure. Young people who spend long periods of time unemployed earn less and are likelier to be unemployed in future. This is known as 'scarring'.[71] They may face greater chances of physical and mental illness.[72] Furthermore, in March 2021 it was estimated that youth unemployment could incur an estimated £10 billion in costs for the wider economy in 2022 due to lost productivity and tax revenue, and additional welfare costs.[73]

Figure 1: Estimated cost of youth unemployment in 2022

Source: Prince's Trust, Learning and Work Institute, HSBC, Facing the future: Employment prospects for young people after Coronavirus (March 2021): https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/Facing-the-Future-2021-full-report.pdf *[accessed 10 November 2021]*

66 The unemployment rate is calculated by dividing the unemployment level for an age group by the total number of economically active people in that age group.

67 Office for National Statistics, 'Labour market overview, UK: November 2021': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/educationalstatusandlabourmarketstatusforpeopleagedfrom16to24seasonallyadjusteda06sa [accessed 16 November 2021]

68 Office for National Statistics, 'Labour market in the regions of the UK: November 2021' Tables H107, H103: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/regionallabourmarket/november2021 [accessed 17 November 2021]

69 National Audit Office, *Employment Support: Department for Work and Pensions* (7 June 2021), p 14: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Employment-support.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

70 House of Commons Library, *Youth unemployment statistics*, CBP 5871, 12 October 2021

71 Written evidence from the Youth Employment Group (YUN0029)

72 Written evidence from Health Foundation (YUN0045). See also written evidence from National Youth Agency (YUN0016) and Health Foundation, 'Living in poverty was bad for your health long before COVID-19': https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/living-in-poverty-was-bad-for-your-health-long-before-COVID-19 [accessed 10 November 2021] .

73 See Prince's Trust, Learning and Work Institute, HSBC, *Facing the future: Employment prospects for young people after Coronavirus* (March 2021): https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/Facing-the-Future-2021-full-report.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021].

6. While our report focusses on the most disadvantaged young people, who are less likely to attend HE, we note that the situation for graduates remains challenging; graduate opportunities in June 2021 were 8% lower than pre-pandemic.[74] One young graduate told us of their "heartbreak" at facing rejections after competing with people who were made redundant.[75] Graduates who are unemployed are less likely to earn the threshold to pay back their student loan, which could lead to a national student loan debt exceeding £140 billion.[76]

7. In light of these challenges, the House of Lords Youth Unemployment Select Committee was appointed in January 2021 to consider youth unemployment, education and skills in England, and to make recommendations. The report focuses on England as many of the matters we consider are devolved in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales; however, we have drawn on good practice from other parts of the UK where relevant and some recommendations may have UK-wide application where they concern reserved matters.

8. We recognise 'youth' as persons between the ages of 16 and 24, as defined by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), unless stated otherwise. A further series of definitions frequently used in this report can be found in Appendix 4.

9. A call for written evidence was issued in March 2021 and we also invited people to share their views with us via other channels such as video and WhatsApp. We also held 23 meetings in which we spoke to youth organisations, employers, education and training providers such as schools and colleges, think tanks, academics, charities and membership groups. We held two evidence sessions with Government ministers, in which we questioned the Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills (then Gillian Keegan MP and since renamed Minister for Skills), the Minister for School Standards (then the Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP), and the Minister for Employment (Mims Davies MP).

10. We were particularly keen to hear and emphasise the voices of young people. We held four meetings, during which we spoke with some young people who had experience of unemployment, as well as representatives from the organisations that support them. In the first, we heard from young representatives from across the country; in the second and third we heard from young people in the East Midlands and in the Bolton and wider Lancashire area respectively; and in the final meeting we focused on young people from ethnic minority backgrounds based in and near London.

11. We are grateful to all who took the time to contribute to our inquiry, and particularly to the young people who shared the benefit of their experiences and views. Their contribution was of the highest importance to us and was a hugely positive influence on our report.

12. We would also like to thank our specialist advisers, Dr Kathleen Henehan and Olly Newton, who gave us invaluable support, advice and guidance throughout our inquiry.

---

74 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Job opportunities during the pandemic* (20 September 2021), p 14: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/BN355-Job-opportunities-during-the-pandemic.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

75 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].

76 Written evidence from the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (YUN0001). See also House of Commons Library, *Student loan statistics*, CBP 01079, 23 June 2021.

Key themes and report structure

13. Despite debate around the drivers of the UK's high youth unemployment rates in comparison both to the wider population and internationally, there are a few points of broad consensus as to where the biggest challenges lie, and it is on these areas that our report will focus:

    - Skills gaps affecting young people: the prevalence of low skill and the related shortages of skill including those needed for the future; the role of the national curriculum in supporting digital, essential and life skills.

    - Careers guidance and work experience: the role of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in tackling youth unemployment, including the Gatsby Benchmarks; and the opportunities and barriers for young people seeking work experience.

    - Further education (FE): the role of FE in tackling youth unemployment, parity of esteem with higher education (HE), and its role in skills provision including the Government's new Lifetime Skills Guarantee

    - Apprenticeships: the shortage of apprenticeship opportunities for young people, the impact of the apprenticeship levy, and obstacles to take up

    - Tackling disadvantage: identifying disadvantaged groups, addressing ongoing employment disparities, tackling discrimination and prejudice, and targeted programmes

    - Government initiatives and responsibilities: departmental coordination, existing and future initiatives, and reforms needed to improve delivery

14. The following chapters will explore these themes in detail. The remainder of this introductory chapter focuses on key youth unemployment statistics, as a means of setting the context for our report.

Key statistics

Table 1: Labour market status of young people aged 16 to 24, Q2 2021

% of population, by age; Q2 2021										
	16	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24**	**16–24**
Full-time students										
Employed w/training	0.7	3.0	4.7	3.5	6.5	5.8	5.1	3.0	1.1	3.7
Employed w/out training	2.3	7.4	9.4	9.8	10.5	9.2	5.4	2.2	2.0	6.4
Unemployed[77]	5.8	8.7	6.1	3.6	2.4	2.0	1.9	0.5	0.1	3.2
Inactive[78]	80.5	71.1	52.6	36.0	33.7	23.4	16.1	9.9	7.4	34.5
Non-full-time students										
Employed w/training	1.3	1.1	5.4	8.7	9.2	10.5	13.9	19.5	20.5	10.6
Employed w/out training	1.3	2.4	11.3	21.7	26.3	32.9	43.3	48.5	57.2	29.0
Unemployed	1.3	1.8	4.3	6.3	4.2	5.6	5.3	5.6	4.2	4.4
Inactive	6.9	4.5	6.3	10.3	7.1	10.7	9.0	10.7	7.6	8.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total not in full-time education or work-based training	9.5	8.7	21.8	38.4	37.7	49.2	57.6	64.8	69.0	41.6

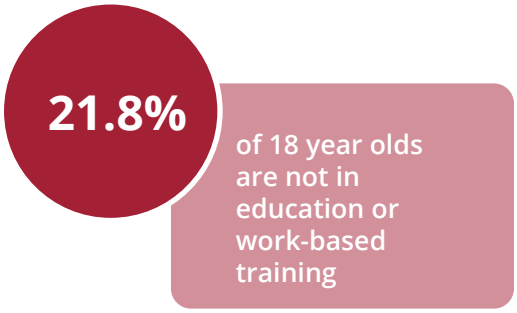
Source: Office for National Statistics, 'Labour Force Survey': https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/series/series?id=2000026#!/abstract [accessed November 2021]NB. Training refers to individuals who reported having received any work-related training within the previous 3 months. Training may vary significantly in type and quality.

77 NB. This is not the same as the unemployment rate as it is a measure of all people in that age category who are unemployed.

78 A person is economically inactive if they are not employed, nor have they actively sought work in the last four weeks and/or are not available to start in the next two weeks (so are not 'unemployed').

15. Table 1 shows that in Q2 2021, 21.8% of young people aged 18 were not in full time education or employment with training. They might be in work without training or may be not in education, employment or training (NEET). These young people are very likely not to be obtaining the skills necessary to achieve fulfilling lives and livelihoods.

Figure 2: Proportion of 18-year-olds not in full-time education or work-based training, Q2 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics, 'Labour Force Survey': https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/series/series?id=2000026#!/abstract [accessed November 2021]

16. Work that does not include training tends to be precarious in nature. Young people are most likely to be in this kind of work, often in jobs characterised by zero hours contracts. Latest ONS figures show that the recent rise in job vacancies has been driven in part by an increase in part-time work and the number of young people on zero hours contracts (the share of 18 to 24 year olds on zero hours contracts rose to 3.1% in July to September 2021, higher than the pre-pandemic figure of 3%).[79] These jobs saw an increase during the pandemic (the proportion of young people on zero hours contracts as their main job peaked at 10.8% in April to June 2020).[80] Even so, young people were not cushioned from redundancy by this growth; more than a third (36%) of young people in insecure work lost their jobs during the pandemic.[81]

17. The NEET measure is complex as it captures disparate groups of people including carers, recent graduates or those not looking for work. It ignores the number of young people who are in employment without training and 'hidden NEETs' who are not registered with a jobcentre, not claiming benefits, and

79 Office for National Statistics, 'Labour market overview, UK: November 2021': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/latest [accessed 16 November 2021] and 'Emp17': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/emp17peopleinemploymentonzerohourscontracts [accessed 16 November 2021].

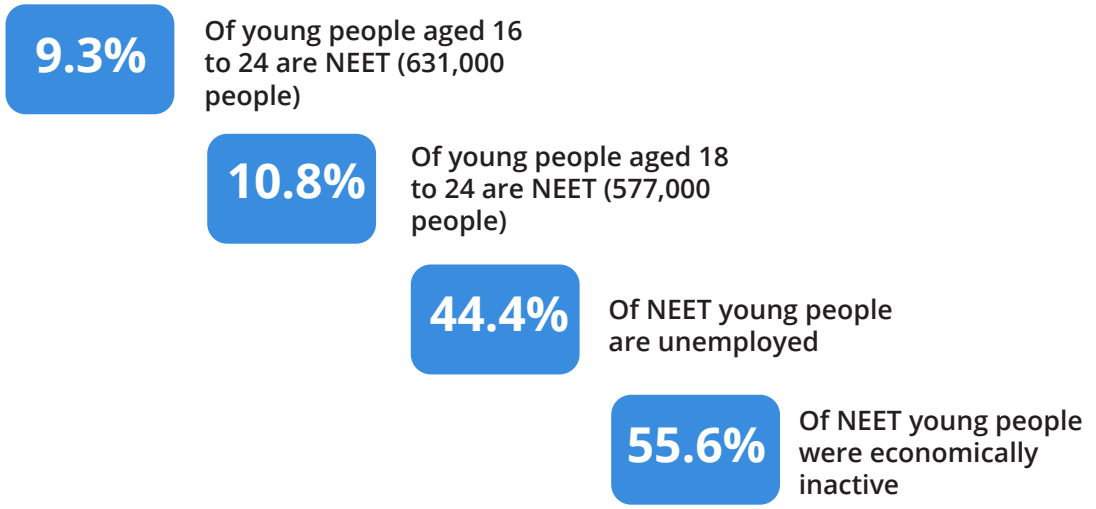
80 Written evidence from Professor Francis Green, Dr Golo Henseke, Dr Hao Phan and Professor Ingrid Schoon, University College London (UCL) Institute Of Education (YUN0011); Office for National Statistics, 'Coronavirus and changing young people's labour market outcomes in the UK: March 2021': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/labourmarketeconomicanalysisquarterly/march2021 [accessed 10 November 2021]

81 Resolution Foundation, *Double trouble, Exploring the labour market and mental health impact of Covid-19 on young people* (13 May 2021), p 31: https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2021/05/Double-trouble.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

therefore not recorded as NEET.[82] Finally, it masks the differences between different groups of young people. Between 2017 and 2019, young people from a Pakistani ethnic background had an average NEET rate of 14.3%, while those from Indian and Chinese backgrounds saw rates of 7.3% and 4.5% respectively.[83] During the COVID-19 pandemic, the NEET rate peaked at 11.8%; by comparison, in 2011 following the financial crash, it reached 16.9%.[84]

18. Recent NEET figures are the lowest since records began in 2001. This may be due to decreasing numbers of young people in the population or because more young people are in education. Of all 18-year-olds in England in 2021, 34.7% are set to start a degree course this year, an increase from 30.4% in 2020. 326,180 students in total (up 10%) were accepted into a full-time undergraduate HE course, of which 210,850 are 18.[85]

Figure 3: NEET young people aged 16 to 24 in the UK between April and June 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics, 'Young people NEET, UK: August 2021': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/latest#measuring-the-data [accessed 26 August 2021]

19. Some young people who are NEET will be defined as unemployed because they are looking for work. The most recent figures show an unemployment rate of 11.7% amongst 16- to 24-year-olds (475,000 people) compared to a pre-pandemic rate of 11.8% in December 2019 to January 2020. Looking at

82 The claimant count measures how many people claim unemployment-related benefits such as Universal Credit (UC) or Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). In September 2021, the number of benefits claimants was 58% higher than in March 2020. See Office for National Statistics, 'CLA02: Claimant Count by age group': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/outofworkbenefits/datasets/cla02claimantcountbyagegroup [accessed 10 November 2021]. Note figures are seasonally adjusted.

83 Office for National Statistics, 'Young people NEET': https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/unemployment-and-economic-inactivity/young-people-not-in-employment-education-or-training-neet/latest#by-ethnicity [accessed 10 November 2021]

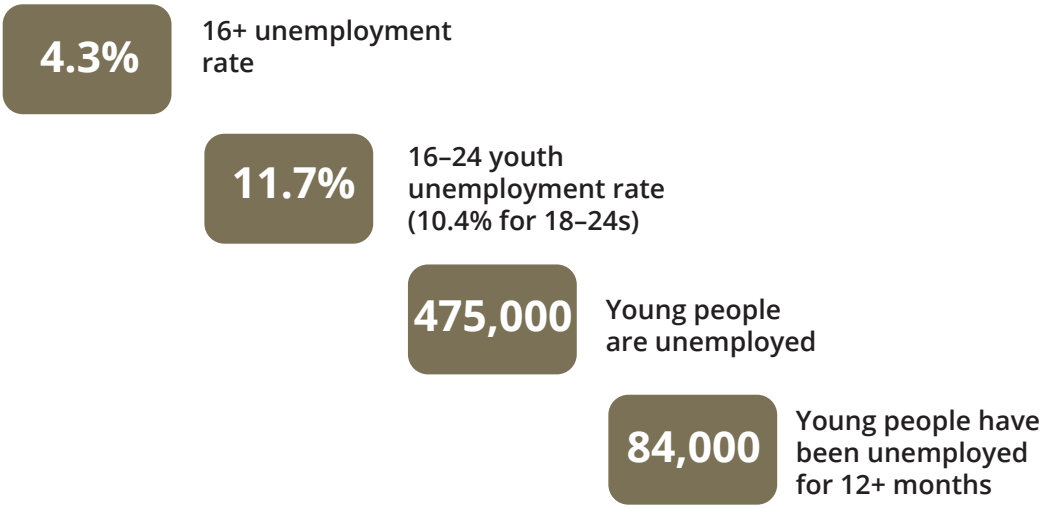
84 Office for National Statistics, 'Young people NEET, UK: August 2021': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peoplenotinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/latest#measuring-the-data [accessed 10 November 2021]

85 UCAS, 'Record number of students accepted into their first choice of university', 10 August 2021: https://www.ucas.com/corporate/news-and-key-documents/news/record-number-students-accepted-their-first-choice-university [accessed 10 November 2021]

unemployment in comparison to the entire youth population, around 7% of all 16- to 24-year-olds in the UK were unemployed.[86] These figures do not account for the end of furlough. For context, following the financial crash in 2011, youth unemployment reached 21.9% (1 million young people).[87] In the early 1980s it reached just under 20%.[88]

20. During the pandemic, the rate of youth unemployment reached 14.8%.[89] However, the Resolution Foundation estimated a rate closer to 20% for 18- to 24-year-olds.[90] The rate also varied for different groups of young people; in April to June 2021, unemployment rates were highest for young black people (36%), and those who were from Bangladeshi or Pakistani backgrounds (22%), while for young white people the rate was 13%.[91]

Figure 4: Youth unemployment for young people age 16 to 24 in the UK between July and September 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics, 'Labour market overview, UK: November 2021': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/educationalstatusandlabourmarketstatusforpeopleagedfrom16to24seasonallyadjusteda06sa [accessed 16 November 2021 and House of Commons Library, Youth unemployment statistics, CBP 5871, 16 November 2021

21. The UK's youth unemployment remains poor in comparison to some other comparable countries. Between April and June 2021, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), put the UK's youth unemployment rate (then around 13.1%) higher than several other economies (see Figure 5).

86 Office for National Statistics, 'Labour market overview, UK: November 2021': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/educationalstatusandlabourmarketstatusforpeopleagedfrom16to24seasonallyadjusteda06sa [accessed 16 November 2021]

87 'Youth unemployment hits 1 million', *The Guardian* (16 November 2011): https://www.theguardian.com/business/2011/nov/16/youth-unemployment-hits-1m-uk [accessed 10 November 2021]. Note that different calculation methods were used in 1984.

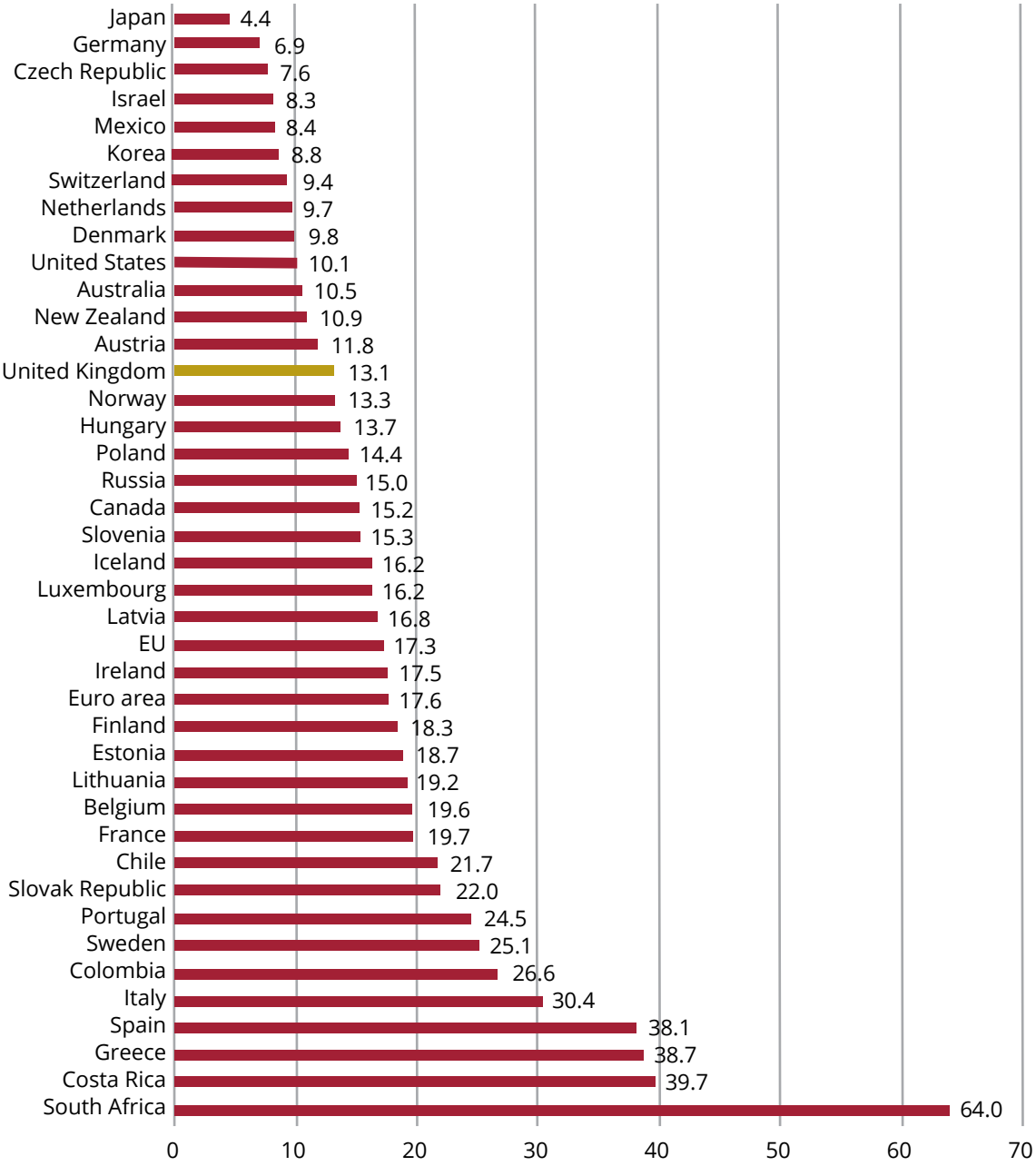
88 Written evidence from Professor Jonathan Wadsworth (YUN0046)

89 House of Commons Library, Coronavirus: impact on the labour market, CBP 8898, 13 October 2021, pp 5–6 and 18

90 Resolution Foundation, *Jobs, Jobs, Jobs* (27 October 2020), p 6: https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2020/10/Jobs-jobs-jobs.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

91 House of Commons Library, *Unemployment by ethnic background*, Research Briefing Number 6385, 28 September 2021

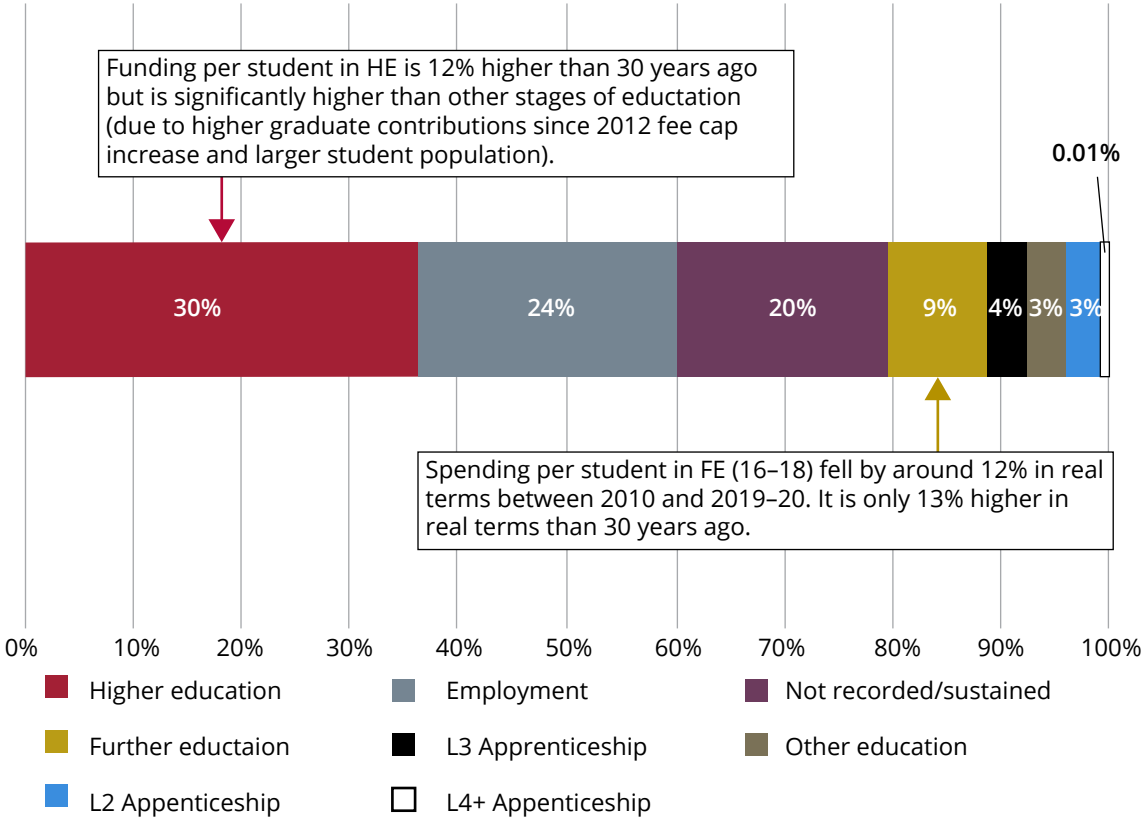
Figure 5: Youth unemployment rates (%) in OECD countries, Q2 2021



Source: OECD, 'Short-term labour market statistics' : https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=35253 [accessed 9 November 2021]

22. In England, young people are allowed to finish compulsory education or training at age 18. They go on to a range of destinations (see Figure 6), with the majority going on to HE. We have chosen to focus our report on those that do not take this path.

Figure 6: Destinations of 18-year-olds at the end of compulsory education or training in England in 2019/20



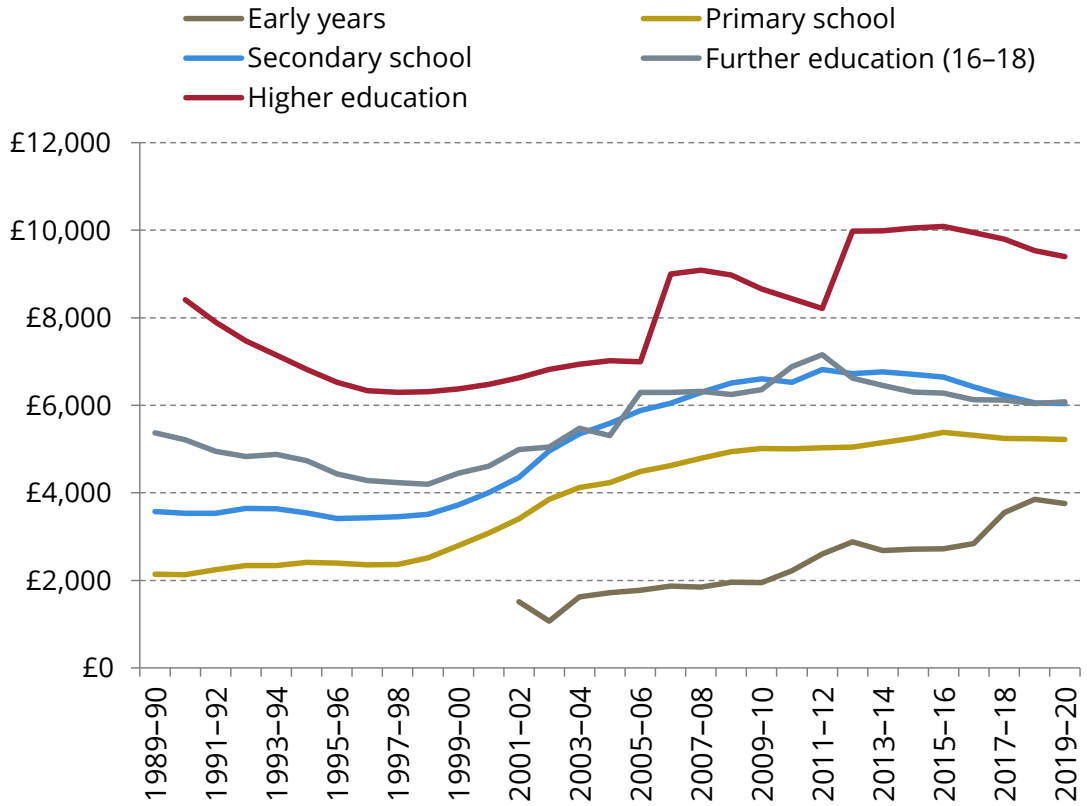
Source: DfE, '16-18 destination measures': https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-destinations [accessed 9 November 2021], Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2020 annual report on education spending in England (November 2020), p 142: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R183-2020-annual-report-on-education-spending-in-England%20%281%29.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]and Institute for Fiscal Studies, Further education and sixth form spending in England (18 August 2021), p 2: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R333-Further-education-and-sixth-form-spending-in-England.pdf [accessed 18 August 2021]

NB. Sustained destination means someone was in that position for 5 out of the 6 months during which data was collected. Data cover England.

23. Comparing rates of funding for each route is highly complex. Generally, funding per student in FE is calculated for those aged 16–18, whilst those over 20 would be included within adult education spending. Furthermore, spending varies by the different types of courses adults choose to take; for example, a level 4 engineering apprenticeship is more expensive than a level 2 English course (a breakdown of qualification levels is given in Appendix 9). This makes comparing HE and FE funding for people of similar ages difficult. As noted, spending on adult education overall is 50% lower than in 2009–10. Total spending on adult education and apprenticeships combined is around 35% lower than in 2009–10 in real terms.[92]

92 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *2020 annual report on education spending in England* (November 2020), pp 93–94: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R183-2020-annual-report-on-education-spending-in-England%20%281%29.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

Figure 7: Spending at different stages of education (2020–21 prices)



Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2020 annual report on education spending in England (November 2020) Figure 6.1: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R183-2020-annual-report-on-education-spending-in-England%20%281%29.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

24. In the following chapters, we will explore the key themes as set out above in more detail.

CHAPTER 2: SHORTAGES OF SKILLS AND THEIR IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

25. Shortages of skills are regularly cited as a contributor to structural youth unemployment, and so any plan to tackle it must have skills at the forefront. This should be understood as both the unavailability of skills for employers—for example due to technical advances and socio-economic change—and the lack of opportunities for young people to acquire the skills they want and need through education and training.

26. There has been recurring debate on the role of 'essential skills' and how young people can develop these, which overlaps with debates on the purpose of the national curriculum in schools. It has also been widely noted that new skills will need to be promoted to support emerging sectors such as the 'green economy' and to ensure that young people have the digital skills needed to succeed in the modern workplace. The need for young people to gain work experience has also been cited as an important factor, amid debates over whether there should be more statutory provision in schools. Finally, with increasingly rapid transition becoming a feature of the economy, we heard evidence on the need to ensure young people have the opportunity to reskill and upskill to meet future needs.

27. There is clearly widespread and unhelpful confusion around terminology in relation to skills. We have defined skills based on the definitions set out by the Skills Builder Partnership, which is recognised by employers, education institutions and impact organisations.[93]

Figure 8: Defining skills

Source: Skills Builder Partnership, 'Universal Framework': https://www.skillsbuilder.org/universal-framework/listening [accessed 10 November 2021]

Box 1: How do the basic skills of our young people compare internationally?

The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) data is the main dataset used to rank the skills of 15-year-olds in reading, maths and science in around 80 countries.

93 See Skills Builder Partnership, 'Universal Framework': https://www.skillsbuilder.org/universal-framework/listening [accessed 10 November 2021]

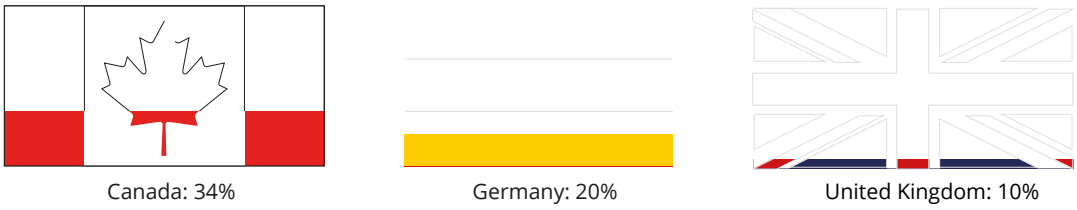
PISA data from 2018 shows that the UK's pupils ranked 18th in maths, an improvement of nine PISA points since 2015. In reading and science, UK pupils ranked 14th, up from 22nd and 15th respectively. The UK ranked higher than the OECD average in all three but behind other economies including China, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Canada. Performance in reading and science has been stable since 2006; however, there was a 4.1 percentage point decrease in the percentage of top performers in science between 2006 and 2018.[94]

While the situation for young people appears to be improving, there is a clear divide between the basic skills 15-year-olds appear to have and those that older adults have. The OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) assesses adult skills in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments. Data from 2013 showed that in England, adults aged between 55 and 65 performed better than 16- to 24-year-olds in literacy and numeracy, the only country where this was the case when factors like gender, socio-economic background and occupation type are taken into account. In problem solving in technology-rich environments, 42.4% of 16 to 24s in England and Northern Ireland were proficient at level 2 or 3, compared to an average of 50.7%. This was 21 points lower than South Korea.

The survey found a stronger association between socio-economic background and literacy proficiency amongst young people, where it was stronger than amongst the broader population. The score-point difference on this measure between 16–24-year-olds and 55–65-year-olds was over 20 points.[95]

In the Autumn Budget 2021, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £560m for a new UK-wide programme called 'Multiply', intended to help adults to develop their numeracy skills. It will be funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (see Chapter 7).[96]

Figure 9: Percentage of all adults aged 20 to 45 who held a level 4 to 5 qualification as their highest in the UK, Germany and Canada



Source: Written evidence from the Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Education (YUN0062); OECD, Skills Beyond School: Synthesis Report, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training (2014): https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/Skills-Beyond-School-Synthesis-Report.pdf [accessed 2 November 2021]

94 OECD and PISA, *Country note: United Kingdom*: https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_GBR.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]. See also 'Pisa tests: UK rises in international school rankings', *BBC News* (3 December 2019): https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-50563833 [accessed 10 November 2021].

95 OECD, *Survey of adult skills: first results: England and Northern Ireland (UK)*: https://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/Country%20note%20-%20United%20Kingdom.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

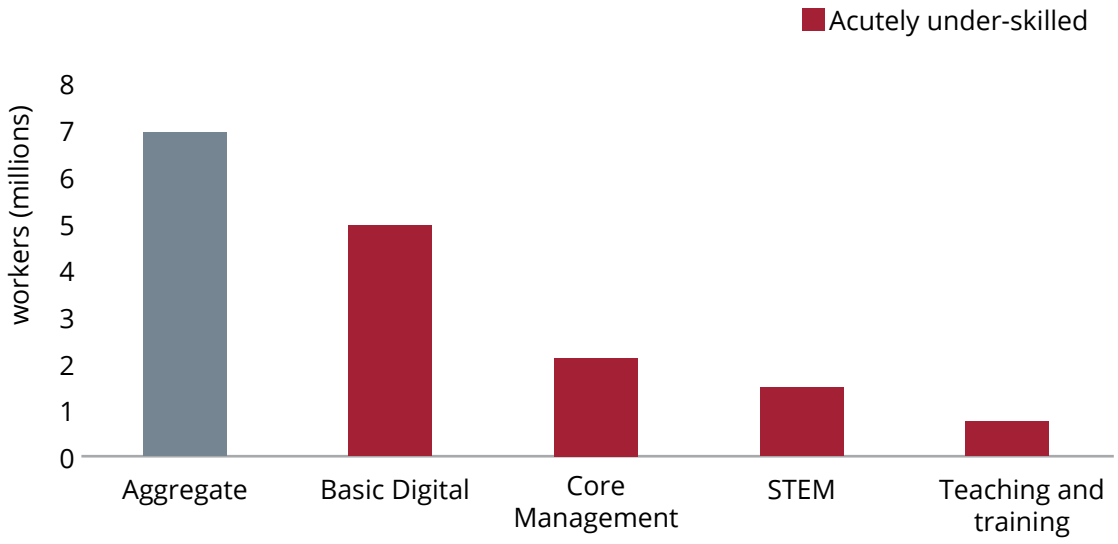
96 HM Treasury, *Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021*, 27 October 2021: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1028814/Budget_AB2021_Web_Accessible.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

Skills mismatches - background

28. Skills mismatches refer to skills gaps and skills shortages. They occur when there is a percentage of the workforce not proficient at their job (skills gaps) and when vacancies cannot be filled because applicants lack the skills, experience or qualifications employers require (skills shortages). They are sometimes referred to simply as 'skills gaps'.

29. We received evidence that skills gaps are growing and that this may pose an additional challenge in tackling youth unemployment, particularly in the context of recovery from the pandemic and with reference to the Government's 'levelling up' agenda. For example, the National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB) told us that "employers face a challenge in identifying the competencies and skills they will require, as well as specific skills shortages in areas likely to be even more important in future, such as digital skills".[97]

Figure 10: Estimated under-skilling in the workforce in 2030



Source: Industrial Strategy Council, UK skills mismatch in 2030 (October 2019), p 3, Figure 1: https://industrialstrategycouncil.org/sites/default/files/UK Skills Mismatch 2030 - Research Paper.pdf [accessed 15 October 2021]

Note: the source clarifies that "The aggregate projection includes workers that are under-skilled across the weighted skill bundle required for their job. An individual could be under-skilled in a certain skill but might not be across their weighted skill bundle. The red bar shows a subset of specific workplace skills".

Current and emerging skills gaps and shortages

30. Evidence shows that skills shortages are a strong driver of youth unemployment. The issue has been especially prominent in recent UK news coverage, but skills shortages exist in a much wider share of the economy than has often been reported. As well as high-profile examples such as HGV drivers, which have impacted UK supply chains, there have also been reports of shortages in sectors including manufacturing, logistics and construction.

31. A September 2021 survey from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) found that skills shortages were a major concern for two thirds of recruiters across the economy and were a particular issue

97 Written evidence from the National Centre for Universities and Business (YUN0008)

for construction recruiters (where 78% said they were a problem). Across sectors, vacancies were reported as much higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic, and survey respondents almost uniformly reported that it was taking "longer" or "a lot longer" to find suitable candidates to fill vacancies. The most commonly cited reasons for labour and skills shortages included the change to immigration rules following the UK's departure from the EU, the inability of employers to offer competitive salaries, and the reluctance of workers to move jobs in the current climate.[98]

32. The Edge Foundation publishes regular bulletins on skills shortages, including how these relate to youth unemployment. Its most recent edition, published in October 2021, highlights shortages in the growing AI sector, and notes the importance of 'boosting basic skills'–by reducing the share of people who lack any formal qualifications–as a driver of employment growth.[99]

Table 2: Highest qualification held by 19–64-year-olds in the UK in 2019

	Total 19–64-year-olds in population (thousands)	Level 2+ (%)	Level 3+ (%)	Level 4+ (%)
19–24	4,779	87	68	27
25–29	4,470	87	71	51
30–39	8,860	86	69	52
40–49	8,351	82	65	49
50–64	12,801	75	55	39
Total	39,261	82	64	44
Total female	19,755	83	65	46
Total male	19,505	81	63	42

Source: Department for Education, 'Education and training statistics for the UK': https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-and-training-statistics-for-the-uk/2020 [accessed 10 November 2021]. For examples of relevant qualifications by level see Appendix 9.

33. While shortages in roles such as HGV drivers appear to have become particularly acute of late—for example, The Road Haulage Association estimates there is now a shortage of over 100,000 qualified HGV drivers in the UK—general shortages have predated the COVID-19 pandemic; there was a shortage of 60,000 drivers before its onset.[100] The impact of Brexit may explain some of the shortfall; in the year to March 2021, there were 28,000 EU nationals working as HGV drivers, down from 44,000 in the previous year, and 39,000 the year before.[101]

98 Recruitment and Employment Confederation, 'Labour and skills shortages': https://www.rec.uk.com/our-view/research/industry-analysis/labour-and-skills-shortages [accessed 10 November 2021]

99 Edge Foundation, *Skills shortages in the UK economy* (October 2021): https://www.edge.co.uk/documents/262/DD0511_-_Skills_shortages_bulletin_9_online_version2.pdf [accessed 18 November 2021]

100 'How serious is the shortage of lorry drivers?', *BBC News* (13 October 2021): https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/57810729 [accessed 10 November 2021]

101 Office for National Statistics, 'HGV drivers by age and nationality': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/adhocs/13636hgvdriversbyageandnationality [accessed 10 November 2021]

34. The Government has invested up to £17 million for skills bootcamps to support 5,000 people to train specifically in HGV driving, [102] and is also set to launch an industry taskforce to inform the response to these issues, including labour market challenges. In November 2020 the Government also established the Construction Skills Delivery Group, a collaboration with industry leaders to improve the training and skills infrastructure in the sector. Initiatives have included accelerated apprenticeships and front-loaded training for apprentices. The skills bootcamps investment announced in July 2021 also included £8 million for construction and engineering construction courses.[103]

35. There have also been high rates of existing skills shortages in social care, a highly necessary and skilled but generally low-status sector. The Youth Futures Foundation told us that health and social care is "widely low paid with low progression".[104] Before the pandemic, there were an estimated 122,000 full-time equivalent vacancies in the adult social care sector, a vacancy rate of around 8% for both the NHS and adult social care, compared to just under 3% for jobs across the wider economy.[105] The adult social care vacancy rate has risen 2.3 percentage points since 2012–13.[106]

36. Although the most prominent media coverage of UK skills shortages largely post-dated our evidence gathering, we heard evidence pertinent to it. The NCUB highlighted that the UK still lacks a national body dedicated to gathering labour market intelligence, a role that was previously played by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), which was closed in 2017.[107] The Employer Skills Surveys provide analysis of employers' views of skills, but no official body is responsible for publishing skills gaps and providing mid and long-term forecasts that explore future needs.

37. The green economy presents a range of future opportunities for young people. However, research published by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in June 2021 shows that the UK is ranked sixth in the G7 in terms of its green recovery and jobs investments, only ahead of Japan.[108] We have heard that jobs in the green economy are set to rise:

    - A recent report by the Local Government Association found that 700,000 new jobs in low-carbon sectors could be created by 2030, and more than a million by 2050.[109]

---

102 Education and Skills Funding Agency and Department for Work and Pensions, ''Plan for jobs', skills and employment programmes: information for employers', October 2021: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-for-jobs-skills-and-employment-programmes-information-for-employers [accessed 10 November 2021]

103 HM Government, *Plan for Jobs: progress update* (13 September 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1016764/Plan_for_Jobs_FINAL.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

104 Written evidence from the Youth Futures Foundation (YUN0022)

105 House of Commons Library, 'The health and social care workforce gap': https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/the-health-and-social-care-workforce-gap/ [accessed 10 November 2021]

106 Skills for Care, *The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England 2021* (October 2021), p 71: https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/adult-social-care-workforce-data/Workforce-intelligence/documents/State-of-the-adult-social-care-sector/The-State-of-the-Adult-Social-Care-Sector-and-Workforce-2021.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

107 Written evidence from the NCUB (YUN0008)

108 Trades Union Congress, 'Ranking G7 green recovery plans and jobs', (2 June 2021): https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/ranking-g7-green-recovery-plans-and-jobs [accessed 10 November 2021]

109 Cited in written evidence from Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) (YUN0001)

- Engineering UK referred us to National Grid research showing that 400,000 roles will need to be filled in the next 30 years to reach its net zero targets.[110]

- About a fifth of new jobs will be involved in installing energy efficiency products such as insulation. Around half of new jobs are expected to be in clean electricity generation, while 14% could be in low-emission vehicles and infrastructure manufacturing.[111]

- A recent study by the London School of Economics (LSE) Grantham Institute found that 20% of jobs in the UK and comparable European economies could be considered directly or indirectly "green", and that there is some evidence that these jobs may be better paid, more secure, and more resilient to automation than non- 'green' positions. This may mean that the green economy offers potential for improving employment prospects for a wider section of the labour market than commonly envisaged.[112]

38. The FE sector could play a significant role in the skills pipeline for the green economy. The Association of Colleges told us that additional funding of £500 million could be used to help colleges to recruit experienced staff to prioritise low-carbon vocational training and reskilling.[113] Waltham Forest Council has partnered with Waltham Forest College and scaffolding consultancy SIMIAN on the Green Energy Skills Training Alliance. The alliance delivers training in retrofitting; the refurbishment of an existing building that intends to reduce its environmental impact.[114] The Government has confirmed that the Green Apprenticeships Advisory Panel will also support T Levels.[115]

39. We heard that better careers guidance will play a role in encouraging young people to take up roles in green sectors, particularly those from underrepresented groups (see Chapter 3).[116] Engineering UK told us that women make up 21% of the engineering workforce, and people from ethnic minorities just 9%.[117] The Government told us that the National Skills Fund will "act as a catalyst for investing in national priorities such as green skills".[118]

40. The Department for Education has recently published its draft strategy on Sustainability and Climate Change, setting out its vision that "the United Kingdom is the world-leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030". The strategy proposes the establishment of a new Climate Leaders Award for schools, a review of subject-specific training and support for teachers, a new Primary Science Model Curriculum, and ongoing commitment to existing initiatives including the rollout of Institutes of Technology, skills bootcamps, Higher Technical Qualifications and the

110 Written evidence from Engineering UK (YUN0044)
111 Written evidence from AGCAS (YUN0001)
112 LSE Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, *Are 'green' jobs good jobs? Lessons from the UK and EU to inform labour market transitions* (October 2021): https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Are-Green-Jobs-Good-Jobs_Policy-brief.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]
113 Written evidence from the Association of Colleges (YUN0057)
114 Written evidence from London Councils (YUN0006)
115 Green Jobs Taskforce, *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener* (October 2021), p 246: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1003570/gjtf-report.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021
116 Written evidence from AGCAS (YUN0001)
117 Written evidence from EngineeringUK (YUN0044)
118 Written evidence from Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions (YUN0062)

Lifetime Skills Guarantee. Furthermore, from December 2021, all FE teachers trained via an apprenticeship must integrate sustainability into their teaching (later to be expanded to all future initial training across all routes in FE). The full strategy will be published in April 2022.[119]

41. We heard widespread recognition that digital skills can no longer be considered an 'add-on' for participating in many aspects of society and the workplace. A recent analysis for the Department for Education found that digital skills are essential requirements for over two-thirds of UK Standard Occupational Classifications and carry with them a wage differential over non-digital roles.[120] It concluded that "digital skills are becoming near-universal requirements for employment" and that acquiring specific digital skills makes career progression as well as a pay increase more likely. By entering a role that requires specific digital skills, workers can reduce their risk of automation by up to 59%. Three key implications of its findings were:

    - Jobseekers need a complete package of skills for success; digital skills often serve to enable non-digital expertise;
    - Policy should be driven locally; digital skills requirements vary substantially by region, and so should efforts to train workers; and
    - Digital skills change over time; policy should be shaped to anticipate this.

42. A March 2021 report by the Learning and Work Institute found that over 9 in 10 businesses say having a basic level of digital skills is important for employees at their organisation, while four in five job vacancies ask for digital skills. Concerningly, the report found that one in four employers say that their current workforce lacks the basic skills they need, rising to over one in three in relation to advanced digital skills. 76% of the businesses it asked said a lack of digital skills would affect the profitability of their businesses.[121]

43. The types of advanced digital skills needed in the economy are expanding, going beyond programming, coding and networking. For example, Belfast Met noted that Northern Ireland, and Belfast in particular, is developing specialisms in cyber security and data analytics. The high level of digital literacy involved in such roles made it particularly important that a strong pathway was established for acquiring these skills.[122]

44. From our discussions with young people, it was clear that they recognise these demands. However, the report from the Learning and Work Institute found that while most young people said they were confident they had the basic digital skills that employers need, fewer than one in five said that they

119 Department for Education, *Sustainability & Climate Change: A draft strategy for the education & children's services systems* (November 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1031454/SCC_DRAFT_Strategy.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]; and Department for Education, 'Education Secretary puts climate change at the heart of education' (5 November 2021): https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-puts-climate-change-at-the-heart-of-education--2 [accessed 10 November 2021]

120 Burning Glass and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, *No longer optional: employer demand for digital skills* (June 2019): https://www.burning-glass.com/wp-content/uploads/no_longer_optional_report.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

121 Learning and Work Institute, *Disconnected? Exploring the digital skills gap* (March 2021): https://learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Disconnected-Report.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

122 Written evidence from Belfast Met (YUN0004)

were very confident they had the necessary advanced digital skills.[123] We heard that while the younger generation is increasingly confident and digitally capable, there remain gaps in training and development to enable adaptation to the demands of the future. This goes against the general consensus that young people are automatically digitally literate. AGCAS noted that "despite preconceptions that Gen-Z [born 1997–2012] graduates are digitally competent, their digital skills, their confidence, and their preference/level of engagement with remote delivery differs substantially".[124] A young person speaking at our engagement session in Bolton and Lancashire told us:

> "In high school, I learned a bit about using basic Microsoft programmes, but not transferable skills in relation to digital learning".[125]

45. Despite this need, the NCUB observed that "while employer demand for digital skills is set to continue to grow, participation in digital skills training has declined", citing figures indicating that the number of young people taking IT subjects at GCSE level has fallen by 40% since 2015".[126]

123 Learning and Work Institute, *Disconnected? Exploring the digital skills gap* (March 2021): https://learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Disconnected-Report.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

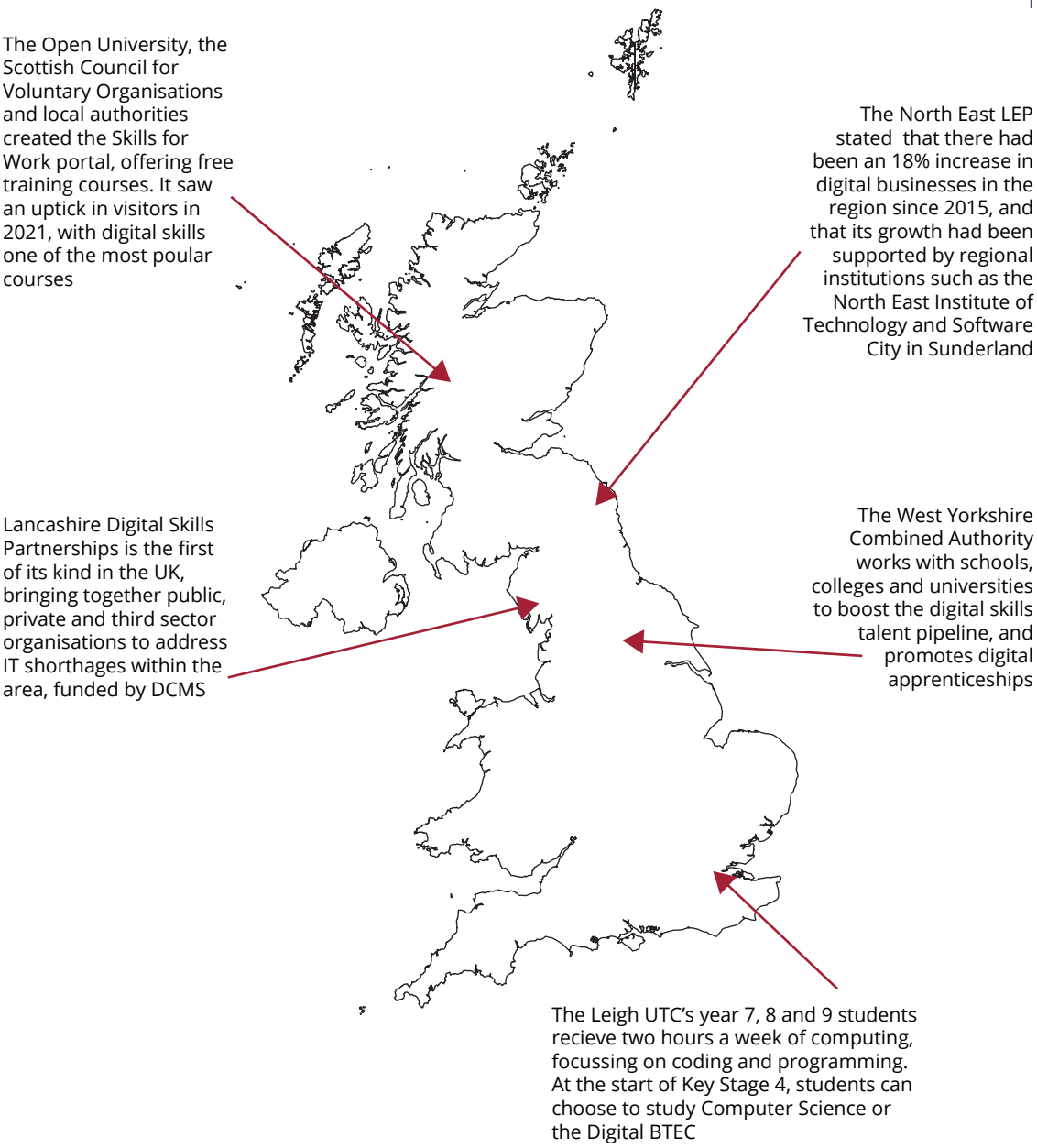
124 Written evidence from AGCAS (YUN0001)

125 Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].

126 Written evidence from the NCUB (YUN0008)

Box 2: Digital skills initiatives

Initiatives from education providers, employers and public institutions can help to bridge digital skills gaps, both in relation to basic skills required for most jobs and for more advanced skills needed in current and emerging digital sectors.



Source: Written evidence from the Leigh University Technical College (YUN0068), the Open University (YUN0020), Local Government Association (YUN0043), North East LEP (YUN0017)

46. The Government has committed to publish an update to the digital skills strategy this year. The Skills White Paper noted that in August 2020 the Government "introduced the digital entitlement for adults who need essential digital skills for work, giving free access to new digital skills qualifications based on our employer-supported national standards". It committed to "reform and update" the digital entitlement to ensure it meets the needs of learners, as well as making digital skills provision "more accessible and

flexible", building on online learning innovations implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic.[127]

Government initiatives

47. The Government acknowledged skills gaps and shortages as two of three key challenges facing employers in the labour market today, alongside concerns over the work-readiness of education leavers.[128] It has recently announced a number of initiatives to tackle the problem, including the following:

- The Skills Accelerator Programme, which includes two key components:
    - Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) intended to "set out the key changes needed to make technical skills training more responsive to employers' skills needs within a local area". They will be created by employers and providers, with employers asked to set out an assessment of their skills needs, to which providers can respond.
    - The Strategic Development Fund (SDF) pilot will provide capital and grant funding for projects intended to build providers' capacity to meet local skills needs.[129] The Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills told us that "this will mean that the training on offer meets the need of local communities and fills skills gaps in key sectors of the economy, allowing more people to get the training needed to secure great jobs close to home".[130]
- The Lifetime Skills Guarantee will offer learners who have not yet got a level 3 qualification the opportunity to study for a fully funded course in a skills shortage area. It includes the Lifelong Loan Entitlement for the equivalent of four years of post-18 education (from 2025), whether it is taught in a college or university. It is hoped this will enable people to study in a modular way and in a flexible means to suit them. The Government is due to consult on the Lifelong Loan Entitlement this year.[131]
- The Government has recently established the Skills and Productivity Board (an independent board to conduct expert analysis of national skills needs to inform government policy), the Green Jobs Taskforce (convened by DfE and BEIS) and the Office for Talent (a cross-departmental team to make it easier for leading scientists, researchers and innovators to come to the UK).

---

127 Department for Education, *Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth*, CP 338, January 2021: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth__web_version_.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

128 Written evidence from Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions (YUN0062)

129 Department for Education, *Skills Accelerator: Expressions of Interest for Local Skills Improvement Plan trailblazers and Strategic Development Fund pilots* (April 2021), pp 5–6: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/978819/Skills_Accelerator_-_LSIP_and_SDF_prospectus.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

130 Supplementary Written Evidence from the Department for Education (YUN0083)

131 Department for Education, 'Education Secretary speech at Universities UK Annual Conference', 9 September 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-speech-at-universities-uk-annual-conference [accessed 10 November 2021]; and Department for Education, *Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth*, CP 338, January 2021: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth__web_version_.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

- 'Skills bootcamps' are intended to support skills development, funded by the National Skills Fund. They offer free courses of up to 16 weeks for adults aged 19 or over who are in work, self-employed, recently unemployed or returning to work after a break. They are available in areas including construction, digital, engineering and manufacturing, rail and green skills.[132] By the end of March 2021, the Government said that over 3,000 learners had participated. It expects to deliver 16,000 training places in 2021.[133] Ofsted is due to report on their effectiveness by September 2022.[134]

- Institutes of Technology were introduced in 2019 as collaborations between FE colleges, universities and leading employers. In January 2021, the Skills for Jobs White Paper set out ambitions to expand them to "spearhead the increase in higher-level technical skills" in STEM.[135]

48. At the Autumn Budget 2021, the Chancellor committed to increase skills spending 26% in real terms (£3.8 billion) by 2024–25. This includes funding for 16–19 education (£1.6 billion), capital investment in 20 Institutes of Technology and FE college infrastructure (£2.8 billion), the new adult numeracy programme 'Multiply' (£560 million), additional measures to increase opportunities for adult upskilling and reskilling (£554 million) and increasing apprenticeship funding to £2.7 billion.[136] These figures combined exceed the total headline amount announced in the Budget. This is due to funding being previously announced and allocated.

49. **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.**

50. **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.**

---

132 Department for Education, 'National Skills Fund', 9 December 2020: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-skills-fund [accessed 10 November 2021]

133 HM Government, *Plan for Jobs: progress update* (13 September 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1016764/Plan_for_Jobs_FINAL.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

134 Ofsted, 'Ofsted to carry out survey of effectiveness of Skills Bootcamps', 27 September 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-to-carry-out-survey-of-effectiveness-of-skills-bootcamps [accessed 10 November 2021]

135 Department for Education, *Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth*, CP 338, January 2021, p 10 : https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth__web_version_.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

136 HM Treasury, *Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021*, 27 October 2021: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1028814/Budget_AB2021_Web_Accessible.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

51. **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.**

52. **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.**

53. **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.**

54. **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.**

Essential skills

55. Essential skills are transferable skills that are required for a person to do almost any job. These are often listed as an essential requirement that employers expect to be demonstrated when making a job application. The Youth Voice Census 2021 showed that just a third (33%) of young people in school think that they understand the skills employers are looking for.[137]

56. The Skills Builder Partnership, a grouping of more than 700 organisations, has developed the Skills Builder Universal Framework, a set of core, essential skills including listening, oracy, problem solving, creativity and teamwork.[138]

137 Youth Employment UK, *Youth voice census report 2021* (15 September 2021), p 11: https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/themes/yeuk/files/youth-voice-census-report-2021.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

138 Skills Builder Universal Framework, 'One universal framework for essential skills': https://www.skillsbuilder.org/ [accessed 10 November 2021]

The Framework was praised in evidence by the Youth Futures Foundation[139] and by the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD), a participant in the Partnership, which stated that it "provides the structure, which schools and businesses need to teach, develop and assess essential skills and most of all, it offers consistency".[140]

57. School leaders clearly recognise these skills. A poll by the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) in July 2020 showed that more than three quarters of 5,000 teachers (74%) said workplace skills like public speaking and teamwork would enable students to secure work. Only 62% said the same about good academic qualifications.[141] Despite this, research by Barclays showed that 22% of teachers do not think their institution is effectively developing these skills.[142]

58. We heard evidence that employers often find it difficult to recruit new entrants who already have the necessary skills to enter the workforce. Philip Jones, Director of Calico, told us that there was an assumption that a young person is not expected to add value in the first twelve months of employment due to the amount of training they require to make up for a lack of skills.[143]

59. We heard particularly compelling evidence on the value of oracy, the skill of oral communication. While there are provisions within the national curriculum for development of the spoken language, research by the Centre for Education and Youth at the University of Oxford showed that 52% of young people believe they left or will leave school without the oracy skills needed for ongoing education, training or employment, compared to 72% of full-time students or young people in work. In addition, just 14% of classroom teachers felt that their school was meeting the spoken language requirement of the national curriculum to a 'great extent'.[144] Oracy skills are of particular concern in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, when many young people communicated with peers, teachers, potential employers and others either virtually or through email rather than face to face due to social distancing.[145]

139 Written evidence from Youth Futures Foundation (YUN0022)
140 Written evidence from the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (YUN0030)
141 'Workplace skills now more important than exam results in post-Covid jobs market say teachers', *FE News* (7 July 2020): https://www.fenews.co.uk/press-releases/50816-workplace-skills-now-more-important-than-exam-results-in-post-covid-jobs-market-say-teachers [accessed 10 November 2021]
142 Written evidence from the Youth Futures Foundation (YUN0022)
143 Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].
144 Written evidence from the Oracy APPG (YUN0074). See also Centre for Education and Youth, University of Oxford, *Oracy after the Pandemic: What Ofsted, teachers and young people think about oracy* (28 April 2021): https://cfey.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/EMBARGOED-until-280421_Oracy_APPG_FinalReport.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]
145 Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].

Box 3: Young people's views on essential skills

During our engagement sessions with young people in the East Midlands, Bolton and Lancashire, Greater London and elsewhere, we heard a range of views on essential skills. These included:

> "More could be done to support communication skills. A lot of people in school are introverted and don't know how to express themselves verbally—more support for this is needed".
>
> "The current exam system focuses just on written answers. It doesn't encourage equipping young people with the communication skills that they need".
>
> "School didn't really help with teamwork as we didn't really work with each other. Going on a football course was much more important to helping me to learn skills like communications, team working, problem solving".
>
> "Lots of my soft skills were developed outside of formal learning. The Duke of Edinburgh and National Citizenship Service helped me improve my communication skills".
>
> "A part time job in retail was where I got the majority of my skills. I didn't formally learn employment related skills until I went to University, which was a bit too late to learn those skills. At GCSE level it would be very difficult to go into your career as you don't get taught employability skills".

Source: Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 and Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].

60. The value of extracurricular activities should be recognised in the development of these skills. One young person told us that volunteering had been a "stepping stone" to develop skills for employment.[146] However, we heard from the Oracy APPG that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to take up extracurricular activities than their more affluent peers.[147]

61. Other crucial skills noted by evidence to our inquiry included adaptability, leadership, organisation and analysis.[148] One young person told us that they were not given any information on personal finance or taxation, which would have been helpful to them as they were self-employed.[149] These are often known as 'life skills'.

146 *Ibid.*
147 Written evidence from the Oracy APPG (YUN0074)
148 Written evidence from the Oracy APPG (YUN0074), Barclays (YUN0060) and North East LEP (YUN0017)
149 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].

Box 4: Life skills

'Life skills' is a fluid term that can include any number of skills that may set a young person up for their future. For example, life skills include money management such as personal finance, pensions and entrepreneurship, and basic household tasks.

Some groups of young people may be more interested in or have a greater need to learn these skills than others. Patricia Stapleton, Policy Manager at The Traveller Movement, told us that young people from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community generally have a higher demand for practical subjects like home economics to prepare them for adult life.[150] Young people who have been in care or who have moved out of home may also benefit from greater assistance in matters of personal finance because they may not have had the benefit of parental advice. A young person in the East Midlands told us:

> "Life skills definitely should be taught to students. I am in the process of moving into my own flat and there were lots of things I didn't know about. Schools and colleges should teach us about these things to prepare us if we are leaving the family home after school".[151]

Currently, personal finance is covered in the national curriculum as part of the citizenship course, which is intended to "prepare pupils to take their place in society as responsible citizens, manage their money well and make financial decisions". Compulsory at Key Stages 3 and 4, the course includes planning for financial decisions as well as credit, debit, insurance, savings and pensions.[152] However, because the national curriculum is not mandatory for schools that are not local authority maintained, it is not necessarily covered in many schools. Another young person in the East Midlands told us:

> "We were not taught useful life skills in relation to issues such as rent payments, utility bills or council tax. If I had been taught about it at school, I might have made different life decisions. Information on things like mortgages might encourage us to make different decisions".[153]

62. The national curriculum framework sets out the matters, skills and processes to be taught at each key stage.[154] Several submissions to our inquiry reflected on the failure of the education system to properly deliver the essential skills required. Some put this down to funding; the North East LEP said that the squeeze on funding for FE institutions limits teaching to core aspects of the national curriculum, rather than providing for investment in wider skills.[155] The NFER pointed to a 2018 study, which found that the national curriculum introduced in 2014 had reduced opportunities for pupils to develop skills in teamworking by 61%, creative thinking by 56%, employability by 47%,

150 *Ibid.*
151 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
152 Department for Education, 'National curriculum in England: citizenship programmes of study for key stages 3 and 4': https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-citizenship-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-citizenship-programmes-of-study-for-key-stages-3-and-4 [accessed 10 November 2021]
153 Engagement meeting with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 (see Appendix 5)
154 Department for Education, *The national curriculum in England: framework document* (December 2014): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/381344/Master_final_national_curriculum_28_Nov.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]
155 Written evidence from the North East LEP (YUN0017)

and career development by 45%.[156] The effect of educational progress measurements is explored in more detail in the next section.

63. **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.**

64. **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.**

65. **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.**

66. **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.**

Pre-16 secondary education

67. The national curriculum is a set of subjects and standards used by primary and secondary schools. At Key Stage 4 (Year 10–11), the national curriculum subjects are: Core (English, maths, science); Foundation (computing, physical education (PE), citizenship); at least one from: the arts, design and technology (DT), humanities, and modern foreign languages; and religious education and sex and relationships education.[157]

68. Some schools including academies and free schools have the option not to follow the national curriculum. 78% of secondary schools are academies or free schools (78% of secondary school pupils).[158] Other types of school include University Technical Colleges (UTCs) (48 schools open as of September 2021) and studio schools (21 open).[159]

156 Written evidence from National Foundation for Educational Research (YUN0049)

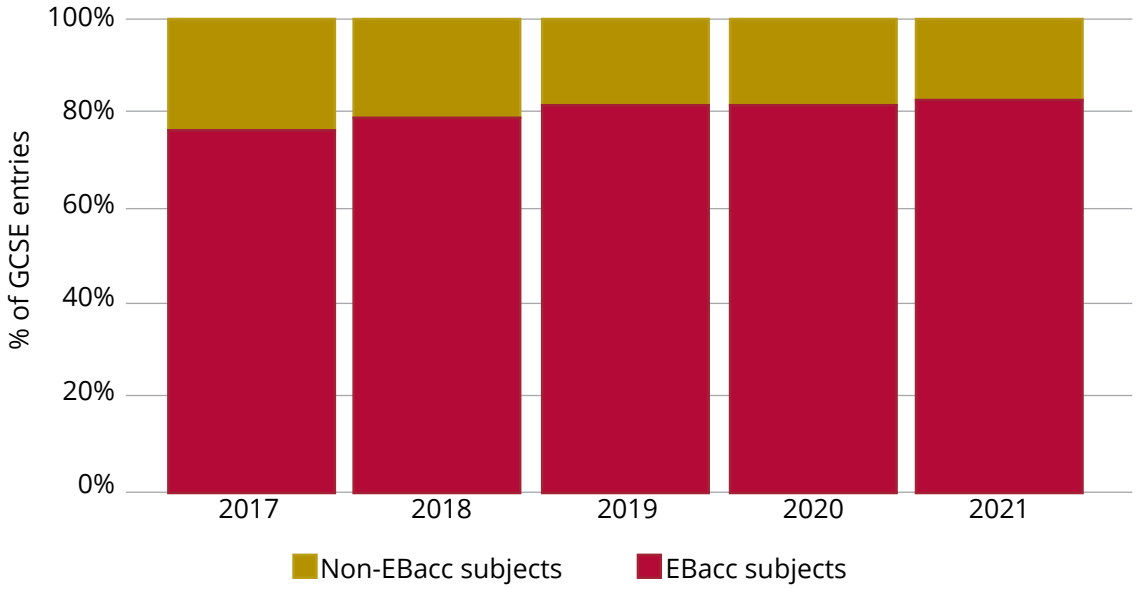
157 HM Government, 'The national curriculum: Key stage 3 and 4': https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/key-stage-3-and-4 [accessed 10 November 2021]

158 Department for Education, 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics', 17 June 2021: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics [accessed 10 November 2021]

159 Department for Education, 'Transparency data: Open academies, free schools, studio schools and UTCs and academy projects in development', 20 March 2014: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-academies-and-academy-projects-in-development [accessed 10 November 2021]

69. Introduced in 2010, the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is the Government's measurement for how many pupils in a secondary school choose to take a GCSE, and how well they do, in all of the following core subjects: English literature and language, maths, the sciences, history or geography, and a language. These subjects have been chosen because they are "considered essential to many degrees and open up lots of doors". The Government's ambition is to see 75% of pupils studying the EBacc at GCSE by 2022, and 90% by 2025.[160] In 2021, 82% of GCSE entries were EBacc subjects, up from 76% in 2017.[161]

Figure 11: EBacc and non-EBacc subjects in GSCE entries from 2017 to 2021 (%)



Source: Ofqual, 'Provisional entries for GCSE, AS and A Level: summer 2021 exam series', 27 May 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provisional-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2021-exam-series/provisional-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2021-exam-series [accessed 28 July 2021]

70. Progress 8 aims to capture the progress of pupils from the end of primary to the end of secondary school, focussing on eight qualifications: maths and English (double weighted), three further EBacc qualifications, and three further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE-approved list.[162]

71. The EBacc and Progress 8 were intended to raise the attainment of young people from all backgrounds. These measures have resulted in progress for many young people; the DfE told us that the EBacc has resulted in improvements of pupils' grades in EBacc subjects.[163] In 2020–21, 51.9% of

160 HM Government, 'The national curriculum: Key stage 3 and 4': https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/key-stage-3-and-4 [accessed 10 November 2021] and 'English Baccalaureate (EBacc)': https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-ebacc/english-baccalaureate-ebacc [accessed 10 November 2021]

161 Ofqual, 'Provisional entries for GCSE, AS and A Level: summer 2021 exam series', 27 May 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provisional-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2021-exam-series/provisional-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2021-exam-series [accessed 10 November 2021]

162 Department for Education, *Progress 8: How Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures are calculated* (2016): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/561021/Progress_8_and_Attainment_8_how_measures_are_calculated.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

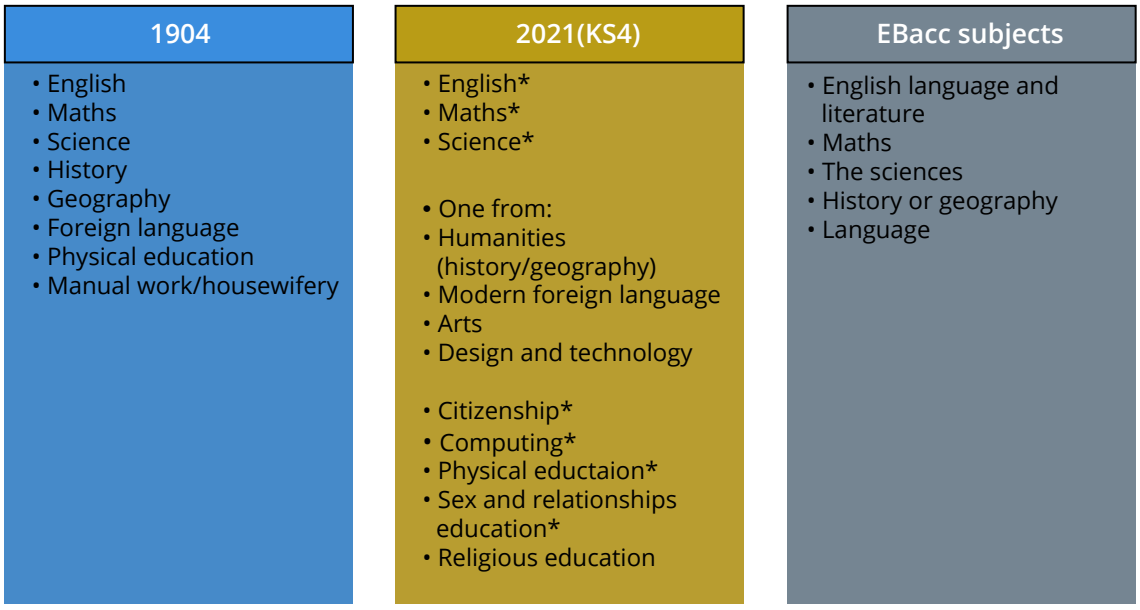
163 Q 212 and Q 215 (Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP)

pupils achieved a grade 5 or higher in English and maths, up from 43.2% in 2018/19.[164]

72. We were overwhelmingly told that the EBacc and Progress 8, as well as the requirements set out in the national curriculum, are limiting schools' and colleges' abilities to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that includes subjects beyond their scope. This is creating a gulf between what is taught in schools and colleges, the subjects many young people want to study, and the skills the economy demands. We also heard that the current measurements and curriculum requirements omit subjects which should be deemed necessary for essential skills development. For example, Nissan Motor Manufacturing told us:

> "The national curriculum DOES NOT equip people with the skills required for the advanced Manufacturing and Engineering sectors. That Design and Technology stop at Key Stage 3 is disastrous, the time lag of introducing a national program also is not keeping pace with changes in technology. In the next ten years we are expecting as much change as has happened in last 100. The current English Baccalaureate (current 75% expectation that children will complete rising to 90% by 2025) focuses on children staying on in education and has no Design or technology component… Schools monitor Progress 8 and Attainment 8 which rarely if ever include technology-based topics. Schools focus on Science and Maths and not Engineering and Technology; as a country we are failing at broad STEM education".[165]

Figure 12: National curriculum for secondary education in 1904 and today (*=compulsory)



Source: Department foe Education 'The national curriculum': https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/key-stage-3-and-4 [accessed 8 September 2021] and Education in England, 'Board of Education, Regulations for Secondary Schools (1904)':http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/boardofed/1904-secondary-regulations.html [accessed 8 September 2021]

164 Department for Education, 'Key stage 4 performance, Academic Year 2020/21', 4 November 2021: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance-revised/2020–21 [accessed 10 November 2021]

165 Written evidence from Ian Green (YUN0002)

73. Youth Employment UK expressed similar sentiments, telling us that "we have seen significant technological developments, changing economic conditions and increased globalisation but despite this the education system has not kept up. Young people are still studying the same curriculum of 20 years or more, there are not enough options for digital, computing, design and technology and creative subjects within the core curriculum despite these being growth and in-demand areas. The focus on the EBacc for many schools has reduced creativity in the secondary curriculum offer".[166]

74. The Association of Colleges told us that AI, virtual reality and robots are "profoundly changing the way people work, learn, communicate and live". As such, young people will need to develop different skillsets and change their notions of traditional career pathways, with more emphasis on more specialised skills and lifelong learning.[167] Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance told us that "the growth of artificial intelligence will have the biggest future impact on youth unemployment". It recommended that education should be directed towards subjects that require human input, including not only creative subjects but also critical thinking and leadership.[168]

75. Some schools offer a different curriculum to students. UTCs offer a pre-16 curriculum made up of 60% core academic subjects for three days a week, plus two days of technical subjects such as engineering and computing including project-based learning. The Leigh UTC told us that it offers two hours of computing per week for students in Years 7, 8 and 9 with a focus on coding and programming.[169] At post-16, the split is reversed to 60% technical and 40% academic. The Baker Dearing Trust told us that in 2019, 22% of its Year 13 leavers went on to study apprenticeships, compared to 7% nationally, and only 3% were NEET, compared to 5% nationally. 61% of the young people in UTCs that go on to do apprenticeships were working in engineering and construction, whilst 15% were in computing and digital media.[170] The Leigh UTC told us that they have seen a large uptick in female students who want to study technical subjects in the college.[171]

76. Subjects like DT explore topics highly valuable to the economy, such as product and computer-aided design and manufacturing (CAD/CAM), metals, robotics, cyber security and the use of 3D printers. However, entries in GCSE design and technology have fallen 8% in the last year alone.[172] Tony Ryan, Chief Executive at the Design and Technology Association, told us that the decline in students taking DT has been "dramatic". He noted the lack of specialist teachers and misconceptions about the subject based on outdated views:

> "The emphasis on accountability has meant that non-EBacc tends to be put into basket 3, and students can choose one creative subject if they are lucky. In some schools, they do not even have that option. If you love art, and you love design and technology, why can you not do both? The

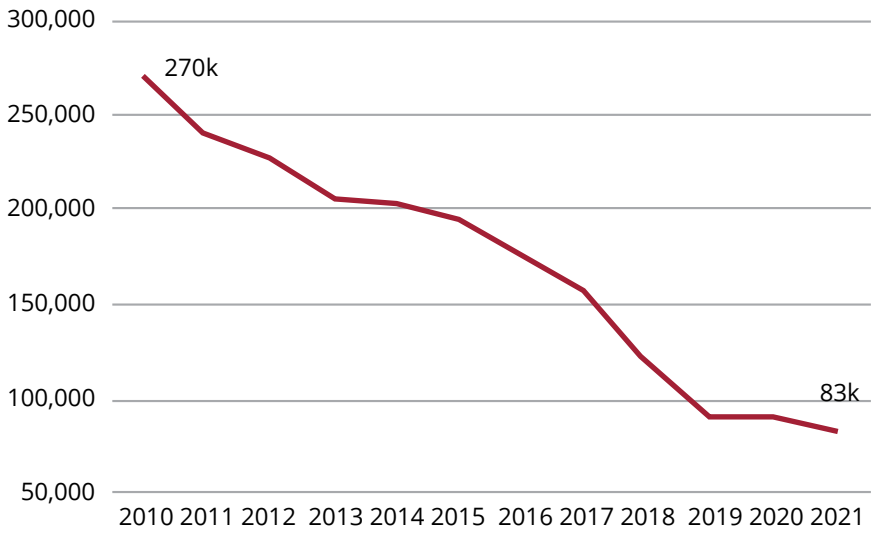
166 Written evidence from Youth Employment UK (YUN0052)
167 Written evidence from the Association of Colleges (YUN0057)
168 Written evidence from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance (YUN0054)
169 Written evidence from The Leigh UTC (YUN0068)
170 Written evidence from the Baker Dearing Educational Trust (YUN0059)
171 Written evidence from The Leigh UTC (YUN0068)
172 Ofqual, 'Provisional entries for GCSE, AS and A Level: summer 2021 exam series', 27 May 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provisional-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2021-exam-series/provisional-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2021-exam-series [accessed 10 November 2021]

accountability system does not allow that in schools at the moment. You do one or the other, or neither. That is the issue".[173]

77. As noted earlier in this chapter, the small increase in the computing GCSE since 2016 has also been dwarfed by the previous decline in the ICT GCSE, meaning that the combined figure still lies well below its level in 2015.

78. Think tank EDSK told us that the EBacc's narrow range has "crowded out a lot of subjects that a lot of parents, pupils and teachers see as very valuable".[174] We heard that employers take a similar view; for example, Roundhouse argued that there needs to be more space for creative subjects.[175] The Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre and the Centre for Cultural Value said arts education should be a statutory part of curricula to meet the challenge of skills and training shortages in the sector.[176] At GCSE level, entries in the performing arts were down to 8,780 in June 2021 from 14,950 in 2017 (41%), while entries in music have fallen from 38,745 to 35,400 (9%).[177] A young person in our engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds told us that "there's an over-focus on STEM compared to humanities and creative subjects—it feels like these are not valued as highly".[178]

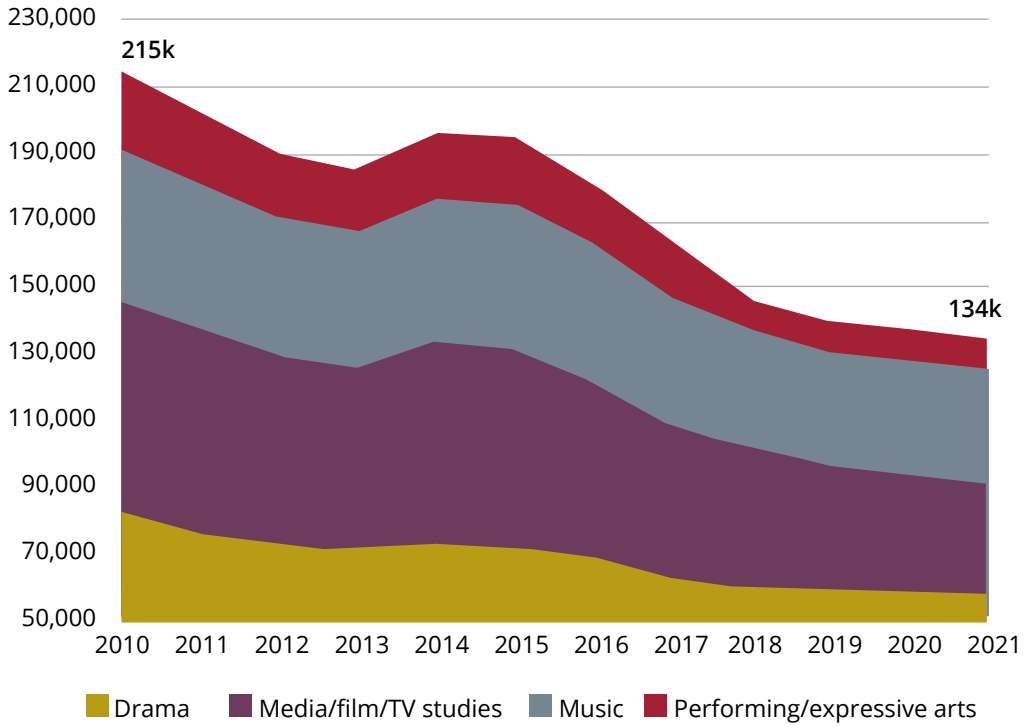
Figure 13: 70% decline in GCSE entries in Design & Technology



Source: Joint Council for Qualifications CIC, 'Examination results': https://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/ [accessed 16 November 2021]

173 Q 174 (Tony Ryan)
174 Q 104 (Tom Richmond)
175 Written evidence from Roundhouse (YUN0012)
176 Written evidence from the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC) and the Centre for Cultural Value (CCV) (YUN0023)
177 Ofqual, 'Provisional entries for GCSE, AS and A Level: summer 2021 exam series', 27 May 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provisional-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2021-exam-series/provisional-entries-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2021-exam-series [accessed 10 November 2021] and 'Entries for GCSE, AS and A Level: summer 2018 exam series', 24 May 2018: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/712450/Report_-_summer_2018_exam_entries_GCSEs_Level_1_2_AS_and_A_levels.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]
178 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].

Figure 14: 40% decline in GCSE entries in creative subjects



Source: Joint Council for Qualifications CIC, 'Examination results': https://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/ [accessed 16 November 2021]

79. We heard that, due to their greater resources, independent schools are more able to provide education in the subjects that schools with a strict focus on the EBacc are not. Tony Ryan told us that DT was "thriving" in the private sector with parents seeing it as an "essential subject".[179] As noted previously, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to take up extracurricular activities.[180]

80. Alongside subjects studied at school, then Education Recovery Commissioner Sir Kevan Collins emphasised the need for a school curriculum to focus on a broad curriculum that places value on broad wellbeing including play as well as academic achievement. He told us that academic and non-academic was a "false dichotomy", in that "these things live in a virtuous relationship and that they really matter".[181] Andy Sprakes, co-founder and Chief Academic Officer of XP School in Doncaster, concurred, telling us that "I agree that there are often these false dichotomies in education, in the UK in particular, in that it has to be a knowledge-rich curriculum and nothing else, or it has to be purely skills. That is just nonsense. It is the "genius of the AND", isn't it?".[182]

179 Q 174 (Tony Ryan)
180 Written evidence from the Oracy APPG (YUN0074)
181 Q 72 (Sir Kevan Collins)
182 Q 100 (Andy Sprakes)

Box 5: The Curriculum for Wales

The Curriculum for Wales will be introduced from September 2022 for learners aged 3 to 16. It is comprised of six Areas of Learning and Experience, intended to bring together disciplines and encourage links across them. They are illustrated as below:

There are only four mandatory curriculum elements, which are Welsh, English, Relationships and sexuality education (RSE), and Religion, values and ethics. The six Areas are intended to help learners realise four purposes, which are: ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives; enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work; ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; and healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

Skills embedded across the curriculum include literacy, numeracy and digital competence, listening, speaking, problem solving and digital skills. Schools must design their own curriculum and assessment arrangements, recognising that "schools and practitioners are best placed to make decisions about the needs of their specific learners, including choosing topics and activities which will best support their learning". Young Enterprise told us that "this approach works incredibly well for careers and enterprise education, which should look and feel different according to local opportunities and the needs of the young people."

Source: Welsh Government, 'Curriculum for Wales: summary of proposed legislation': https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/summary-of-proposed-legislation/, 'Developing a vision for curriculum design': https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/developing-a-vision-for-curriculum-design/#cross-curricular-skills, and 'Introduction to Curriculum for Wales guidance': https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/introduction/ [accessed 10 November 2021]; written evidence from Young Enterprise (YUN0019)

81. The Department for Education has resisted calls for change.[183] The then Minister of State for Schools told us that prior to the age of 16 a "very rigorous academic education" was the best way to prepare young people for their choice of post-16 education, whether a technical or academic route.[184] He added that "we must strongly resist the calls from those who talk about

183 Department for Education, *Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth*, CP 338, January 2021, p 5 : https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth__web_version_.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

184 Q 210 (Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP)

ripping up our curriculum to make it more 'relevant' or to make it solely about preparing pupils for work".[185]

82. **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.**

83. **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.**

84. **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.**

85. **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.**

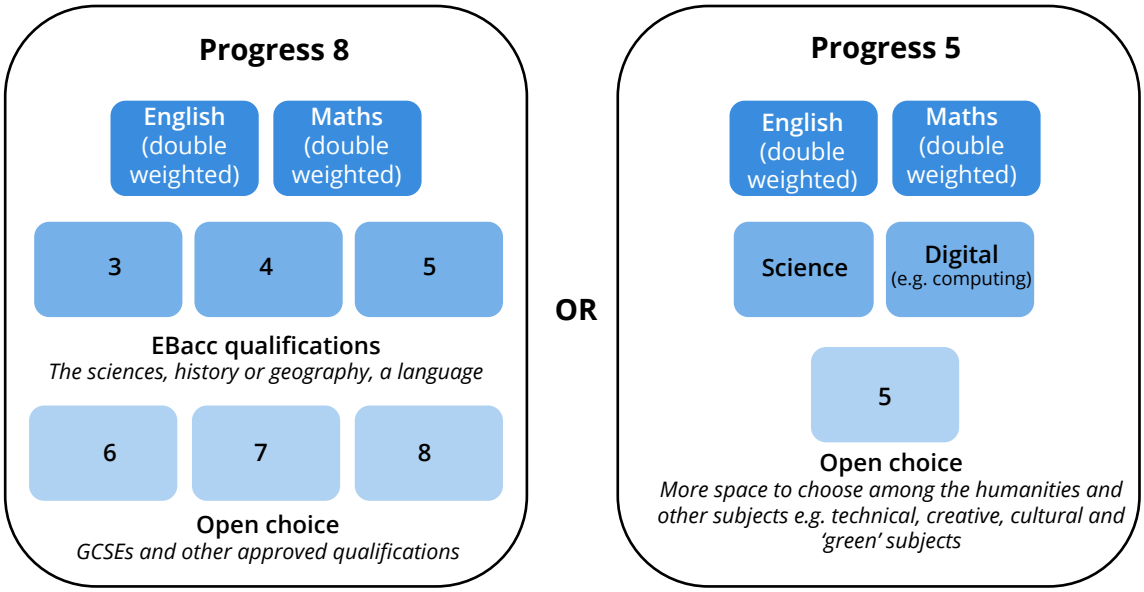
86. **The Government must therefore reform progress indicators so that schools that wish to focus on courses of practical, technical, cultural, business- and work-related skills alongside the core are able to do so without being downgraded on Government performance measures. This would not involve a 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.**

87. **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**

185 'Nick Gibb: Education after Covid. We must not let the pandemic lead us astray from our mission to raise school standards', *Conservative Home* (26 March 2021): https://www.conservativehome.com/platform/2021/03/nick-gibb-education-we-must-not-let-the-pandemic-lead-us-astray-from-our-mission-of-raising-school-standards.html [accessed 10 November 2021]

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).

Figure 15: Possible recalibration of progress measures



Box 6: Assessment reform

Although it is not central to our remit, we also heard evidence on the debate over assessment methods and their role in helping young people secure employment and fulfil their career aspirations.

Debate around assessment methods generally reflect three main concerns: the stage at which young people are assessed, the skills tested and the methods of assessment. On the first of these, we heard differing views on the merits of formal assessment at the age of 16;[186] on the second, we heard that there was too much focus on subject domain knowledge recall;[187] and on the third, we heard a number of views advocating for a broader range of assessment methods beyond written exams, which some felt were too limited.[188]

The evidence we heard suggests there may be a case for a thorough review of the assessment of young people in our secondary schools today to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that it effectively assesses the full range of young people's skills and talents. Among other factors, this review could cover the stages of assessment, the skills tested and the methods of assessment. Any such review should consider the forthcoming recommendations of the Rethinking Assessment group, as well as other voices who have contributed to the debate on assessment reform.

Reskilling and upskilling

88. The rapidly changing nature of the UK economy means that the skills young people need are changing regularly. The challenge is not simply one of learning skills through education. The notion of 'reskilling' is often

186 See for example Q 100 (Tom Richmond), and written evidence from Rethinking Assessment (YUN0081), which criticised the focus on assessment at 16; the opposing view was expressed by the then Minister for Schools Standards Q 214 (Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP).

187 See for example Q 100 (Phil Avery) and written evidence from Rethinking Assessment (YUN0081).

188 See for example Q 100 (Tom Richmond), Q 102 (Andy Sprakes), Q 103 (Phil Avery) and written evidence from Rethinking Assessment (YUN0081) and CSW Group (YUN0003).

associated with an older workforce. However, reskilling is also a pressure faced by younger people, especially early in their careers where they may be moving roles more often and exposed to differing expectations as well as greater job insecurity.

89. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) estimate nine in 10 current employees will need to reskill by 2030. It said "more incentives are necessary to encourage businesses to (re)train more of their own employees through initiatives such as training tax credits for SMEs" (small and medium sized enterprises). [189]

90. We heard that businesses and universities must collaborate to ensure that reskilling needs are met for the economy of the future. The Open University noted that it was well placed to support business reskilling needs because it enables students "to learn in a flexible manner", and "by encouraging individuals to study in smaller, more bite sized chunks of learning such as modules, they can upskill and reskill as the economy changes, and as business demands change".[190]

91. The NCUB reported that only 21% of businesses report being able to make use of public funds to support their employees through reskilling and upskilling.[191] It concluded that "there is an urgent need to develop clear policies and funding to support retraining and upskilling into sectors that are predicted to grow in the next decades". The NCUB called for a new body which would reintroduce the functions of the UKCES and merge it with the Skills and Productivity Board, Green Jobs Taskforce and Office for Talent, sitting outside any one Government department and having the ability to "evaluate our labour market needs in the short, medium and long term and make recommendations to all Whitehall departments as well as devolved government on skills, education, immigration and diversity and inclusion policy".[192]

92. The pandemic emphasised the need for reskilling. Changes to the operation of businesses and other employers created a different set of working expectations and skills requirements, some of which are likely to endure. The LGA spoke of "accelerated automation and digitalisation; resulting in a need for a more digitally skilled workforce and meaning upskilling and reskilling will become even more of a priority".[193]

93. London Councils argued that unemployment generated by the pandemic "represents an opportunity to reskill younger residents in the types of growth industries that are robust from automation in the future". It added that "reskilling programmes–such as apprenticeship and internship initiatives–for this demographic should be focused on the occupations least at risk of automation and most likely to experience significant growth in the future".[194] Youth Employment Group noted that "Kickstart (and any future schemes for young people) could therefore provide a strong platform to upskill and reskill young people to work in new and growing industry sectors such as logistics, healthcare and the 'green economy'".[195]

189 Written evidence from the National Centre for Universities and Business (YUN0008)
190 Written evidence from The Open University (YUN0020)
191 Written evidence from the National Centre for Universities and Business (YUN0008)
192 *Ibid.*
193 Written evidence from Local Government Association (YUN0043)
194 Written evidence from London Councils (YUN0006)
195 Written evidence from the Youth Employment Group (YUN0029)

94. However, opportunities may be limited by the concerning reduction in the amount of in-work training taking place in recent years, limiting the ability of young people to reskill. As noted in chapter 1, 21.8% of 18-year-olds are not in education or work-based training. These young people are either in work without training or NEET.[196] Academics from the University College London (UCL) Institute of Education told us that "between 1997 and 2011, the volume of training for each worker halved…volumes fell by about an hour per week from about 5 hours in 2011 to just above 4 hours in 2019". They argued that these developments suggest the current system of workplace training has not become better at reaching those who might benefit most from training.[197]

Box 7: Claiming benefits whilst studying

One of the aims of the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) was to remove the '16-hour rule' that applied with Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), where claimants would lose benefits if they worked or studied more than 16 hours a week. UC no longer universally enforces this, but limits have not been discarded entirely.[198]

Young people cannot normally claim UC if they are studying more than 12 hours a week (including full-time courses studied part-time); however, they might be able to do so if they meet certain criteria such as responsibility for a child, disability, or are aged 21 or under in non-advanced education (e.g. A Level equivalent and below) and do not have parental support (e.g. care leavers).[199] We heard that those on UC have to prioritise job searches and take available jobs if able to do so, limiting their opportunities to develop skills.[200] These restrictions might incentivise them away from study that could lead to work.

If a young person is claiming UC, a decision will be made on whether they can continue to claim whilst taking a course their work coach has referred them to. Full-time study is normally allowed if the course lasts for a maximum of 8 weeks. During the pandemic, the Government extended this to 12 weeks for a six-month period, and 16 weeks for skills bootcamps.[201] UC claimants can now attend full-time work-related training for up to 12 weeks whilst receiving benefits.[202]

196 Department for Education , 'Participation in education and training and employment: Calendar Year 2020', 24 June 2021 : https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/participation-in-education-and-training-and-employment/2020 [accessed 11 November 2021]

197 Written evidence from academics at UCL Institute of Education (YUN0011)

198 Department for Work and Pensions, 'Guidance: Universal Credit work allowances': https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-work-allowances/universal-credit-work-allowances [accessed 11 November 2021]

199 Department for Work and Pensions, 'Guidance: Universal Credit and students', 21 May 2018: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-and-students [accessed 11 November 2021]

200 Association of Colleges, *Let them learn: further education colleges' support for the unemployed* (9 June 2021): https://feweek.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/AoC-report-on-universal-credit.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]

201 Education & Skills Funding Agency, 'ESFA Update further education', 28 April 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-28-april-2021/esfa-update-further-education-28-april-2021 [accessed 11 November 2021]

202 Department for Work and Pensions, 'Over a million jobseekers to benefit from new training opportunities', 1 November 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-a-million-jobseekers-to-benefit-from-new-training-opportunities [accessed 11 November 2021]

Parents may lose their Child Benefit if their child starts an apprenticeship or work for 24 hours or more a week and is not in education or training. This does not take into account the rate at which it is paid. The national minimum wage for apprentices aged 16–18 (or aged 19 or over and in their first year) is currently £4.30 per hour.[203] The Autumn Budget 2021 raised this to £4.81.[204]

Together, these restrictions may have a negative influence on the ability of people claiming benefits to take opportunities to upskill or reskill.

95. The Government told us it is providing £2.5 billion over the course of this Parliament for the National Skills Fund to help people learn new skills and prepare for the future economy. The fund has already been used to extend the level 3 entitlement to over 24s and develop skills bootcamps.[205] In the Autumn Budget 2021, the Government committed £554 million by 2024-5 to increase opportunities for retraining and upskilling for adults, including via the National Skills Fund, Lifetime Skills Guarantee and skills bootcamps.[206] The Government stated that "this provides a 9 per cent real terms uplift in adult skills funding compared to 2019–20 and meets the government's commitment to a national skills fund".[207] The Lifetime Skills Guarantee is focussed on "targeting courses that will help adults get ahead in work and support strong labour market outcomes."[208] Institutes of Technology are now offering modular courses in skills shortage subjects including cyber security and digitisation of manufacturing.[209]

96. We also heard evidence on demand challenges for reskilling and upskilling, especially as they related to take up of level 4 and 5 qualifications. In particular, the TUC told us that, while it welcomed the Lifelong Loan Entitlement proposal, "there are concerns that it may lead to excessively high levels of student debt currently affecting university students becoming a reality for people using this loan to fund sub-degree technical qualifications (level 4 and 5) in the future". It suggested that one partial means of tackling this could be to "take forward the recommendation by the Augar Review for the restoration and extension of maintenance grants of up to at least £3,000 per annum to support the large number of socio-economically disadvantaged students".[210]

97. **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**

203 HM Government, 'Claim Child Benefit': https://www.gov.uk/child-benefit/eligibility [accessed 11 November 2021] and 'Become an apprentice': https://www.gov.uk/become-apprentice/pay-and-conditions [accessed 11 November 2021]

204 HM Treasury, *Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021*, 27 October 2021: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1028814/Budget_AB2021_Web_Accessible.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

205 Written evidence from Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions (YUN0062)

206 HM Treasury, *Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021*, 27 October 2021: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1028814/Budget_AB2021_Web_Accessible.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

207 *Ibid.*

208 Written evidence from Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions (YUN0062)

209 Department for Education, 'Thousands more adults set to benefit from new technical skills', 13 October 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-more-adults-set-to-benefit-from-new-technical-skills [accessed 11 November 2021]

210 Written evidence from Trades Union Congress (YUN0048)

of the future, as well as to help address skills gaps and shortages that are already known to exist.

98. **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.**

99. **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.**

100. **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.**

101. **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.**

102. **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.**

CHAPTER 3: CAREERS GUIDANCE AND WORK EXPERIENCE

103. Access to careers information is a fundamental right for all children. High quality careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) enables young people to understand all the possible careers open to them and the routes they can take to get there.

104. While progress has been made through the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) and the development of the Gatsby Benchmarks, we heard that more could be done to better support those who would benefit most. Our evidence also indicated the particular importance of young people—particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds who do not have access to networks, connections and familial advice to rely upon—having access to targeted, one-to-one careers advice and guidance. We also heard that more could be done to target CEIAG towards sectors of high and emerging skills needs in the economy as it transitions towards a green and ever more technologically advanced future.

105. Work experience is a critical part of a young person's careers education because it enables them to understand the workplace and the skills they need to be successful. We heard that the removal of the statutory duty on schools to ensure that 14- to 16-year-olds have work experience at Key Stage 4 has had a particular impact on this fundamental part of their preparation for work.

Careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG)

106. Access to careers information is a fundamental right. Article 28b of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out that states must "make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children".[211] Education and training providers have a duty to ensure that pupils are provided with independent careers guidance from Years 8 to 13 (the Government has pledged to lower this to Year 7). They are expected to ensure that a range of providers have access to speak to pupils, including those promoting technical routes as per the Baker Clause (see box 8).[212]

107. The Career Development Institute (CDI) told us that "one of the main challenges facing employers today is the lack of occupational knowledge and awareness of employment opportunities, apprenticeships and traineeships and related progression routes among young people".[213] A young person speaking at our engagement session in the East Midlands echoed these sentiments, telling us that "when I was in school in Year 11 apprenticeships were not really spoken about, I didn't know anything about them. Even now I don't really hear a lot about them. I only first heard about them at the time I applied for one".[214]

211 UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (20 November 1989): https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/unicef-convention-rights-child-uncrc.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]

212 Department for Education, *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers* (October 2018): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748474/181008_schools_statutory_guidance_final.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]

213 Written evidence from the Career Development Institute (YUN0018)

214 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].

Box 8: The Baker Clause

Young people typically choose a technical or academic pathway at 16. In 2020/1, there were 695,000 certifications for A Levels and 340,000 certificates awarded to students taking level 3 vocational and technical qualifications.[215]

The Technical and Further Education Act 2017 inserts section 42B "the Baker Clause" into the Education Act 1997. It came into force on 2 January 2018. It sets out that for pupils aged 13 to 18 in schools in England there must be "an opportunity for a range of education and training providers to access registered pupils during the relevant phase of their education for the purpose of informing them about approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships".[216]

However, the Youth Voice Census shows that many young people said they had never had traineeships (65.6%), apprenticeships (14.2%) or T Levels (72.7%) discussed with them.[217] Research shows that 70% of FE providers approached said they found it difficult to access schools.[218] Annabel May wrote to us to say that "further advertisement of apprenticeships within schools would be greatly beneficial to thousands of students".[219] During our engagement session in the East Midlands, a young person told us: "People who are offering apprenticeships should be brought into school to discuss what they are and why they would be a good option".[220]

Schools must publish a policy statement setting out arrangements for access and ensure it is followed.[221] 63% of 101 secondary schools surveyed in 2019 failed to do so, yet faced no formal action.[222] In May 2020, the first school was warned by Ofsted over failing to meet the clause and the Government has since sent letters to remind schools of their obligations.[223] From September 2021, guidance has been updated so that if a school does not meet the Baker Clause, Ofsted will report this in its 'personal development' judgement in a school's inspection report.[224]

We heard calls for penalties for non-compliance, to ensure that all young people receive fair access to information.[225] The Government's Skills for Jobs White Paper committed to introducing a three-point plan to enforce the Baker Clause

215 Department for Education, 'Record numbers of students take up university places', 10 August 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/record-numbers-of-students-take-up-university-places [accessed 11 November 2021]
216 Technical and Further Education Act 2017, section 2, and Association of Employment and Learning Providers, *The Baker Clause: Best practice guidance for schools, providers and learners* (November 2018): https://www.aelp.org.uk/media/2615/bp-58-version-2.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]
217 Youth Employment UK, *Youth voice census report 2021* (15 September 2021), p 38: https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/themes/yeuk/files/youth-voice-census-report-2021.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]
218 Written evidence from National Foundation for Educational Research (YUN0049)
219 Written evidence from Annabel May (YUN0063)
220 Engagement session with young people in in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
221 Department for Education, *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers* (October 2018), p 9: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748474/181008_schools_statutory_guidance_final.pdf [accessed 23 September 2021]
222 Institute for Public Policy Research, Dean Hochlaf, Joe Dromey, *The Baker Clause: one year on* (January 2019), pp 3–4: https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/the-baker-clause-one-year-on [accessed 23 September 2021]
223 'Ofsted raps first school over Baker Clause', *FE Week* (15 May 2020): https://feweek.co.uk/2020/05/15/school-slammed-by-ofsted-after-failing-baker-clause/ [accessed 23 September 2021]
224 Q 180 (Sean Harford) and Ofsted, 'School inspection handbook', para 259: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook [accessed 11 November 2021]
225 Written evidence from the Youth Futures Foundation (YUN0022)

including tougher action on non-compliance, and government-funded careers support for schools to be made conditional on compliance.[226]

An amendment to the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill passed in the House of Lords which requires that education institutions "must give a representative range of education and training providers…access to registered pupils on at least three occasions during each of the first, second and third key phase of their education".[227] At the time of publication, the Bill is currently progressing through the House of Commons.

The Government said it would consult on proposals to strengthen the Baker Clause in the summer of 2021, however at the time of publication this consultation has not materialised.[228]

108. The CEC was established in 2014 to support schools and colleges to deliver CEIAG so that "every young person, regardless of their background or where they live, has access to the best careers education, information, advice and guidance".[229] It published a toolkit to achieve greater parity between academic and technical post-16 pathways in May 2021.[230] One of the ways the CEC hopes to continue the improvement of CEIAG is via Careers Hubs.

109. Careers Hubs are groups of up to 40 secondary schools and colleges that work with business partners, the public, education and voluntary sectors.[231] The Skills White Paper confirmed that they would be scaled up.[232] 45% of mainstream schools and colleges in England are part of the model.[233] Evidence from the CEC shows that schools and colleges in Careers Hubs report more employer encounters (there are 300 Cornerstone Employers working with careers hubs) and more work experience than those not in Hubs.[234] Young people are shown to be more likely to consider apprenticeships and technical qualifications if their school is in the CEC Network.[235] Ryan Gibson of the Academies Enterprise Trust told us:

> "We have found hubs incredibly useful. Our schools being connected into Careers Hubs means that our careers leaders are connected to networks with other careers leaders, both regionally and nationally. They are connected with local and regional employers, which we have found to be incredibly useful as well. The access to employer networks

226 Department for Education, *Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth*, CP 338, January 2021, pp 47 and 102 : https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth__web_version_.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021] and Q 222 (Gillian Keegan MP)

227 See Skills and Post-16 Education Bill [HL], 14(2) [Bill 176 (2021–22)].

228 'Government careers agency bemoans lack of Baker Clause compliance', *FE Week* (7 June 2021): https://feweek.co.uk/2021/06/07/government-careers-agency-bemoans-lack-of-baker-clause-compliance/ [accessed 15 June 2021]

229 Careers & Enterprise Company, *Careers education in England's schools and colleges 2020* (November 2020), pp 16–17: https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/osbd2av3/1244_careers_ed_2020_report18_0.pdf [accessed 4 June 2021]

230 'Careers education toolkit launched to boost 'parity'', *TES* (12 May 2021): https://www.tes.com/news/careers-education-toolkit-launched-boost-parity [accessed 14 June 2021]

231 Careers & Enterprise Company, 'What is a Careers Hub?': https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/about-us/our-network/careers-hubs [accessed 20 April 2021]

232 Department for Education, *Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth*, CP 338, January 2021, p 46: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth__web_version_.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

233 Written evidence from the Careers & Enterprise Company (YUN0035)

234 Q 221 (Gillian Keegan MP)

235 Written evidence from the Careers & Enterprise Company (YUN0035)

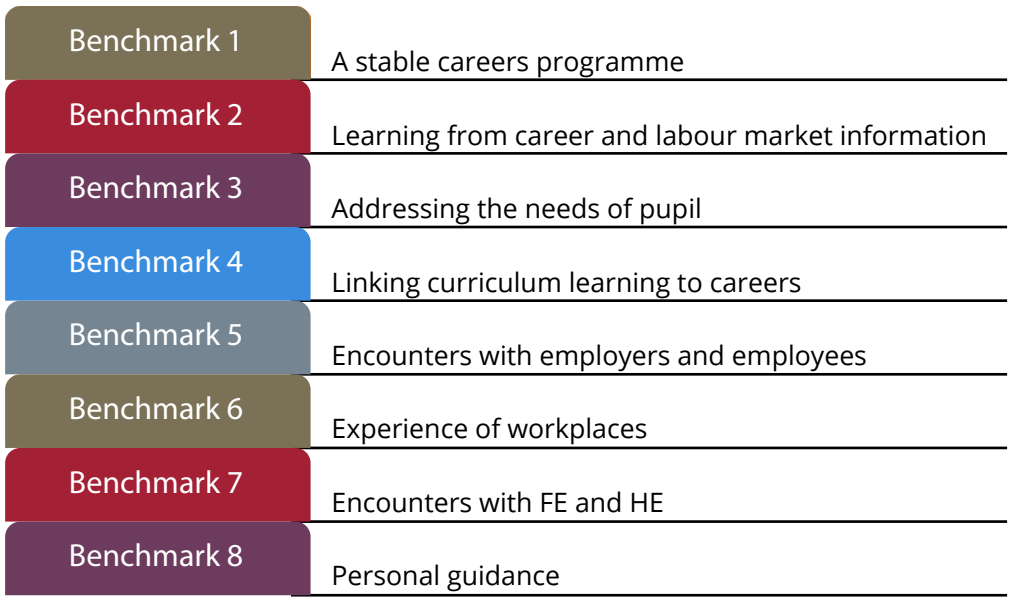
is something that schools have traditionally struggled with. As a teacher in a classroom, where do you find and approach an employer? Having a mechanism through the hub to be able to do that is incredibly useful. Having a careers leader in the school to facilitate that conversation between classroom and employment setting or employer has been incredibly beneficial".[236]

110. One of the main functions of the CEC is to implement the Gatsby Benchmarks (see Box 9).

Box 9: The Gatsby Benchmarks

The 2017 Careers Strategy required education providers to use the Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance, a series of steps to improve provision of CEIAG.[237] While they are non-statutory, Professor Sir John Holman, Emeritus Professor at the University of York, senior adviser to the Gatsby Foundation and creator of the benchmarks, told us that they provide the opportunity to assess "granular information" about the careers provision offered by schools for the first time.[238] The benchmarks are provided in full in Appendix 8.

Figure 16: The Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance



Source: Gatsby, Good career guidance: Reaching the Gatsby Benchmarks: A handbook for secondary schools, (2018): https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/good-career-guidance-handbook-digital.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]

236 Q 165 (Ryan Gibson)

237 The 2017 Careers Strategy required education providers to use the Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance, a series of steps to improve provision of CEIAG. While they are non-statutory, Professor Sir John Holman, Emeritus Professor at the University of York, senior adviser to the Gatsby Foundation and creator of the benchmarks, told us that they provide the opportunity to assess "granular information" about the careers provision offered by schools for the first time. The benchmarks are provided in full in Appendix 8.

238 Q 163 (Professor Sir John Holman)

Data shows a correlation between achievement of the benchmarks and increasing chances of young people being in sustained education, employment or training (EET) after leaving school or college.[239] An average of 3.75 benchmarks are currently being met. This is an increase on the 1.87 that schools met when the benchmarks were first rolled out.[240] However, we heard from NatWest that "uptake and implementation of the benchmarks is patchy across the country".[241]

Furthermore, despite the role of Careers Leader (Benchmark 1), there is no requirement that schools employ a staff member with sole responsibility for careers. This means that they may not have up to date knowledge. We heard from Barclays that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has an important role in guaranteeing this.[242] A young person speaking during our engagement session with people from ethnic minority backgrounds told us:

> "It's difficult for teachers as they've all gone through the standard education and HE pathways, they don't necessarily have information or insight into the industries that their students want to go into".[243]

We heard that more should be done to embed careers into subjects (Benchmark 4) so that young people feel the relevance of learning to their future careers because "careers embedment is not particularly subtle and seems like a Gatsby tick box exercise".[244] Michelle Rainbow told us that Benchmark 4 was the most challenging to achieve because the curriculum is not always easily adaptable.[245]

The North East LEP is running a regional pilot with 70 primary schools to adapt the benchmarks for use in primary schools. This is important because, although the Government has proposed to lower the age at which careers guidance should be provided to Year 7,[246] we heard that career-limiting ideas that stop young people from pursuing certain pathways develop far earlier than secondary school.[247] Michelle Rainbow of the LEP told us:

> "By the age of seven, life-limiting decisions are already being formed in young people: the types of jobs that they can do or see their family doing; the types of jobs that suit their gender; or the types of jobs that they can or cannot do if they have a disability or a learning challenge".[248]

239 Supplementary written evidence from Careers & Enterprise Company (YUN0073)
240 Q 163 (Professor Sir John Holman) and Careers & Enterprise Company, *Careers education in England's schools and colleges 2020* (2020), p 9: https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/osbd2av3/1244_careers_ed_2020_report18_0.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]
241 Written evidence from NatWest (YUN0034)
242 Written evidence from Barclays (YUN0060)
243 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].
244 Written evidence from the CSW Group (YUN0003) and engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
245 Q 135 (Michelle Rainbow)
246 Department for Education, *Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth*, CP 338, January 2021: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth__web_version_.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]
247 Q 157 (Professor Ewart Keep)
248 Q 135 (Michelle Rainbow)

Ryan Gibson of the Academies Enterprise Trust told us that approaches such as this could give pupils an early taster for the world of work by encouraging employer interactions.[249] Michelle Rainbow also told us that the pilot has been running for a year and the LEP is working with the DfE on sharing information.[250]

111. We heard a range of evidence on the importance of employer engagement in CEIAG and curriculum design, where it can play a major role in tackling the causes of youth unemployment and in opening up pathways to rewarding jobs and careers. The evidence we heard clearly indicated that the more closely employers and education institutions work together, the better potential outcomes there are for young people and the easier it will be to address the challenges.

112. The CEC has a duty to support employers to engage with purpose; it does this by recruiting 4,000 senior business volunteers to work with careers leaders on their careers programmes, as well as 300 'Cornerstone Employers', businesses who "work to transform careers education across multiple schools and colleges in their local areas". [251]Oli de Botton, Chief Executive of the CEC, told us that:

> "employers are absolutely central to 21st-century careers education because they bring relevance and rigour to the process. They are or should be giving young people an insight into the role of work, information about routes in, including apprenticeships, and, crucially, the sorts of skills that they are looking for…It is really encouraging to see, from my perspective, what happens when you connect schools to employers at scale. You see benefits to each".[252]

113. Ryan Gibson, national systems leader for careers at Academies Enterprise Trust, highlighted the improved engagement of recent years. He told us that employers:

> "have the traditional role that they have always played, in that they have been able to run assemblies, attend careers fairs and offer mentoring, but a difference that has emerged over the last three or four years is employers working closely and strategically with the leadership in schools. Employers looking at the careers programme alongside a careers leader just brings that employer perspective".[253]

114. We also heard evidence that, while the COVID-19 pandemic had curtailed many opportunities for employer engagement, new opportunities had been created through the move to virtual engagement. Professor Sir John Holman told us that:

> "the progress that was made using online virtual encounters with employers was tremendous and happened very quickly, and some of it will endure… schools will go on using virtual encounters with employers, where appropriate, but we have to be careful, because there is a world

249 Q 167 (Ryan Gibson)
250 Q 135 (Michelle Rainbow)
251 Careers & Enterprise Company, 'About us': https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/who-we-are/about-us/ [accessed 14 October 2021]
252 Q 165 (Oli de Botton)
253 Q 165 (Ryan Gibson)

> of difference between simply showing a video of the workplace… and having the opportunity to interact with an employer".[254]

115. The points made by these witnesses on the importance of employer engagement were echoed by large employers in written evidence. Barclays said that:

> "[employer interaction] can often be the difference between finding employment or leaving school without a job. Students who gain four quality employer interactions at school are 86% less likely to become NEET and over 90% of teachers believe that employer engagement can have an impact on the academic achievement of pupils".[255]

116. The Collab Group told us that there should be a more formalised relationship between FE colleges and employers, noting that "there is a clear place for business in creating a thriving jobs market for young people through detailed engagement with education providers". They argued that "ensuring all further education providers have strong sector focused employer boards that influence skills and training at the college is vital. Progression to higher level skills can then be developed as part of the pathway with universities".[256] An amendment to the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill passed in the House of Lords, which requires that forthcoming LSIPs should be developed in partnership with local authorities including Mayoral Combined Authorities and FE providers in the area,[257] may go some way to addressing this.

117. We also heard evidence on the important role that employers can play in curriculum design. For example, the Collab Group cited the example of Institutes of Technology, employer-led education providers working in collaboration with FE and HE providers and universities.[258] The Government said these were part of "plans to reform technical training to help employers get the skilled workforce they need and offer local people rewarding jobs".[259]

118. On a similar theme, the City & Guilds Group told us that "the Ford programmes of Project-Based Learning billed as Next Generation Learning should be explored and taken forward as examples of how primary/secondary and employer engagement can transform curriculum and education",[260] while the NCUB told us that "collaboration between further education colleges, universities and business is essential",[261] and Classof2020 stated that "business-led education is highly attractive to young people and prospective employers alike", adding that "the most suitable people to accredit skills are industry professionals or businesses, not education institutions".[262]

119. **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**

254 Q 164 (Professor Sir John Holman)
255 Written evidence from Barclays (YUN0060)
256 Written evidence from The Collab Group (YUN0053)
257 See Skills and Post-16 Education Bill [HL], part 1(7) [Bill 176 (2021–22)].
258 Written evidence from The Collab Group (YUN0053)
259 Department for Education, 'Institutes of Technology': https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/institutes-of-technology--2/institutes-of-technology [accessed 14 October 2021]
260 Written evidence from City & Guilds Group (YUN0051). NB. Ford Next Generation Learning is a programme "connecting communities, local businesses and educators to blend classroom learning with essential workplace skills and real world experience".
261 Written evidence from National Centre for Universities and Business (YUN0008)
262 Written evidence from Classof2020 (YUN0024)

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.

120. **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.**

121. **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.**

122. **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.**

123. **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.**

124. **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.**

125. **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.**

Work experience

126. In 2004, work experience became a statutory requirement in England for all Key Stage 4 students, namely those aged 14–16. This duty was removed in 2012 by an amendment to the Education Act 2002. This was justified by the Government on the basis of recommendations made in The Wolf Report on vocational education in March 2011.[263] The report gave three key reasons: it made sense for work experience to take place later given the raising of the school participation age, employers were less willing to have 14- and 15-year-olds on their premises, and the provision of work experience was expensive and poor quality. The Government also wanted to give schools more freedom to exercise their judgement about how to deliver work-related learning.[264]

127. While work experience below the age of 16 is no longer mandatory, Gatsby Benchmark 6 (see Box 9) "experience of workplaces" sets out that young people should have at least one experience of a workplace additional to part time work by the age of 16, and another by 18. It also sets out that "every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer". This is any encounter in which they have an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace.[265]

128. This differs from the approach taken by other countries. For example, in Finland, career education is a compulsory subject in the school curriculum and Practical Professional Orientation Periods (PPO) are compulsory. Around 76 hours are allocated to careers education between Years 7 and 9. Opportunities for work experience are signposted through TET-tori, a tool that facilitates links between school counsellors, students and parents and PPO vacancies. In Northern Ireland, the website Connect to Success NI allows users to search for work experience opportunities and apprenticeships. In Germany, the Federal Employment Agency works with employers and schools to list current vacancies and match students with opportunities, while local branches organise work placements for young people in Years 9 and 10.[266]

129. The Government offers a range of work experience opportunities, including Kickstart and traineeships specifically for young people, alongside sector-based work academy placements (SWAPs). SWAPs offer pre-employment training, work experience and a guaranteed job interview to unemployed people on benefits. As part of its Plan for Jobs in summer 2020 the Government committed to expanding SWAPs, with a focus on skills shortage areas such

263 Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, Department for Education, *Review of Vocational Education: The Wolf Report*, (March 2011): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180504/DFE-00031–2011.pdf [accessed 14 October 2021]

264 HL Deb, 23 July 2012, cols 246-254

265 Gatsby Foundation, *Good career guidance* (2014), p 24: https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]

266 Department for Education, *International approaches to careers interventions* (March 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/966252/International_Approaches_to_Careers_Interventions_March_2021.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]. See also CEDEFPOP, 'TET-tori': https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/print/pdf/node/26186 [accessed 3 November 2021]; NIdirect, 'Connect to Success NI': https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/connect-success-ni [accessed 3 November 2021] and 'Why careers education needs international inspiration', *TES* (4 December 2019): https://www.tes.com/news/why-careers-education-needs-international-inspiration [accessed 3 November 2021]

as adult social care and construction.[267] McDonalds told us that it had a positive experience working with the Government on SWAPs.[268] In 2020 almost 65,000 jobseekers enrolled on a SWAP. The Government is looking to create 80,000 more SWAPs by the end of 2021, and the Autumn Budget 2021 provided over £10 million a year to fund SWAPs.[269]

130. Despite these initiatives, we heard that a third of employers are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied by the amount of relevant work experience young people have.[270] For example, Barclays called for an increase in workplace visits, work experiences, and insights into work through practical activities and challenges.[271] This issue has been exacerbated during the pandemic when more young people could not access in-person work experience.[272] AGCAS found that there was a reduction of 40% in expected internship and placement positions in 2020 compared to anticipated numbers.[273]

131. London Councils recommended that young people should have taken 100 hours of work experience by the age of 16.[274] 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.

132. However, we also heard a number of challenges hindering the setting up of work experience:

- The burden to employers—Mike Cherry, National Chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), told us that work experience training was a "huge burden to small businesses" and their employees, who have to shoulder the cost and divert significant resource.[275] The Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills told us that LSIPs would encourage employers to go "far back into the pipeline to work with local schools via the Careers & Enterprise Company".[276]

- Organisational challenges for schools—David Hughes, Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges told us that employers do not come forward enough: "…at the moment, employers get besieged by people saying, 'Can we have some students in your company?' They need a single point of contact that makes it easy and simple." He praised the CEC Careers Hubs in trying to address this. The CEC gave us an example of a programme run between one of its Cornerstone Employers, Morgan Sindall Construction Employers, and Ipswich, Norwich and Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Areas, New Anglia Careers Hub and Leeds SEND Hub. The programme invites schools

267 Written evidence from the Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions (YUN0062)
268 Written evidence from McDonald's UK (YUN0028)
269 HM Government, *Plan for Jobs: progress update* (13 September 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1016764/Plan_for_Jobs_FINAL.pdf [accessed 29 October 2021] and HM Treasury, *Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021*, (27 October 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1029974/Budget_AB2021_Web_Accessible.pdf [accessed 29 October 2021]
270 Written evidence from the Youth Futures Foundation (YUN0022)
271 Written evidence from Barclays (YUN0060)
272 Q 20 (Laura-Jane Rawlings)
273 Written evidence from AGCAS (YUN0001)
274 Written evidence from London Councils (YUN0006)
275 Q 66 (Mike Cherry)
276 Q 227 (Gillian Keegan MP)

to put forward students with a 50:50 gender balance for a week's work experience.[277]

- Lack of funding—NatWest Group said that the reduction of school budgets to pay for brokers to carry out risk assessments means most young people explore the opportunities available to them using a theoretical approach. They told us that there are "a plethora of online sources, platforms and tools provide information, but the opportunity to experience and explore the variety of roles available within a workplace are more difficult to achieve".[278]

- Competition with other forms of work experience—Ian Green of the Nissan Skills Foundation expressed concern that the work experience requirement for T Levels may crowd out other work experience opportunities as businesses have a finite number of places. He said: " if we have a choice of 45 days to support someone on a T Level who will potentially become an apprentice or employee or a school child who may or may not enter the sector, then the latter will miss out".[279]

133. We also heard from young people that they are finding it difficult to access work experience opportunities, and do not know how to go about achieving one. Comments made by young people in our engagement sessions in London and the East Midlands included:

> "School tells you what you need—I'm aware that I need a CV or that I need experience—but I've never been told how to write a CV or been given any work experience opportunities from school".[280]
>
> "Work experience opportunities feel very inaccessible—they're rare, they're unpaid, they're far away"[281]
>
> "If I hadn't had the opportunity for work experience with my family, I wouldn't have got the experience I needed to begin my career".[282]

134. The Minister for Employment confirmed that:

> "work experience is really important but starting to have an honest conversation about a changing labour market and a changing world of work is key. That is where our schools linking better into local communities comes in. That is why our work coaches also go into schools. I strongly believe that we can and must do more here. There needs to be a better joining up of work experience, getting young people ready for the world of work, and that changing labour market".[283]

135. **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**

277 Written evidence from the CEC (YUN0035)
278 Written evidence from NatWest Group (YUN0034)
279 Written evidence from Ian Green, Nissan Skills Foundation (YUN0002)
280 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].
281 *Ibid.*
282 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
283 Q 240 (Mims Davies MP)

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.

136. **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.**

137. **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.**

138. **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.**

139. **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.**

CHAPTER 4: FURTHER EDUCATION

140. Further Education (FE) is a fundamentally important component of post-16 education provision, but we heard that for many years it has been undervalued and significantly underfunded. Its providers—FE Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges and specialist colleges such as Land-based or Art, Design and Performing Arts Colleges—sit between secondary and tertiary education, offering 1.7 million learners in England opportunities to study for a range of qualifications at a range of levels.[284] It is therefore a crucial springboard into employment for many young people.

141. However, the FE sector has faced disproportionate funding cuts over the past decade compared to other types of post-16 education and is held back by a system of funding student places that is no longer fit for purpose. The IFS reports that "16 to 18 education has been the big loser from changes over the last 30 years".[285] This has limited the sector's capacity to support its students, many of whom come from the most disadvantaged groups in society. Furthermore, despite the benefits it can offer, FE is too often regarded by schools and parents and students as a less prestigious and less desirable option than higher education (HE).

142. Together, these factors are limiting the potential of the FE sector to contribute as much as it could, and should, to the ambitious 'levelling-up' plans laid out by the Government in the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, not least in apprenticeship provision and the roll-out of T Levels.

The pressures on FE funding

143. The number of young people aged 16 and 17 who are in full-time education reached a record high of 85% in 2020.[286] This was in part a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and higher GCSE grades, but is also a result of longer-term trends.

144. FE for those aged 16 to 19 (up to 25 if they have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan) is funded via a funding formula, allocated annually to institutions and based on considerations including student numbers and programme cost. Funding is not demand-led and does not automatically follow the student but is limited by the institution's previous record. This restricts its capacity to provide places for all qualified people who want them.

145. Total spending on post-18 education is around 50% lower than it was in 2009–10 and two thirds lower than it was in 2003.[287] In 2020–21 prices,

284 Association of Colleges, *College key facts 2021/22* (2021): https://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/AoC College Key Facts 2021–22.pdf [accessed 14 October 2021]

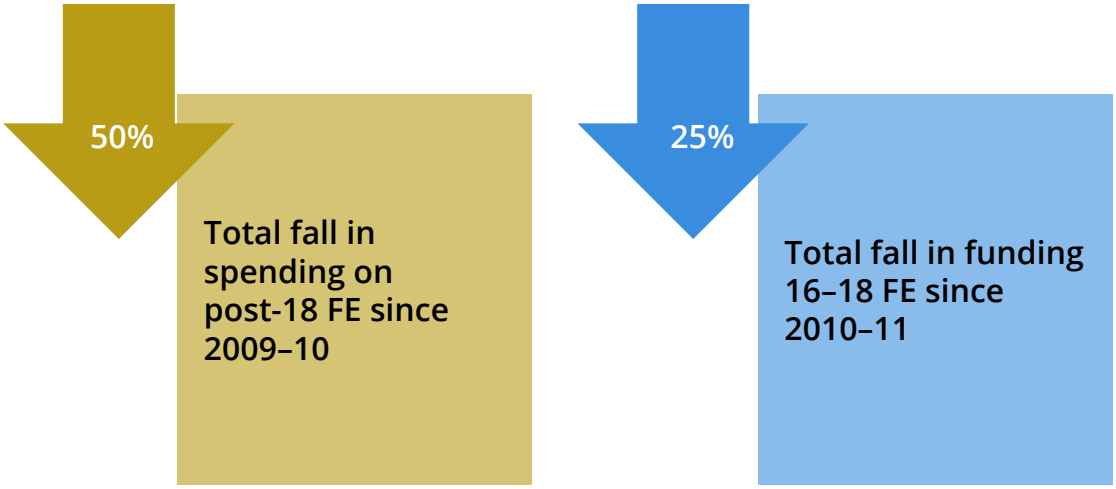
285 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *2020 annual report on education spending in England* (November 2020), p 142: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R183-2020-annual-report-on-education-spending-in-England%20%281%29.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

286 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Further education and sixth form spending in England* (18 August 2021), p 2 https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R333-Further-education-and-sixth-form-spending-in-England.pdf [accessed 16 November 2021]

287 Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2020 annual report on education spending in England (November 2020): https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R183-2020-annual-report-on-education-spending-in-England%20%281%29.pdf [accessed 16 November 2021]. Funding for those in FE aged 18 and over falls under the remit of the Adult Education Budget, which the Government plans to merge with the National Skills Fund by 2022–23. See Department for Education, *Skills for jobs: a new further education funding and accountability system* (July 2021): 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 [accessed 8 November 2021]

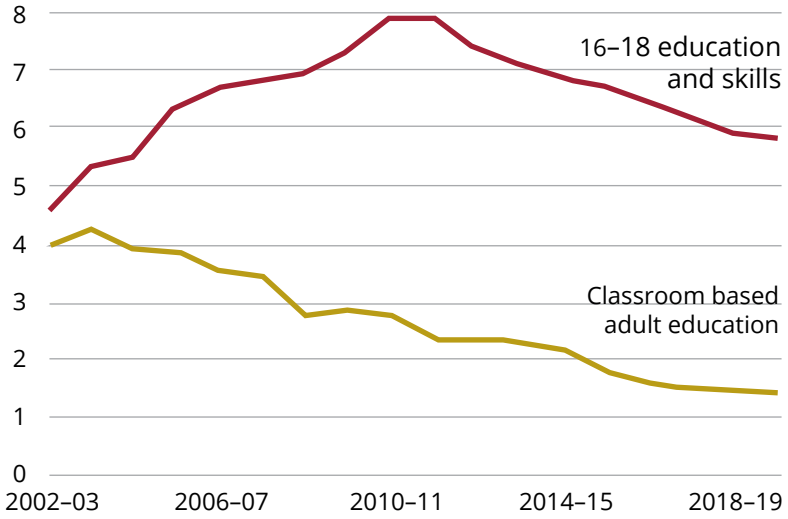
adult FE funding stood at £2.9 billion in 2009–10 and was under £1.5 billion in 2019–20 (see Figure 18). Total funding for 16 to 18-year-olds in FE has fallen by 25% in real terms between 2010–11 and 2019–20, while funding per pupil of this age fell by over 11% in real terms between 2010–11 and 2020–21.[288]

Figure 17: Funding for FE has fallen over the last decade



Source: Institute for Fiscal Studies, Further education and sixth form spending in England (18 August 2021), p 2: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R333-Further-education-and-sixth-form-spending-in-England.pdf [accessed 18 August 2021] and Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2020 annual report on education spending in England (November 2020): https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R183-2020-annual-report-on-education-spending-in-England%20%281%29.pdf [accessed 16 November 2021]

Figure 18: Public spending on 16-18 and post-18 FE in £billion in England



Source: House of Commons Library, Further Education funding in England, CBP 9194 30 April 2021 and Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2020 annual report on education spending in England (November 2020), section 4: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R183-2020-annual-report-on-education-spending-in-England%20%281%29.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

146. Teachers in FE institutions are paid £9,000 less than their counterparts in schools, a disparity which may have contributed to more than half of the college workforce from 2014/15 leaving. They have been followed by students;

288 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Further education and sixth form spending in England* (18 August 2021), pp 2 and 11: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R333-Further-education-and-sixth-form-spending-in-England.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

since 2015, the number of people taking FE courses has dropped from 2.6m to 1.7m. This is despite the fact that FE courses are generally shorter and cheaper than HE courses.[289] Annual public funding per university student averages £6,600 compared to just £1,050 for adults in FE.[290] The Association of Colleges concluded that FE funding is "wholly inadequate" compared to both university and school funding. The North East LEP told us:

> "Further Education funding in general has been in decline since 2010 and is not currently sufficient to deliver much needed quality and additionality required to meet the needs of young people. The current funding envelope only allows for core aspects of curriculum delivery rather than investment in the additional and essential skills required to succeed in the labour market".[291]

147. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government made several ad hoc commitments to funding including £400 million for colleges and sixth forms in the 2020/21 financial year and a capital fund to improve the quality of college infrastructure.[292] Prison education was not included (see Chapter 6).[293] In 2020, the Institute for Public Policy Research found that £2.7 billion a year was needed for 16 to 19 education to have kept up with population changes and inflation over the past decade.[294]

148. At the recent Autumn Budget 2021, the Chancellor confirmed an additional £1.8 billion for education recovery overall on top of the £3.1 billion announced already; £800 million of this will be allocated to 16 to 19 catch up, funding an additional 40 hours across the academic year. In addition, an extra £1.6 billion will be invested by 2024–25 to fund additional teaching hours for T Level students and to "maintain funding rates in real terms per student". However, it is unclear if this means funding will increase with inflation.[295]

149. The Government also announced the core schools budget will receive a £4.7 billion boost on top of the 2019 settlement, returning it to 2010 levels in

289 'Does Boris Johnson have the right plan to 'skill up' the UK workforce?', *Financial Times* (27 September 2021): https://www.ft.com/content/4954c5e0-4592-4dd5-85d3-207657a76afe [accessed 8 November 2021] and Department for Education, 'School workforce in England', 17 June 2021: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england [accessed 8 November 2021]

290 Written evidence from the Association of Colleges (YUN0057)

291 Written evidence from the North East LEP (YUN0017)

292 HM Treasury, Department for Education, 'Chancellor announced £400m investment for 16–19-year olds' education' (31 August 2019): https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-announces-400-million-investment-for-16-19-year-olds-education [accessed 5 October 2021] and ESFA, 'Capital allocations for FE colleges and designated institutions' (19 August 2020): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/capital-allocations-for-fe-colleges-and-designated-institutions [accessed 5 October 2021]

293 Written evidence from the Prisoner Learning Alliance (YUN0014)

294 Institute for Public Policy Research, *Going further: the case for investing in Further Education and adult skills* (November 2020): https://www.ippr.org/files/2020–10/1604082172_going-further-nov20.pdf [accessed 29 October 2021]

295 See 'Spending review 2021: What the Chancellor announced for FE and skills', *FE Week* (27 October 2021): https://feweek.co.uk/spending-review-2021-what-the-chancellor-announced-for-fe-and-skills/ [accessed 11 November 2021].

real terms by 2024–25. This equates to an increase of £1,500 per pupil.[296] However, FE education is not included in this. Analysis by the IFS shows that cuts to FE and sixth forms are only partially reversed by the Budget and will still be 10% down on their 2010 levels in 2024 despite the new funding.[297]

Support for learners who are disadvantaged

150. A particularly concerning aspect of the cuts FE is the impact it will have given that FE institutions cater for some of the most disadvantaged. In the 2020–21 academic year, over £530 million was allocated to colleges, schools and other providers to support, attract and retain 16- to 19-year-olds who are disadvantaged and those with additional needs.[298] However, there is no pupil premium in FE, a sum of money given to primary and secondary schools to improve the attainment of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

151. Many young people need significant financial support to stay in education after 16. Until 2011, young people aged 16 to 18 from low-income families could claim Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), totalling £30 a week. In 2011, 650,000 people received EMA, 45% of all 16 to 18-year-olds in full-time education.[299] It still remains in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Research found that EMA, which could be spent as young people chose to help them stay in post-16 education or training, made young people more likely to do so and reduced the number of young people NEET. It had a particularly positive impact on the destinations of young men.[300] Despite this, it was abolished on the grounds it was "deadweight".[301] There is now little maintenance support for young people in FE. This is not the case for young people who go to university, who can take out a student loan for tuition and a maintenance grant to support living costs.

152. Learners disadvantaged by socio-economic status can access the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund, which was introduced to replace EMA in 2011 and supports the costs of participation such as transport, books and equipment up to £1,200 per year. The budget of the Fund was less than a third of the EMA budget and targets a smaller group of young people. Colleges and FE providers can choose how they allocate the fund. An impact evaluation found that full-time participation of students in Year 12 who would have been eligible to claim full EMA fell by 1.6 percentage points, while another found that the short-term savings were outweighed by long-term costs due to

296 Department for Education, Education Hub, 'How does school funding work and how does the Budget affect it?'(29 October 2021): https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/10/29/how-does-school-funding-work-and-how-does-the-budget-affect-it/ [accessed 11 November 2021] and HM Treasury, *Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021*, (27 October 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1028814/Budget_AB2021_Web_Accessible.pdf [accessed 29 October 2021]

297 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Spending Review 2021: austerity over but not undone* (28 October 2021): https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/Autumn-Budget-2021-Austerity-over-but-not-undone-Ben-Zaranko.pdf [accessed 29 October 2021]

298 Written evidence from the Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions (YUN0062)

299 Written evidence from Ian Green, Nissan Skills Foundation (YUN0002)

300 Loughborough University, *Evaluation of Education Allowance Pilots: young people aged 16 to 19 years* (2019), p iii: https://repository.lboro.ac.uk/articles/online_resource/Evaluation_of_Education_Allowance_Pilots_young_people_aged_16_to_19_years/9598373 [accessed 23 August 2021]

301 'Q&A: EMA grants', *BBC News* (28 March 2011): https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-12209072 [accessed 23 August 2021]

lower projected lifetime earnings and tax receipts of individuals.[302] In 2020–21, £130m was made available for Discretionary Bursaries for disadvantaged young people, and £32 million was allocated for free FE meals in 2020/21.[303]

153. The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill introduces the Lifelong Loan Entitlement, which will ensure adults can access a loan for the equivalent of four years of student loans at higher-level study at either university or college.[304] The Government has not confirmed if the Lifelong Loan Entitlement will cover maintenance support.

154. We heard that after the age of 18, obtaining funding to study at an FE institution is hard.[305] This can be problematic for some young people. Those who have a level 3 qualification may wish to 'reskill' in another, but they will face an "unforgiving" system that does not automatically fund them to complete another qualification at this level.[306] The University of Lincoln said that many young parents may seek to return to FE when their children are older; however, Care to Learn funding (which helps to pay for childcare while studying) ends at age 20.[307] We were told by the Youth Employment Group that there is a clear need to ensure FE colleges can guarantee places for any suitably qualified young person who wishes to (re)enter education.[308]

The reputation of FE institutions

155. We heard on several occasions that FE colleges face a "reputational deficit" compared to universities.[309] While FE was championed by the FE Funding Council until 2001, it no longer has a body or agency supporting its interests, a role played by the Office for Students in the HE sector. However, the DfE has recently broadened the portfolio of the Minister for Universities to FE, under the new title of Minister for Higher and Further Education.

156. This reputational mismatch is felt by students, who told us that they were encouraged to attend sixth forms instead of FE colleges. Speaking to organisations in the East Midlands, we were told that schools and parents often pressure young people into academic routes because they are seen as the higher status route even when it is not most suitable for a young person.[310] One young person from West Yorkshire told us that choosing to attend a college to study anything other than A Levels rather than going to sixth form was seen as a poor choice by their teachers."[311] A young person in Greater London told us: "I was quite a high achieving student, so the school pressured me into going into HE—I got the feeling that this was to get them better statistics and 'bragging rights' rather than in my best interests".[312]

302 Edge Foundation, *Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)* (May 2021): https://www.edge.co.uk/documents/194/Learning_from_the_past_Paper_No._4_EMA_Final.pdf [accessed 17 November 2021]
303 Written evidence from the Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions (YUN0084)
304 Department for Education, Education Hub, 'Three key things the new skills bill will do for you' (25 May 2021): https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/05/25/three-key-things-the-new-skills-bill-will-do-for-you/ [accessed 13 October 2021]
305 Q 160 (Professor Ewart Keep)
306 Q 160 (Professor Sandra McNally)
307 Written evidence from the University of Lincoln (YUN0013)
308 Written evidence from the Youth Employment Group (YUN0029)
309 Written evidence from Belfast Met (YUN0004)
310 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
311 Engagement session with young people, 13 April 2021 [see Appendix 5].
312 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].

157. In July 2021, the Government published new statutory careers guidance, which combined guidance for schools, sixth forms and FE colleges. The guidance sets out that academic routes of education including HE should not be prioritised over technical routes like FE or apprenticeships. We also welcome guidance that schools with sixth forms should not promote this avenue over alternative routes, and the recognition that schools and colleges should inform students whether courses under consideration lead to positive outcomes.[313]

158. The Government has also set out its ambitions to overhaul the reputation of the FE sector and rebalance it with HE institutions. In September 2020, the Prime Minister announced that that the Lifetime Skills Guarantee would seek to end the distinction between practical and academic training.[314] These principles were later laid out in the Skills for Jobs White Paper and are now passing through Parliament via the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill. At the Autumn Budget 2021, the Government committed £2.8 billion of capital investment, part of which would be used to raise the condition of FE colleges in England and create "high-quality facilities".[315] However, it remains unclear if this is new funding, as previous announcements have been made in this area—for example to improve facilities to deliver T Levels (£50 million) and via the Further Education Capital Transformation Programme (£1.5 billion).[316]

159. We heard that FE institutions need more funding to fully achieve the Government's ambitions. The Collab Group suggested that funding must be targeted towards ensuring that teaching staff are up to date with the latest industry standard skills.[317] This will be critical to ensuring that FE institutions can compete with HE institutions for both teachers and learners.

160. **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.**

161. **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**

313 Department for Education, *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers* (July 2021), pp 18, and 33–34: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1002972/Careers_statutory_guidance.pdf [accessed 26 July 2021]

314 Prime Minister's Office, 'PM's skills speech: 29 September 2020': https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-skills-speech-29-september-2020 [accessed 27 July 2021]

315 HM Treasury, *Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021* (27 October 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1028814/Budget_AB2021_Web_Accessible.pdf [accessed 29 October 2021]

316 Department for Education, '£50 million to deliver world-class facilities for T Level students', 25 August 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/50-million-to-deliver-world-class-facilities-for-t-level-students [accessed 10 November 2021] and Department for Education, *Further Education Capital Transformation Fund* (July 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1002000/FETF_guidance_for_applicants_-_stage_2_.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

317 Written evidence from the Collab Group (YUN0053)

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.

162. **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.**

T Levels

163. T Levels have been launched by the Government as a high quality technical alternative to A Levels. We heard from a range of voices that they are a step in the right direction towards rebalancing parity of esteem between technical and academic routes and a good option for young people for whom academic study is not their preferred choice. Jane Gratton, Head of People Policy at the British Chambers of Commerce, told us that their employer-led design was welcome and stated that "we cannot afford for T Levels to fail". She also said, however, that more clarity was needed over the pathways that they lead to and greater awareness of the qualifications generally was required.[318]

Figure 19: Composition of T Levels

Source: HM Government, 'T Levels': https://www.tlevels.gov.uk/ [accessed 10 November 2021]

164. We have heard that entry requirements for T Levels may be too high for some students who achieve mid-level grades at GCSE but for whom the T Level option would be a good fit. The Collab Group told us that only 67% of Year 11 students get 'good' grade 4 GCSE grades in English and Maths, and as such a significant proportion of young people will not be able to progress to T Level (or A Level) study, which it argues will be a "strong barrier to social mobility".[319] Tom Dower, Principal at UTC South Durham, noted that Engineering T Levels will demand a grade 6 in maths and science.[320] While this will ensure rigour, it may present a barrier to those who do not wish to go on to academic FE or HE, but who do not have the grades for T Levels. This is a particular concern for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are less likely to achieve top grades. In 2020, only 56%

318 Q 34 (Jane Gratton)
319 Written evidence from the Collab Group (YUN0053)
320 Written evidence from Tom Dower (YUN0075)

of disadvantaged pupils achieved grade 4 or above in GCSE English and maths.[321]

165. If young people cannot or do not want to take a T Level, they may choose the T Level Transition Programme. Others may prefer to take another form of qualification, most commonly BTECs or Applied General Qualifications (AGQ), but they may soon find that these qualifications are not available.

Box 10: Defunding of 'competing' qualifications

The Government has proposed to cut funding for qualifications that it sees as overlapping with T Levels. These include alternatives such as Applied General Qualifications (AGQs), Extended Diplomas and BTECs, which are often practical in nature. Some large BTECs over one A level size will be funded, but only in areas that do not overlap with T or A levels.[322]

230,000 students received level 3 BTEC results in August 2021.[323] They are a common route into HE and are particularly taken up by students from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).[324] Almost half of black British students accepted into university have at least one BTEC.[325]

The Government recognised in its updated impact assessment that 16- to 19-year-olds who are male, from Asian backgrounds, have a history of SEND support or are disadvantaged are most likely to be impacted.[326]

Several groups including the National Union of Students, National Education Union, Collab Group and the Association of School and College Leaders have campaigned against the binary choice between A and T Levels, arguing that "they are a different type of qualification that provide a different type of educational experience".[327]

321 FFT Education Datalab, 'GCSE results 2020: did attainment gaps increase?' (18 September 2020): https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2020/09/gcse-results-2020-did-attainment-gaps-increase/ [accessed 8 November 2021]

322 Department for Education, *Review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 in England* (July 2021), pp 22–23: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004610/Review_of_post-16_qualifications_at_level_3_in_England_government_response.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

323 'Results day 2021: 230,000 get level 3 BTEC results', *TES* (10 August 2021): https://www.tes.com/news/results-day-2021–230000-get-level-3-btec-results [accessed 10 November 2021]

324 Department for Education, *Review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 in England: Government consultation response: Impact assessment* (July 2021), p 16: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1002076/Impact_assessment.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

325 Social Market Foundation, *Vocation, vocation, vocation* (January 2018), p 6: https://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/SMF-Vocation-Vocation-Vocation.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

326 Department for Education, *Review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 in England: Government consultation response: impact assessment* (July 2021), p 17: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1002076/Impact_assessment.pdf [accessed 16 August 2021]

327 Protect Student Choice, 'Joint position statement on the future of applied general qualifications' (June 2021): https://sfcacampaign.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/document/0621-FINAL-Joint-Position-Statement-on-AGQs-Final1.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

In the Government's response to its consultation, the Department for Education acknowledged that 86% of respondents opposed its proposals to defund existing qualifications that overlap with T or A Levels or which have "low" levels of enrolment.[328] Despite this, the Government intends to allow the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) to delist the qualifications it no longer sees as valuable.

An amendment to the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill recently passed in the House of Lords would introduce a four-year moratorium on doing so. During debates on the amendment, it was argued that swift reduction of funding from 2022 would not give employers or students time to review the success of T Levels, nor will it take into account the results of T Level students who began learning in September 2020.

More recently, the Education Secretary told the House of Commons that he recognises the value of these qualifications and stated that it is "quite likely we will see many BTECs and other similar applied general style qualifications continuing to play an important role in 16-19 education, for the foreseeable future." The Education Secretary has said that plans to defund these qualifications will be delayed by a year from 2023 to 2024.[329]

166. An industrial placement is a key attribute of the T Level programme and is being piloted with employers. BAE Systems is supporting the Engineering T Level and is piloting design activity with Blackpool and the Fylde College and Furness College, developing a template model for the industry placement.[330]

167. Some employers may have concerns about their ability to guarantee provision of a 45-day placement over two years. This could explain why fewer than 200 providers have confirmed they will offer T Levels.[331] We heard that the Government should provide more incentives to employers and local councils to offer more industry placements, as well as the resources to manage and promote them.[332] The City & Guilds Group suggested it should be made clearer how employers can use industry placements to build a talent pipeline.[333]

168. Even if employers offer industrial placements, young people who have limited access to transport due to limited infrastructure or financial means may miss out on opportunities due to a lack of placements in their local area (see Chapter 6). This may particularly impact young people who live in rural, coastal or hard-to-reach areas that do not benefit from good connectivity, or a plethora of local businesses and education providers. The Collab Group told us:

> "As T Levels roll out there is a potential problem whereby extensive industry placements…exclude students from subjects where there is limited capacity for placement in their local area. A 16-year-old who dreams of entering the Visual Effects industry will not be able to conduct a 45-day placement in London at 16 years if they live in Lincoln. This

328 Department for Education, *Review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 in England: Government consultation response* (July 2021), p 19: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004610/Review_of_post-16_qualifications_at_level_3_in_England_government_response.pdf [accessed 16 August 2021]

329 HC Deb, 15 November 2021, col 385

330 Written evidence from BAE Systems (YUN0042)

331 Education and Skills Funding Agency, 'T Level provider list', 25 May 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providers-selected-to-deliver-t-levels [accessed 29 July 2021]

332 Written evidence from the Local Government Association (YUN0043)

333 Written evidence from the City & Guilds Group (YUN0051)

policy ensures that only learners from regions with an established workforce can deliver in a subject area—this will impact upon social mobility and aspiration".[334]

169. We heard concerns that some universities will not accept T Levels as an entry qualification despite their equivalence to three A Levels.[335] The Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills told us that as of July 2021, 32 universities have said they will accept them, including three from the Russell Group, with three saying they will not (University of Cambridge, Imperial College London and Queen Mary University London).[336] T Levels may be most relevant for technical degrees, and as such humanities or arts courses may choose to prioritise applications from students with A Levels. However, the decision of some universities not to accept T Levels on a blanket basis as equally valuable to A Levels may reflect the tendency to treat technical qualifications with condescension. It threatens the credibility of T Levels and may encourage some young people not to take them if they feel it limits them from going to university later.[337] The Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills told us conversations with universities are ongoing to encourage them to explore how T Levels align with their degrees.[338]

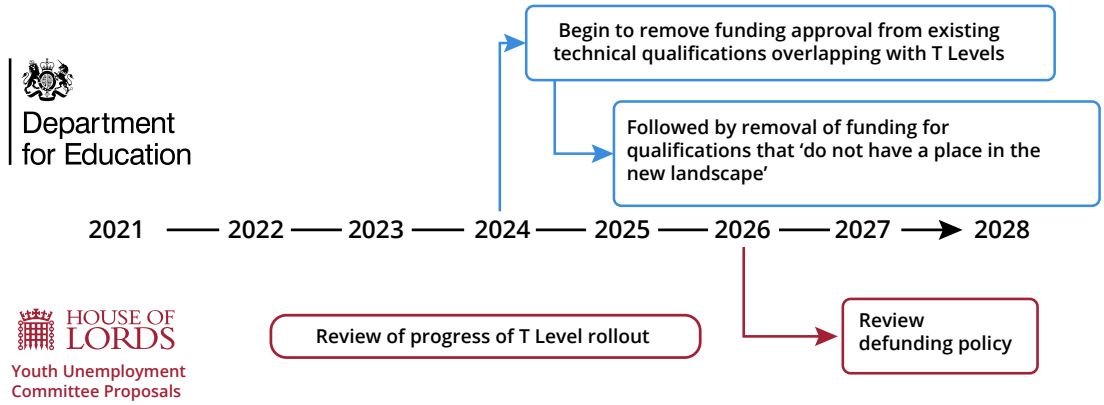
170. The distinction between academic and technical education is complex and difficult to define. Tom Dower of UTC South Durham argued that the nature of the binary choice of A versus T Levels is reinforcing a false divide that limits a young person's options.[339] Ofsted's National Director for Education urged caution in using words like 'creative' and 'technical' given the interdisciplinary nature of such skills and the need for both in technical and creative roles.[340] 80% of the T Level course is taught in the classroom and as such could be considered academic.

171. **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.**

172. **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.**

334 Written evidence from The Collab Group (YUN0053)
335 Written evidence from Tom Dower (YUN0075)
336 Written evidence from IfATE (YUN0078), Q 220 (Gillian Keegan MP) and '3 leading universities say they won't accept T Levels', *TES* (10 September 2020): https://www.tes.com/news/3-leading-universities-say-they-wont-accept-t-levels [accessed 17 August 2021]
337 '3 leading universities say they won't accept T Levels', *TES* (10 September 2020): https://www.tes.com/news/3-leading-universities-say-they-wont-accept-t-levels [accessed 17 August 2021]
338 Q 220 (Gillian Keegan MP)
339 Written evidence from Tom Dower (YUN0075)
340 Q 188 (Sean Harford)

Figure 20: Proposed timeline for the reconsideration of funding for qualifications that overlap with T Levels



173. **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.**

CHAPTER 5: APPRENTICESHIPS

174. Apprenticeships are a form of earn and learn employment. They are highly valued by learners and employers and are an important means by which young people can enter the labour market if they do not want to go to university, study an academic subject, or if they wish to earn a wage whilst they study. 20% of an apprentice's normal working hours are spent on study, while the rest are spent on practical training in a job.

175. There are a range of barriers that stop young people from taking on apprenticeships. We heard that systemic faults within the apprenticeship levy funding system have led to employers converting existing training programmes to apprenticeships at the expense of recruiting young people. Furthermore, there is a lack of incentives geared towards recruiting young people or providing for adequate funding of places. This has led to an imbalance in the supply of places relative to demand.

176. At the same time, young people are not properly supported to take up apprenticeship roles. Misconceptions and lack of awareness about the value of an apprenticeship are a longstanding issue, particularly influencing take up amongst some demographic groups. There is no single, central application portal for young people to apply through as exists for HE via UCAS. Finally, while it is improving, careers education is still not effectively increasing awareness of the variety of options open to young people outside the academic route. A key part of this lies in the fact that the Baker Clause is not effectively implemented in every institution (see Box 8). A young person at our engagement meeting with young people from Bolton and Lancashire told us: "The benefit of an apprenticeship is no student debt and more experience. In an apprenticeship you are working somewhere for three or four years and you get more skills out of it".[341]

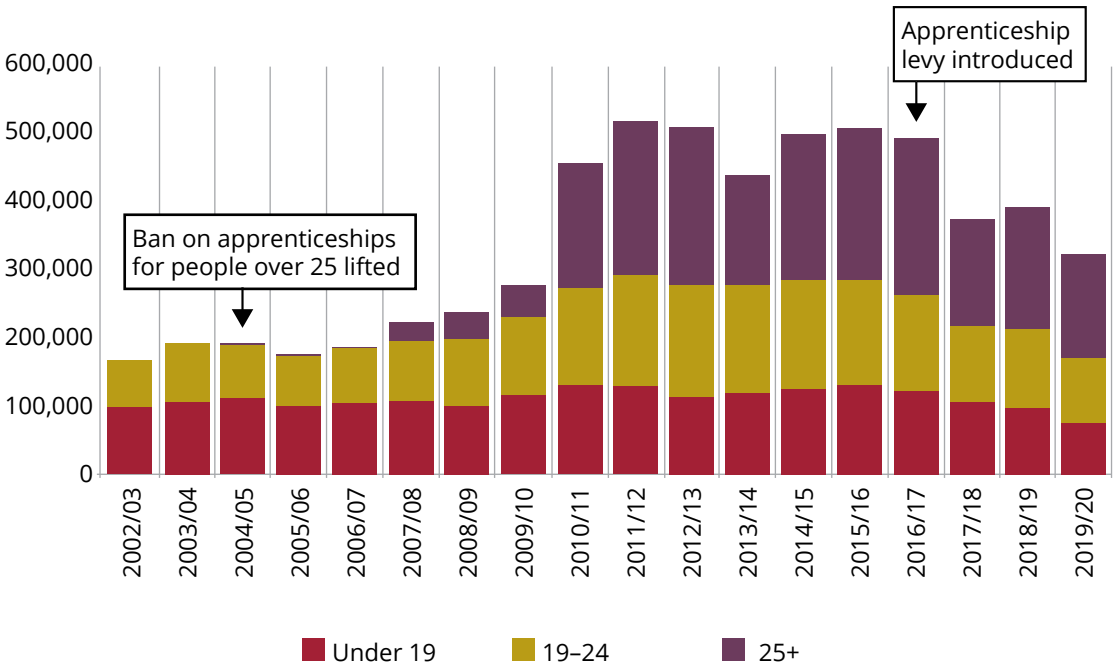
Apprenticeships: Key statistics

177. The decline in young people participating in apprenticeships is a long term trend which has been exacerbated in recent years, including through the COVID-19 pandemic. The IFS concludes "there are few policy reforms or incentives in place to arrest the specific decline in work experience opportunities amongst 16- and 17-year-olds" with regard to apprenticeships, although it suggests the new T Levels may go some way to addressing this.[342]

341 Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].

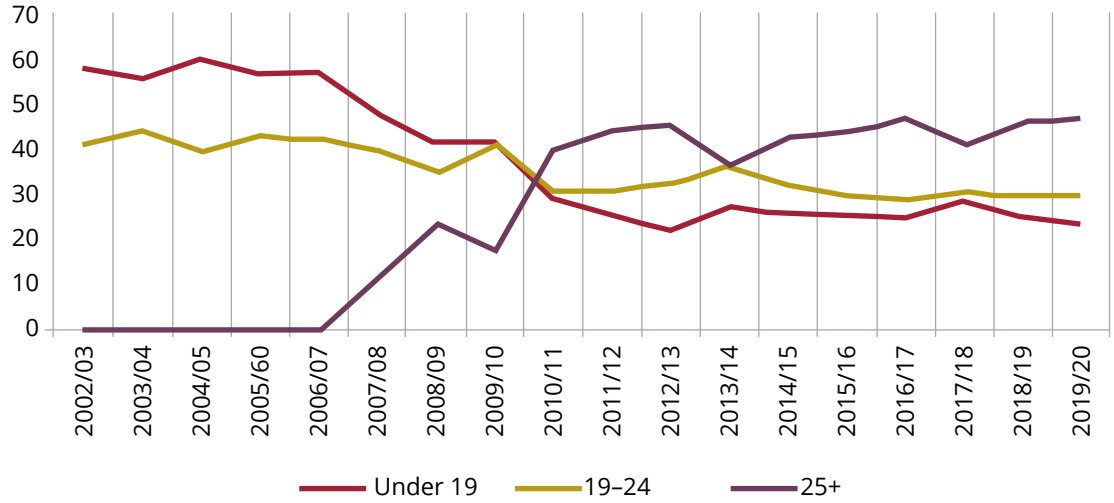
342 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Further education and sixth form spending in England* (18 August 2021), pp 5, 13: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R333-Further-education-and-sixth-form-spending-in-England.pdf [accessed 18 August 2021]

Figure 21: Total apprenticeship starts by age since 2002/03



Source: DfE, 'Apprenticeships and Traineeships data', (Apprenticeships by age, gender and level: starts 2002/03 to 2012/13) (Apprenticeships by framework & pathway, level and age: starts 2013/14 to 2014/15): https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships [accessed 1 November 2021]; DfE, 'Apprenticeships and traineeships: academic year 2020/21': https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships [accessed 1 November 2021].

Figure 22: Proportional (%) apprenticeship starts by age since 2002/03



Source: DfE, 'Apprenticeships and Traineeships data', (Apprenticeships by age, gender and level: starts 2002/03 to 2012/13) (Apprenticeships by framework & pathway, level and age: starts 2013/14 to 2014/15): https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships [accessed 1 November 2021]; DfE, 'Apprenticeships and traineeships: academic year 2020/21': https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships [accessed 1 November 2021]

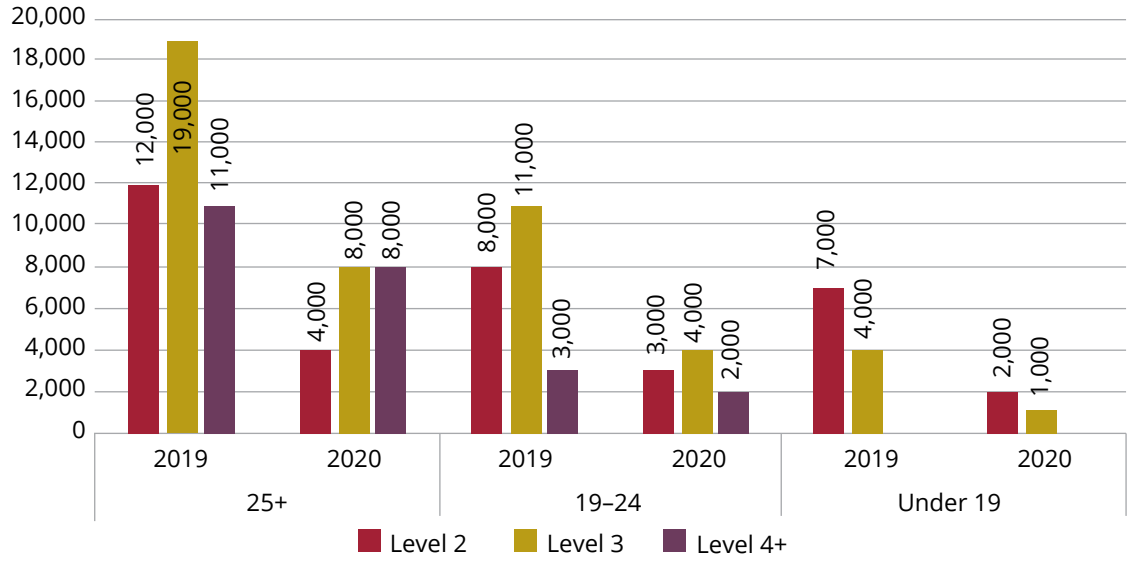
NB. England only. Figures for 2011/12 on are not directly comparable to earlier years as the introduction of Single Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data led to a removal of duplicate learners, reducing in overall numbers by approximately 2%.

178. The latest figures for 2020–21 compared to the previous year show that apprenticeship starts fell by 15% for under-19s, remained flat for 19 to 24 year olds and increased by 8% for those aged 25 and above. Level 2 apprenticeships declined by 15%, while level 4 apprenticeships increased by 21%. Level 4 apprenticeships for those aged 25 and above increased by 28%.[343]A full breakdown of apprenticeship starts by age and level since 2014–15 is provided in Appendix 10.

179. Latest data covering the 2020–21 academic year between August and April show that the proportion of starts for those aged under 19 were down by 4.7 percentage points to 21%, and for 19 to 24 year olds the figure decreased slightly to 24.9%, while for those aged 25 and over they were up 4.9 percentage points to 49.6%.[344]

180. The IFS calculates that current rates of 16 and 17-year-olds in apprenticeships or employer-funded training is at its lowest level since the 1980s. Just 3% of young people who were 16 and 17 took apprenticeships in 2020 and even fewer, just 2%, were in employer-funded training. This is in part a result of the pandemic's influence on young people choosing to stay in education for longer; the number of apprentices of this age fell by 30% between 2019 and 2020.[345]

Figure 23: Apprenticeship starts by age and level during the pandemic in England



Source: Resolution Foundation analysis of DfE, 'Apprenticeships and Traineeships' cited in TES, 'Apprenticeships starts: will they ever bounce back?', TES (27 August 2020): https://www.tes.com/news/apprenticeships-starts-will-they-ever-bounce-back [accessed 2 November 2021]

343 Department for Education, 'Apprenticeships and traineeships': https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships/2020–21 cited in 'Young people hit hardest again in full year apprenticeship figures', *FE Week* (7 October 2021): https://feweek.co.uk/young-people-hit-hardest-again-in-full-year-apprenticeship-figures/ [accessed 2 November 2021]

344 Department for Education, 'Apprenticeships and traineeships', (28 January 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships/2020–21: [accessed 18 October 2021]. NB data applies to England.

345 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Further education and sixth form spending in England* (18 August 2021), pp 5, 13: https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/R333-Further-education-and-sixth-form-spending-in-England.pdf [accessed 18 August 2021]

Supply of apprenticeship places

The apprenticeship levy

181. Apprenticeships are funded by the apprenticeship levy, which was introduced in April 2017 and is paid by employers in all sectors who have annual pay bills over £3m, which means that fewer than 2% of UK employers pay it.[346] Those with a pay bill under £3m pay 5% of the cost of apprenticeship training and the Government pays the rest.[347] While the proportion of young people starting apprenticeships was falling before the levy came into force, its introduction has exacerbated the degree to which employers are spending their levy on existing, and therefore generally older, workers.

182. EDSK shared analysis showing that since the introduction of the levy to the pre-pandemic month of January 2020, 66% of higher apprenticeships (level 4+) were started by those aged 25 and over and 46% had been with their employer for at least six months before they started training.[348] Higher apprenticeship starts accounted for just 4% of starts in 2014–15, but they made up to 25.6% of all starts in 2019–20.[349] A National Audit Office report published in 2019 found that some levy-paying employers were simply supplanting their existing professional development programmes with apprenticeships, presenting a "risk that the additional value of the apprenticeship to the economy may not be proportionate to the amount of government funding."[350]

183. The North East LEP told us that "the apprenticeship levy has predominantly impacted business through driving organisational change rather than supporting its original ambitions… the levy has encouraged employers to upskill their existing workforce through, for example, converting existing leadership and management training into apprenticeship training at the expense of creating opportunities to support entry level recruitment opportunities and attract new, young talent".[351]

184. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated these trends. Apprenticeship starts for all ages fell 45.5% from March to July 2020 compared to the year before. Of these starts, people aged 25 and over made up 61.6% of starts, up from 54.5% before the pandemic. Level 2 apprenticeships made up 25.6% of starts (down from 36.1% the same period in 2018/19) and apprenticeships at level 4 and above made up 31.4% of starts (up from 17.7% in 2018/19).[352]

185. The impact of Brexit should be considered with respect to this need for skills at lower levels. The Association of Colleges noted that there is a broader need

346 HMRC, 'Apprenticeship Levy' (last updated 13 May 2021): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy/apprenticeship-levy [accessed 5 May 2021]

347 Department for Education, 'Key facts you should know about the apprenticeship levy', (5 April 2019): https://www.gov.uk/government/news/key-facts-you-should-know-about-the-apprenticeship-levy [accessed 21 July 2021]

348 EDSK, *Runaway training* (January 2020): https://www.edsk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/EDSK-Runaway-training.pdf [accessed 28 June 2021]

349 Department for Education, 'Apprenticeships and traineeships: academic year 2020/21', (last updated 7 October 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships [accessed 11 October 2021]. Data applies to England.

350 National Audit Office, *The Apprenticeships Programme* (6 March 2019), p 30: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/The-apprenticeships-programme.pdf [accessed 28 July 2021]

351 Written evidence from the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (YUN0017)

352 Department for Education, 'Apprenticeships and traineeships: Academic year 2019/20', (last updated 28 January 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships/2019–20 [accessed 28 June 2021]. Data applies to England.

for level 2 training given the likelihood of skills shortages that were previously filled by inward EU migration.[353] AELP told us that new immigration rules following Brexit have brought "additional pressures on shortages of skilled workers across key sectors of the economy, as well as hindering employment prospects for young people."[354]

186. We heard several suggestions on how the Government can refocus the apprenticeship levy on new entrants to the labour market, including:

- The NCUB suggested that a salary ceiling for levy-funded apprentices may reverse the balance of public funding going towards higher-level training. It also recommended a 50% wage grant for people under 25 taking any apprenticeship;
- EDSK suggested that employers should be allowed to redirect 10% of their levy contributions towards approved pre-apprenticeship programmes like traineeships. This may boost employers' confidence in taking on more young people;
- The Prince's Trust suggested that National Insurance Contributions (NICs) should be waived for under-25s to stimulate new hiring;
- The North East LEP suggested that the public sector target should be refocussed on young apprentices;
- The Youth Futures Foundation suggested the abolition of employer co-investment (set at 5%) for SMEs if the apprentice is under 25, and the introduction of a 10% co-investment rate for apprentices aged over 25 in all businesses;[355] and
- The Youth Employment Group suggested removing level 7 apprenticeships from the scope of the apprenticeship levy.[356] The Minister for Higher and Further Education has said that financial incentives are being considered as a means to encourage more universities to offer degree apprenticeships at levels 6 and 7.[357]

187. We heard how businesses could be encouraged to work together to create more opportunities. The Tees Valley Combined Authority told us that discussions with local employers exploring how they spend and transfer their levy could be accompanied by a locally led 'matching service' between levy-paying and non-paying employers. Local organisations with links to business could support and signpost organisations who cannot take apprentices.[358]

188. We also heard calls for more flexibilities in the apprenticeship levy by allowing a proportion of levy funds to be used to subsidise apprentices' wages and for administration costs. The LGA argued that "even reallocating the

353 Written evidence from the Association of Colleges (YUN0057)
354 Written evidence from The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (YUN0005)
355 The Government pays 100% of the training costs for employers with fewer than 50 employees.
356 Written evidence from the National Centre for Universities and Business (YUN0008), EDSK (YUN0065), the Prince's Trust (YUN0039), North East LEP (YUN0017), Youth Futures Foundation (YUN0022), Youth Employment Group (YUN0029)
357 'Universities could be incentivised to run degree apprenticeships, minister suggests', *FE Week* (29 October 2021): https://feweek.co.uk/universities-could-be-incentivised-to-run-degree-apprenticeships-minister-suggests/ [accessed 3 November 2021]
358 Written evidence from Tees Valley Combined Authority (YUN0040)

government's 10% top-up payments for this purpose would help to unlock more apprenticeship opportunities".[359]

189. The issue of underspent levy funds, which are returned to the Treasury if not spent after two years, was another concern. The Collab Group said "the underspend of the levy cannot be the Government's only source of apprenticeship funding for SMEs. If the levy paying employers, circa 2–3% of the employers in the country, all use their levy, apprenticeships will crash".[360] London Councils said employers should have three rather than two years to spend the levy; that the threshold for levy transfer to SMEs should be increased to 50%; and agreed that some of the levy could be allowed to be spent on traineeships, which often lead to an apprenticeship. Of the 14,900 traineeships started in 2018–19, 26.1% led to an apprenticeship start before the end of 2019–20.[361] A young person in our Bolton and Lancashire meeting said that traineeships offer a chance to get a foot in the door and show what young people can do.[362]

190. AELP put forward the suggestion that employers could gift their unspent levy funds to finance apprenticeships for people in custody.[363] The North East LEP suggested that unspent funds could be repurposed to cover the cost for employers required to pay a 5% contribution as this can be a barrier to participation, particularly in some sectors like health and social care.[364]

191. We also heard evidence that older workers must continue to have opportunities to upskill via apprenticeships.[365] However, a range of other evidence said that apprenticeships are a valuable option for young people who want to earn and learn, and funding should be safeguarded for their use.

Lack of incentives

192. The Government currently has a public sector apprenticeship target, requiring all public bodies with 250 or more staff in England to employ at least 2.3% of their staff as new apprentice starts.[366] However, there is no age bracket specified within this target. At the latest count public sector employment of apprentices was 1.7%.[367] The target has recently been extended to 2022.

193. For private sector employers, there are few incentives geared towards encouraging businesses to take on apprenticeships. Temporary apprenticeship incentives were launched in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Firms receive £3,000 for new apprentices of any age who join their organisation from 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021. This is on top of the £1,000 firms

359 Written evidence from Local Government Association (YUN0043)
360 Written evidence from the Collab Group (YUN0053)
361 Department for Education, 'Apprenticeships and traineeships: academic year 2020/21', (last updated 7 October 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships [accessed 11 October 2021]. Data applies to England.
362 Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].
363 Written evidence submitted by The Association of Employment and Learning Providers to the Education Select Committee inquiry on prison education (EPB0024)
364 Written evidence from the North East LEP (YUN0017)
365 Written evidence from NatWest (YUN0034)
366 Department for Education, 'Meeting the public sector apprenticeship target 2021–22', (last updated 19 March 2021): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-apprenticeship-target [accessed 28 July 2021]
367 Department for Education, *Progress report on the Apprenticeships Reform Programme* (July 2021), p 11: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1003681/CCS0621801708-001_2021_Progress_Report_on_the_Apprenticeships_Reform_Programme_E-Laying.pdf [accessed 17 August 2021]

already receive for hiring an apprentice aged 16 to 18, or someone with an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan.[368] Government figures indicate that at the end of September 2021, the number of apprentices for whom incentives have been claimed totalled 101,460, and that 76% were aged between 16 and 24. Level 2 apprenticeships accounted for 38%, level 3 for 46% and level 4 and above for 16%.[369] The Government has extended incentive payments to January 2022.[370]

194. Amy Fazackerley, National Partnerships Manager at Coach Core Foundation, told us that SMEs have been so adversely affected by COVID-19 that even the financial support available through these incentives is not enough to cover the costs.[371] The Prince's Trust suggested incentives were not high enough, nor were they targeted by age. It recommended increasing payments to £5,000 for those aged 16 to 18, and £4,000 for those who are 19 to 24.[372]

195. Small businesses may require additional support in establishing apprenticeships. Michelle Ovens CBE, founder of Small Business Britain, told us that in the first instance, "there is wide misunderstanding in small businesses about the role that apprenticeships could play for them."[373] The CSW Group offered similar sentiments, telling us that "small employers without infrastructure need to be supported in making apprenticeships work. They do not have the time to put toward the additional administration and background reading required". It called for a brokerage service, similar to the Learning Agreement programme previously trialled by government, to help young people and employers maximise apprenticeship opportunities.[374]

196. At the Autumn Budget 2021, the Chancellor announced that he would increase apprenticeship funding by £170 million to £2.7 billion by 2024-5. It is not clear whether this increase simply derives from an increase in employer contributions to the levy as employment and wages go up.[375] The boost will be accompanied by an "enhanced recruitment service" for SMEs to help them hire apprenticeships and a "return on investment tool" to ensure employers can see the benefits apprentices create in their business.[376]

---

368 Education and Skills Funding Agency, 'Incentive payments for hiring a new apprentice', (last updated 27 October 2021): https://www.gov.uk/guidance/incentive-payments-for-hiring-a-new-apprentice [accessed 10 May 2021]

369 Department for Education, 'Apprenticeships and traineeships: academic year 2020/21', (last updated 7 October 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships [accessed 11 October 2021]. Data applies to England.

370 HM Treasury, *Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021* (27 October 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1028814/Budget_AB2021_Web_Accessible.pdf [accessed 29 October 2021]

371 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].

372 Written evidence from Prince's Trust (YUN0039)

373 Q 61 (Michelle Ovens CBE)

374 Written evidence from the CSW Group (YUN0003)

375 See 'UK Budget fails to deliver 'skills revolution', say education leaders', *Financial Times* (28 October 2021): https://www.ft.com/content/b0199edc-d7f7-4d75-b23c-4fd78cb5ee75: [accessed 10 November 2021] and 'Spending review 2021: What the chancellor announced for FE and skills', *FE Week* (27 October 2021): https://www.ft.com/content/b0199edc-d7f7-4d75-b23c-4fd78cb5ee75 [accessed 10 November 2021].

376 HM Treasury, *Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021* (27 October 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1028814/Budget_AB2021_Web_Accessible.pdf [accessed 29 October 2021]

Other factors

197. We heard evidence indicating that, while apprenticeships are generally popular, various factors can limit opportunities in particular sectors and localities. In some high-demand sectors this may not be avoidable; for example, BAE Systems said that it had received 10,500 applications for just 750 positions, 14 applications per role on average,[377] which may be explained by the attractiveness of employment opportunities at the firm and limits to its capacity. Nonetheless, we also heard of more arbitrary obstacles to apprenticeships where measures may be needed to tackle them.

198. Youth Employment UK told us that in some areas apprenticeship opportunities are simply too limited. They said that "for many young people the volume of apprenticeship opportunities means that they may have no choice but to apply for university. In the 2020 Youth Voice Census only 13% of young people were very confident that they would find quality jobs in their local area… of those who had looked for an apprenticeship in their local area 35% said they could not find any appropriate apprenticeship opportunities at the right level".[378] In the year to mid July 2021, a total of 142,124 candidates under 25 years old submitted at least one application using the Find An Apprenticeship service, of whom just 9,587 had an application marked as 'successful'.[379] A young person in our Bolton and Lancashire engagement session told us:

> "Apprenticeship opportunities are very limited in my geographical area. I would have liked this option, but it simply wasn't feasible in terms of opportunities".[380]

199. We heard from employers that establishing apprenticeships can often be challenging and resource-intensive, limiting their ability to offer opportunities. For example, the Roundhouse—a creative arts facility in North London—told us that "delivering traineeships and apprenticeships effectively requires substantial holistic support, which is labour intensive. This needs to be reflected in the money offered to employers to support young people into work".[381] The North East LEP also identified a number of barriers to employers' engagement with apprenticeships and traineeships, including the availability of appropriate apprenticeship standards for SMEs, capacity and time, cost, location (especially if poorly served by public transport), and reductions in recruitment during the COVID-19 pandemic.[382]

200. The LGA recommended that the Government should "empower local areas to align apprenticeship activity to local skills strategies, paving the way for local partnerships to address supply and demand-side issues, [and] widen participation to disadvantaged groups and specific cohorts".[383]

201. As in the case of T Levels, we have heard that entry requirements for young people keen to take on apprenticeships are too high. During a private session in the East Midlands, we were told that the requirement to have

377 Written evidence from BAE Systems (YUN0042)
378 Written evidence from Youth Employment UK (YUN0052)
379 Department for Education, *Apprenticeship vacancies: demand and supply* (July 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004624/HoL_ad-hoc_Template_July_2021.pdf [accessed 3 November 2021]
380 Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].
381 Written evidence from Roundhouse (YUN0012)
382 Written evidence from North East Local Enterprise Partnership (YUN0017)
383 Written evidence from Local Government Association (YUN0043)

a Grade 4 qualification in English and Maths at GCSE was a barrier to some young people taking up apprenticeships. Alex Reader, a representative of Nottingham Works For You at Nottingham City Council, told us that for those who were barred from apprenticeships due to the academic rigour needed, the traineeship option was not attractive as it is unpaid.[384]

202. **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.**

203. **The 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. 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.**

204. **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.**

205. **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.**

384 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].

206. **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.**

Barriers to take up

Misconceptions about apprenticeships

207. We have heard on numerous occasions that young people are not properly supported or encouraged to take up apprenticeship positions due to long-held misconceptions about their value. Technical routes of qualification have traditionally suffered from negative perceptions and lack of social capital in the UK. Recent focus on HE, in part stimulated by the 1997 Government's target for 50% of young people to attend university (met in 2019), has resulted in non-academic or university courses, often studied in FE institutions, being regarded as lower status by parents and school leaders. Kelly Perkin, Chief Executive at Alliance Learning, told us that apprenticeships are regarded with "snobbery".[385] There is a widespread lack of understanding about the employment and pay outcomes to which an apprenticeship may lead. A young person at our engagement session in the East Midlands told us:

> "People have the view that apprenticeships may be an inferior option despite the range of things that you learn. If you don't learn them then you might have to pay someone else to learn them later down the line. I don't know how we get out of the mentality of apprenticeships being seen as lower status to degrees".[386]

208. We also heard the following from young people in Greater London, during our session focused on young people from ethnic minority backgrounds:

> "If you had no intention of going to university it was almost like you were not thought about. There was a big push towards encouraging A-Levels and then University".[387]

> "I had one appointment with a careers officer. Even then that was focused on university rather than what career I was interested in. Other than a day visit to a bank I was not introduced to any other sectors, so I had a limited understanding of career options".[388]

209. While the academic route—comprised usually of GCSEs, A Levels and a university degree—is commonly understood, technical pathways are not well outlined. Tony Ryan, Chief Executive of the Design and Technology Association, told us that parents may be reluctant to encourage their children to take up technical options. Instead, they typically want their children to go to university "because that is the route that they understood".[389]

210. It should be noted that it is a highly complex task to compare raw pay data for university graduates and apprentices due to the differences in types of learner and their backgrounds—for example age and experience (those who have just completed a first degree are normally younger and less experienced

385 Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].
386 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
387 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].
388 *Ibid.*
389 Q 170 (Tony Ryan)

than those completing a higher apprenticeship), employment history, socioeconomic background, region, and subject.

211. Median graduate annual earnings five years after graduation have been shown to reach £27,400, compared to £27,560 for level 4 apprentices and £29,030 for level 5 and above apprentices.[390] Men getting a higher technical (level 4) qualification earn on average £5,100 more at age 30 than those with a level 6 degree, and women getting a higher technical (level 5) qualification £2,700 more at age 30 than those with a level 6 degree.[391] A 2015 report from the Sutton Trust showed that level 5 apprenticeships result in greater lifetime earnings (£1.5 million) than undergraduate degrees from non-Russell Group universities (£1.4 million on average when student dept repayments are considered).[392] The City & Guilds Group noted that in the promotion of apprenticeships, earnings potential should also be set against the likelihood of student debt with the university route.[393]

212. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the graduate unemployment rate for young people aged between 21 and 30 was 4.5%, and this increased to 6.3% in 2020.[394] In the context of the pandemic, and while graduate employment rates have fallen back into line with those of pre-pandemic cohorts between 9 and 12 months after leaving education (75%), research from the IFS shows that jobs attained by those who graduated in 2020 were of worse quality than their predecessors'.[395] The Government's apprenticeship evaluation for 2018 to 2019 shows that most apprenticeship completers were in work (93%), including 76% in full-time employment.[396]

390 Department for Education, 'Graduate outcomes (LEO): Tax year 2018–19', (last updated 25 June 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/graduate-outcomes-leo/2018–19 [accessed 8 November 2021] and Department for Education, 'Further education: outcome based success measures', (last updated 27 November 2020): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/further-education-outcome-based-success-measures/2017–18 [accessed 8 November 2021]

391 CVER, 'Post-18 education: who is taking different routes and how much do they earn?', September 2020, table 7 cited in Department for Education, *Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and growth*, CP 338 (January 2021), p 6 : https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957856/Skills_for_jobs_lifelong_learning_for_opportunity_and_growth__web_version_.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

392 Sutton Trust, *Levels of success: The potential of UK apprenticeships* (October 2015), p 2: https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Levels-of-Success3-1.pdf [accessed 3 June 2021]

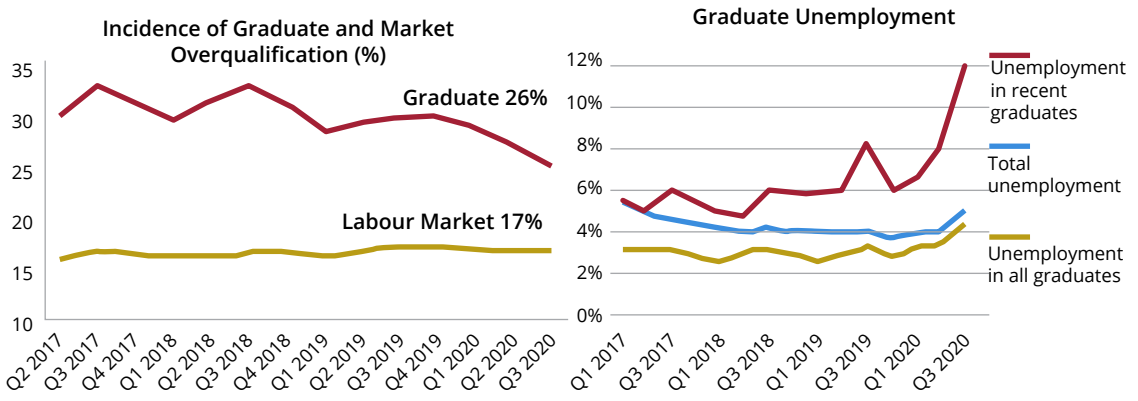
393 Written evidence from City & Guilds Group (YUN0051)

394 Department for Education, 'Graduate labour market statistics', (last updated 23 September 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/graduate-labour-markets [accessed 28 July 2021]

395 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Employment and the end of the furlough scheme* (30 September 2021): https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/Green-Budget-2021-Employment-and-the-end-of-the-furlough-scheme.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]

396 Department for Education, A*pprenticeships evaluation 2018–19: learners* (2020), p 15: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875553/Apprenticeships_Evaluation_-_Learner_Report.pdf [accessed 1 June 2021]

Figure 24: Graduate under- and unemployment



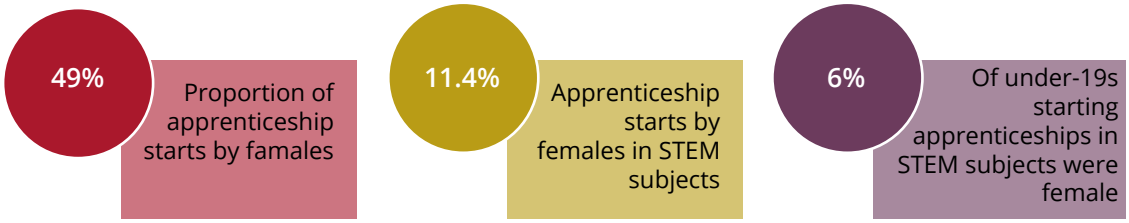
Source: Office for National Statistics, 'Graduates' labour market outcomes during the coronavirus (COVID-19), pandemic: occupational switches and skill mismatch': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/graduateslabourmarketoutcomesduringthecoronaviruscovid19pandemicoccupationalswitchesandskillmismatch/2021–03-08 [accessed 11 November 2021]

Demographic stereotypes

213. Apprenticeship courses are still beset by misconceptions based on gender stereotypes. Professor Sandra McNally, Professor of Economics at the University of Surrey, told us that young women are much less likely to choose STEM subjects in FE, HE and apprenticeships.[397] Professor Ewart Keep, Professor Emeritus at the University of Oxford, told us that perceptions about the labour market begin to crystallise before the age of 16, and "if you leave interventions to the point of just before 16, they are not likely to have much impact".[398]

214. In 2019–20, females made up 49% of all apprenticeships starts.[399] However, they accounted for just 11.4% of starts in STEM apprenticeships. This was up from 8.8% the previous year, but still demonstrates the distance to travel to achieve a good gender balance in STEM subjects.[400] In 2019–20, of those aged 16–19 taking STEM apprenticeships, just 6% of starts were by females, while the figure is 11.1% for those aged 19 to 24.[401]

Figure 25: Apprenticeship starts by females in STEM subjects in 2019/20



397 Q 157 (Professor Sandra McNally)
398 Q 157 (Professor Ewart Keep)
399 Department for Education, 'Apprenticeships and traineeships', (last updated 28 January 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships/2019–20 [accessed 18 October 2021]. Data applies to England.
400 Written answer HL504 Session 2021–22
401 Department for Education, 'Apprenticeships and traineeships', (last updated 28 January 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships/2019–20 [accessed 18 October 2021]. Data applies to England.

215. John Grainger, Executive Director at Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster, told us that careers advice was crucial to addressing this, arguing that CEC enterprise advisers can be beneficial for encouraging women to explore careers in engineering.[402] The TUC added that "while women are just as likely to take up an apprenticeship, a wide range of research shows that they are much more likely to be working in sectors synonymous with low pay and do not have as much opportunity to access apprenticeships in sectors which would lead to increased career opportunities and higher pay".[403]

216. In the case of people from ethnic minority backgrounds, the TUC said that "in addition to occupational segregation and low pay, they are much less likely to access any kind of apprenticeship". It pointed to a study indicating that in one year 38% of the applicants for apprentices were from ethnic minority groups but they made up just 17% of apprentices taken on in that year. It added that "these twin barriers also reflect the experiences of many disabled people who engage with the apprenticeship programme".[404]

217. We heard arguments that public procurement could be better utilised as a tool to meet aspirations for increasing apprenticeship numbers, particularly for those from minority communities. Jeremy Crook, Chief Executive of the Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG), noted that public procurement was an effective but underused tool in getting young people from ethnic minority backgrounds into construction apprenticeships.[405] The TUC told us that the Government should extend the use of procurement for infrastructure and public spending projects to boost apprenticeships by obliging employers to recruit a certain number of apprentices depending on the value of the contract. It noted its framework agreement for the HS2 project, which sets out a mechanism for both parties to discuss the progress of HS2 and its legacy. This includes employment matters affecting those working for suppliers to the projects, such as high quality apprenticeships.[406]

Systemic barriers

218. Young people can apply for an apprenticeship via the Find an Apprenticeship website. For some young people who are able to attend careers fairs and events, finding an apprenticeship may be easy. However, not all employers have the resource to attend careers fairs, and for them attracting young people to apply may be more challenging. A young person at our Bolton and Lancashire engagement session told us:

> "Signing up for an apprenticeship was quite a straightforward process. We went to the apprenticeship careers fair, spoke to the employers, and applied to the ones that sounded good".[407]

402 Q 58 (John Grainger)
403 Written evidence from Trades Union Congress (YUN0048)
404 *Ibid.*
405 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].
406 Written evidence from the Trades Union Congress (YUN0048). See also HS2 Ltd and Trades Union Congress, *Initial framework agreement* (April 2016): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/515079/HS2_Ltd_and_TUC_initial_framework_agreement_April_2016.pdf [accessed 28 September 2021].
407 Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].

219. A young person at our East Midlands engagement session also said that "when I was doing A-Levels I looked at doing a degree apprenticeship but didn't know how to go about it".[408]

220. Unlike completing university applications, which take place via UCAS, there is no central application portal for all apprenticeships. This makes it more difficult for young people to know how to apply for an apprenticeship and see all the options available to them, which also applies to employers. Smaller employers in particular may struggle to access careers fairs and online platforms that bigger companies have access to. David Barker of Techcentre told us:

> "Corporations have funded graduate recruiters. They can afford to do all the career fairs and invest in all the platforms to find young people…We need to break through that and enable SMEs to equalise opportunity by offering them opportunities on the same platforms as the big corporates and afford it, and allow young people to find those opportunities and apply for them…A better way for an employer would be to use one app to see graduate jobs, posts, and all the different types of people coming out of different systems on a single platform. There is a place still for technologies to play a part. That would then allow SMEs to compete on graduate and general apprenticeship employment as well".[409]

221. **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.**

222. **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.**

223. **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.**

408 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
409 Q 55 (David Barker)

CHAPTER 6: TACKLING DISADVANTAGE

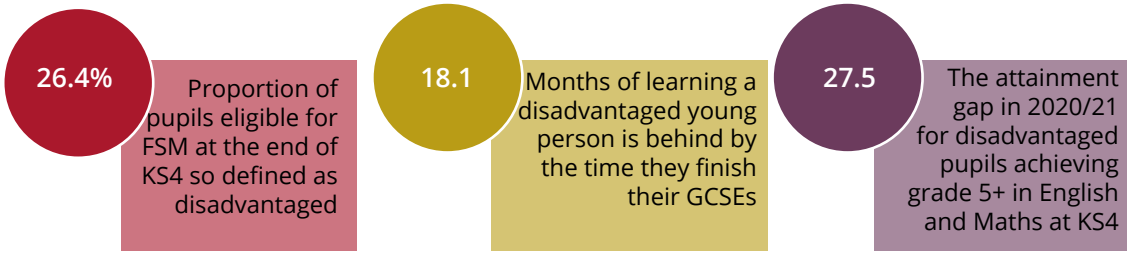
224. Young people from certain demographic groups and backgrounds may face barriers to work that do not affect others. They include young people disadvantaged by their financial backgrounds, those with additional needs or SEND, those from ethnic minority backgrounds, those who have been in care and those who have been involved with the criminal justice system.

225. At present, these groups often face higher rates of youth unemployment, higher rates of temporary exclusion from school, and greater likelihood of being on an insecure contract than their peers in the wider youth population. They require bespoke support to counter the challenges they face; however, they are not being targeted effectively by policymakers and gaps remain in support provided to help these young people into work. This is despite the Government's release of £90 million (plus an additional £10 million during the COVID-19 pandemic) from dormant bank accounts to go towards activities that address disparities in youth unemployment.[410]

Socio-economically disadvantaged young people

226. In 2020–21, 26.4% of pupils in state-funded schools at the end of Key Stage 4 were recorded as disadvantaged.[411] It is important to note that young people may be disadvantaged by a range of factors such as their gender, ethnic background or where they grew up, as well as eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM).

Figure 26: The disadvantage gap for young people



227. The Education Policy Institute estimates that the disadvantage gap between young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers by the end of their GCSEs is 18.1 months of learning.[412] This gap begins to develop in a child's early years. We heard figures showing that amongst children who have persistently experienced poverty, 75% start school below average in language development.[413] At Key Stage 4, for the percentage of pupils achieving grades 5 and above in English and maths, the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils has widened from 25.2 percentage points in 2018–19 to 27.5 percentage points in 2020-21.[414]

410 Supplementary written evidence from the Department for Education (YUN0083)
411 Department for Education, 'Key stage 4 performance, Academic Year 2020/21' (4 November 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance-revised/2020–21 [accessed 5 November 2021]
412 Education Policy Institute, *Education in England: Annual report 2020* (August 2020): https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/EPI_2020_Annual_Report_.pdf [accessed 24 August 2021]
413 Written evidence from the Oracy APPG (YUN0074)
414 Department for Education, 'Key stage 4 performance, Academic Year 2020/21' (4 November 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance-revised/2020–21 [accessed 5 November 2021]

228. This is important because these early disparities may manifest in inequalities later in a child's educational attainment. We heard that each step up in qualifications halves a person's chances of becoming NEET. Disadvantaged young people are twice as likely to be low qualified, and young people with low qualifications are twice as likely to be NEET as those with five GCSEs.[415] Even when they have similar qualifications, disadvantaged young people are around 50% more likely to be NEET than their more affluent peers.[416]

229. We also heard that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to be well informed of the career pathways open to them.[417] The Youth Voice Census found differences in the information provided to students depending on their socio-economic status. Young people on FSM were less likely to hear about doing A levels five times or more (42.3%) than their more privileged peers (52.9%).[418] Patchy provision advice means young people often rely on information from informal networks. One Government survey found the most accessed source of CEIAG for 18- and 19-year-olds was friends and relatives (90%).[419] This reliance on informal networks may disproportionately benefit young people from privileged backgrounds and equally may result in the provision of careers advice based on outdated views and misconceptions. The Youth Futures Foundation reported the views of a member of their Future Voices Group:

> "Given most young people get their careers advice from friends and family, largely from same area, same socio-economic backgrounds, how can people meaningfully get educated and prepare themselves early on for a particular career or sector unless it's one that people from their family/community/friends etc. are directly involved in?".[420]

230. While apprenticeships are often seen as a tool of social mobility, we heard there are substantial differences in the pattern of apprentices from different socio-economic backgrounds at different levels. Only 13% of degree apprentices are from neighbourhoods in the bottom fifth of deprivation, while 27% come from the most advantaged.[421] Research by the Social Mobility Commission published in June 2020 put the case that the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017 caused a decline in starts by apprenticeships

---

415 Private seminar delivered by Ben Gadsby, Head of Policy and Research, Impetus (9 March 2021); Impetus, *Establishing the employment gap* (April 2019), pp 22–23: https://www.impetus.org.uk/assets/publications/Report/Youth-Jobs-Gap-Establising-the-Employment-Gap-report.pdf [accessed 10 September 2021]

416 Private seminar delivered by Ben Gadsby, Head of Policy and Research, Impetus (9 March 2021); Impetus, *Establishing the employment gap* (April 2019), pp 8, 23, 26: https://www.impetus.org.uk/assets/publications/Report/Youth-Jobs-Gap-Establising-the-Employment-Gap-report.pdf [accessed 10 September 2021]

417 Written evidence from London Councils (YUN0006)

418 Youth Employment UK, *Youth Voice Census Report 2021* (15 September 2021) pp 38–39: https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/themes/yeuk/files/youth-voice-census-report-2021.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]

419 Department for Education, *Young people's experiences of careers information, advice and guidance: evidence from the second Longitudinal Study of Young People in England* (September 2021), p 3: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1027406/Young_people_s_experiences_of_careers_information__advice_and_guidance.pdf [accessed 27 October 2021]

420 Written evidence from the Youth Futures Foundation (YUN0022)

421 Written evidence from the Sutton Trust (YUN0033) citing Sutton Trust, *Degree apprenticeships: levelling up?* (May 2020): https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Degree-Apprenticeships-Levelling-Up.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]

from disadvantaged backgrounds.[422] The evidence we heard makes clear that efforts must be made to ensure that access to apprenticeships for those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds is not cut off by what has been termed a 'middle class grab' on apprenticeships as they increase in popularity, whilst keeping them open and accessible to all.[423]

231. Disadvantaged young people have lower rates of progression to HE than their peers. In 2019/20, the progression rate for FSM pupils by age 19 was 26.6%, which represents a gap of 19.1 percentage points (the largest since 2005–06) between those who claim FSM and those who do not. Rates of progression are higher in London than in other parts of the country. The gap between independent and state-educated A Level students has decreased slightly in the last year from 9.2% to 8.9%. However, independent school students are most likely to progress to high tariff HE by the age of 19 (56.7%) compared to state educated students (24.9%).[424] Sally Dicketts CBE, Chief Executive of Activate Learning, told us that "if we are not careful, university becomes the finishing school for the middle classes".[425]

232. This disparity in HE attainment translates to disparities in employment outcomes. In 2020, the regions of the UK with the highest rates of employment were also the regions with the greatest proportion of people with degrees, and the lowest proportion of people without qualifications.[426] Even if they are degree educated, we heard from Esther O'Callaghan OBE that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who do go to university still struggle to gain work in a market where they are competing against more privileged peers "who did not have to work while studying to support themselves and who have a family network and alumni to fall back on".[427]

233. When they get to the labour market, we have heard that some sectors are considered impenetrable for young people from socio-economically deprived backgrounds. The Sutton Trust told us that in their survey of 3,400 employees in the tech industry, 21% had attended independent or fee-paying schools, and 67% came from professional or managerial backgrounds.[428] Academics at the UCL Institute of Education told us:

> "…there remain important inequities in the chances to access top jobs. Evidence from UK cohort and panel data suggests that career opportunities for young people are associated with area characteristics, with young people living in deprived areas most at risk of becoming NEET or dropping out of the labour market altogether".[429]

---

422 Social Mobility Commission, *Apprenticeships and social mobility: fulfilling potential* (June 2020), p 8: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/894303/Apprenticeships_and_social_mobility_report.pdf [accessed 13 September 2021]

423 See 'Middle-class grab' on apprenticeships confirmed by new analysis', *FE Week* (20 May 2021): https://feweek.co.uk/2021/05/20/middle-class-grab-on-apprenticeships-confirmed-by-new-analysis/ [accessed 13 September 2021].

424 Department for Education, 'Widening participation in higher education': https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education/2019–20 [accessed 15 October 2021]

425 Q 112 (Sally Dicketts)

426 House of Commons Library, *The Government's levelling up agenda*, CDP2021/0086, 10 September 2021

427 Written evidence from the Esther O'Callaghan OBE (YUN0082)

428 Written evidence from the Sutton Trust (YUN0033)

429 Written evidence from Professor Green and others, UCL (YUN0011)

234. Travel can be a barrier for disadvantaged young people. The statutory responsibility for transport for 16- to 19-year-olds rests with local authorities, which have access to funding to support free school travel for children from low-income families. They have a duty to set out arrangements to support learners undertaking apprenticeships and traineeships, including the costs of travelling to or from learning or a work placement.[430] However, young people are still struggling to access work or study.

235. For example, one young person told us that he had no savings and struggled to find a job in his local area. As his family could not access benefits because they were in low-paid work, he and his siblings had to get jobs aged 16 to support the family. In his first job at university, he struggled to pay the bus fare. He was fortunate to have an employer who paid him a week's wages up front so that he could afford this. He said lots of young people face financial barriers and struggle to find a suitable job that is accessible as a result.[431] The LGA echoed these sentiments, telling us:

> "The cost and complexity of travelling to post-16 places of learning can also be a barrier to young people accessing further education, particularly in rural areas and areas with limited access to public transport. As not all courses are able to be run from local colleges, supporting under 25-year-olds with transport costs is vital to maintain equitable access to further education and many councils are supporting young people with costs".[432]

236. Disadvantaged young people may struggle to afford basic necessities to help them to stay in study or training. The TUC told us that many apprentices spend more money on things they need to complete their programme such as work clothes, travel and childcare, than they are paid.[433]

237. During the pandemic, the issue of digital exclusion came to prominence given government guidance to work and study from home. Around 1.5 million households do not have access to the internet in the UK. Among the least likely groups to have home internet access are lower income families (11% without access) and the most financially vulnerable (10%).[434] In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government provided devices including a total of more than 1.3 million laptops and tablets to disadvantaged young people in England, along with routers.[435] Despite this, Catch22 told us that there was a need for a central strategy to ensure nobody is disadvantaged due to lack of access to a device or data.[436]

238. Moreover, during the COVID-19 pandemic, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds reported higher levels of poor mental health, anxiety, loneliness and faced greater behavioural, emotional and attentional difficulties than

430 See Department for Education, *Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training: Statutory guidance for local authorities* (January 2019): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/772913/Post16_transport_guidance.pdf [accessed 30 July 2021].
431 Engagement session with young people, 13 April 2021 [see Appendix 5].
432 Written evidence from the LGA (YUN0043)
433 Written evidence from the Trades Union Congress (YUN0048)
434 Ofcom, 'Digital divide narrowed by pandemic, but around 1.5m homes remain offline', (28 April 2021): https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/media/media-releases/2021/digital-divide-narrowed-but-around-1.5m-homes-offline [accessed 24 August 2021]
435 Department for Education, 'Laptops and tablets data': https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/laptops-and-tablets-data [accessed 24 August 2021]
436 Written evidence from Catch22 (YUN0055)

their more affluent peers. Particularly vulnerable young people included children who were in care.[437] While research on the impact of the pandemic on mental health is limited, increases in poor mental health are thought to reflect the indirect impacts of the pandemic.[438] A young person in our evidence session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds told us that "my mental health really went downhill for about 9 months during the pandemic because of a lack of support and career direction".[439]

239. **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.**

240. **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.**

241. **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.**

242. **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.**

Young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

243. Young people with additional needs and/or disabilities often face significant hardship both in education and in the world of work. In the UK, 8% of children are disabled as defined under the Equality Act 2010. More than half of all disabled children and young people

437 Public Health England, 'COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing surveillance report: 4. Children and young people' (updated 18 November 2021): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report/7-children-and-young-people [accessed 19 November 2021]

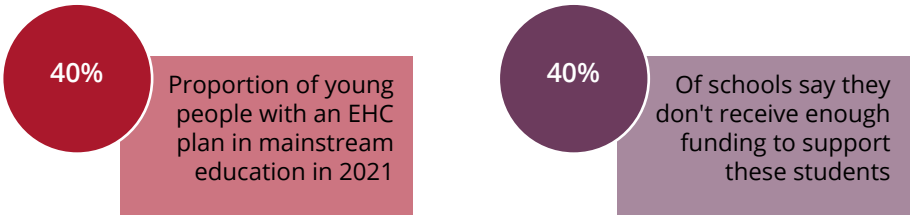
438 Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology, *Children's mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic*: PN653, September 2021

439 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].

also meet the definition of having special educational needs.[440] As of January 2021, there were 430,700 children and young people with an EHC plan. The proportion of children and young people with an EHC plan in mainstream education increased from 39% in 2020 to 40% in 2021.[441] Despite this, 97% of schools told the National Association of Head Teachers they received insufficient funding to support pupils with additional needs.[442] The Autumn Budget 2021 committed £2.6 billion for new school places for children with SEND in England.[443]

244. Worryingly, during a private session in the East Midlands with organisations that work with young people, we heard some young people who were eligible for an EHC plan were not being put forward for assessment at the right time, making it more difficult for them to obtain one after they have left school.[444]

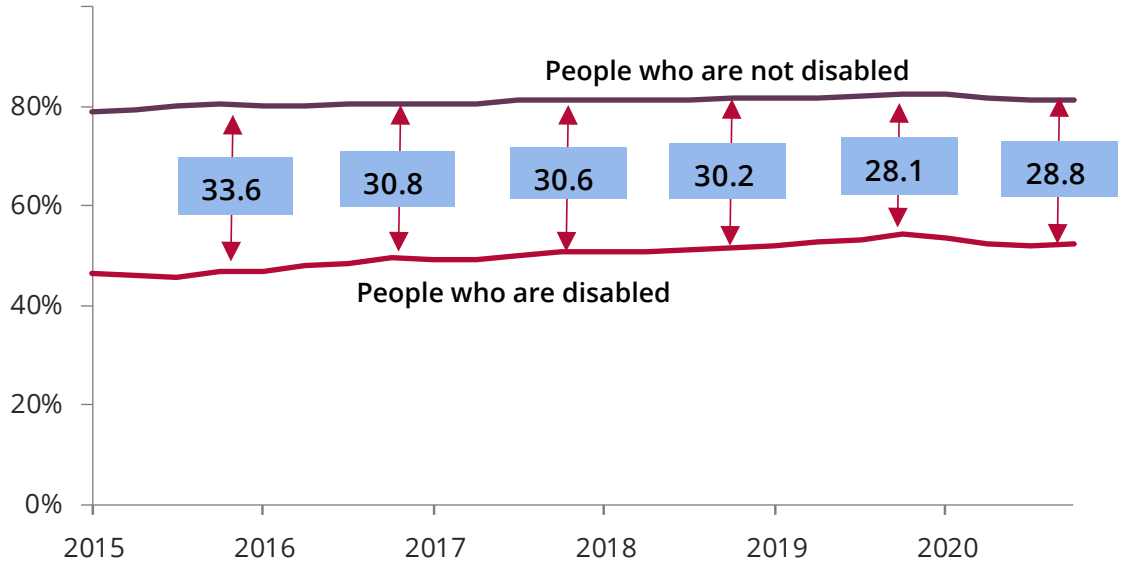
Figure 27: Young people with SEND face significant challenges in education



245. The disability employment gap is the difference between the employment rate of disabled people compared to those who are not disabled. During the pandemic, the gap increased to 28.8%, from 28.1%. This follows a gradual reduction over time. In 2015, the gap reached 33.6%.[445] The disability employment gap is 19.6% for 18- to 24-year-olds.[446] Stephen Evans, Chief Executive of the Learning and Work Institute, told us that disabled people were more likely to lose their jobs during the pandemic, and more likely to drop out of work before it.[447]

440 Department for Work and Pensions, *National disability strategy*, CP 512 (July 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1006098/National-Disability-Strategy_web-accesible-pdf.pdf [accessed 2 August 2021]
441 Deapartment for Education, 'Education, health and care plans' (last updated 20 October 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans [accessed 13 May 2021]
442 'Special-needs support beyond crisis, heads say', *BBC News* (8 September 2021): https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-584744l6 [accessed 8 September 2021]
443 HM Treasury, *Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021* (27 October 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1028814/Budget_AB2021_Web_Accessible.pdf [accessed 29 October 2021]
444 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
445 House of Commons Library, *Disabled people in employment*, CBP 7540,24 May 2021
446 Department for Work and Pensions, 'The employment of disabled people 2021', (4 November 2021): https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2021/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2021 [accessed 5 November 2021]
447 Q 148 (Stephen Evans)

Figure 28: Disability employment gap between 2015 and 2020 for those aged 16 to 64 in October to December



Source: House of Commons Library, Disabled people in employment, CBP 7540 24 May 2021. NB. The latest data covering July to September 2021 shows the disability employment gap was 27.6 percentage points; see Office for National Statistics, 'Labour market overview, UK: November 2021': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/november2021/relateddata?page=2 [accessed 17 November 2021]

246. Leonard Cheshire told us that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing structural inequalities, "entrenching barriers to the workplace for disabled people".[448] During the pandemic, disabled people were more likely to become economically inactive or move out of employment. One in 10 (9.3%) disabled people who were in work at the end of 2019 before the pandemic were not in work at the end of 2020, compared to one in 17 (5.8%) non-disabled people. They were also more likely to see a reduction in their hours. Young people who are disabled were more likely to have moved out of employment during the pandemic. The employment rate for the 16 to 24 age group fell by 1.8 percentage points between 2019 and 2020.[449]

247. Even before the pandemic, a disabled person with a degree was no more likely to be in work than a non-disabled person whose highest qualification is at GCSE level.[450] In 2019–20 just 8.4% of pupils with an EHC plan or SEN statement progressed to HE by the age of 19. This is compared to 47.5% for pupils with no additional needs.[451] 12.5% of apprenticeships started in 2020 were started by disabled people.[452]

248. Disability charity Leonard Cheshire told us that disabled young people may face prejudice from some employers. Its survey found that one in

448 Written evidence from Leonard Cheshire (YUN0047)

449 Learning and Work Institute, *Disability Employment: from pandemic to recovery* (27 May 2021), pp 30, 21, Figure 6: https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/disability-employment-from-pandemic-to-recovery/ [accessed 20 August 2021]

450 Department for Work and Pensions, *National disability strategy*, CP 512 (July 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1006098/National-Disability-Strategy_web-accesible-pdf.pdf [accessed 2 August 2021]

451 Department for Education, 'Widening participation in higher education',(14 October 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education/2019–20 [accessed 15 October 2021]

452 Department for Work and Pensions, *National disability strategy*, CP 512 (July 2021), p 69: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1006098/National-Disability-Strategy_web-accesible-pdf.pdf [accessed 2 August 2021]

five employers stated they would be less likely to employ a person with a disability. This might be due to misconceptions about their capabilities or an underappreciation of disabled young people's skills in physical or manual labour roles. Other challenges include a lack of accessible application processes and employers failing to make reasonable adjustments to make the process more amenable to those with disabilities.[453] A young person at our Bolton and Lancashire engagement session told us that "there should be a greater understanding and compassion for young people with disabilities".[454]

249. The Youth Voice Census found that those with additional needs were twice as likely to have never had the prospect of university discussed with them (20.1%).[455] The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) noted that more tailored careers support for young people with SEND was required to give them and their parents access to networks that they might not have, as "you can't be what you can't see".[456]

250. The Government has set a target of getting one million more disabled people into work by 2027. However, the National Audit Office reported in 2019 that "this growth in the number of disabled people in employment cannot be linked directly to any particular government policy" and is more likely "to be due to more people already in work reporting a disability rather than more disabled people who were out of work, moving into work".[457]

251. The Shaw Trust noted that there were no specific interventions for disabled young people in the Plan for Jobs.[458] Young disabled people can only access Kickstart if they claim UC rather than Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).[459] The Government committed to increasing the number of Disability Employment Advisors (DEAs) by 315 in April 2021, but this is far beneath the 13,500 work coaches recruited by the DWP.[460] The Shaw Trust supported the recommendations put forward by the Youth Employment Group, which included that there should be specialist programmes for young disabled people, greater provision of DEAs in line with the increase in work coaches, and an increase in provision of Supported Internships to those who had SEND support at school, not just those with an EHC Plan.[461] The Autumn Budget 2021 committed to an additional £156 million to provide job finding support for disabled people with a focus on additional work coaches.[462] A

453 Written evidence from Leonard Cheshire (YUN0047) and Leonard Cheshire, *Locked out of the labour market* (October 2020): https://www.leonardcheshire.org/sites/default/files/2020–10/Locked-out-of-labour-market.pdf [accessed 7 September 2021]

454 Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].

455 Youth Employment UK, *Youth Voice Census Report 2021* (15 September 2021), pp 38–39: https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/themes/yeuk/files/youth-voice-census-report-2021.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]

456 Written evidence from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (YUN0030)

457 National Audit Office, *Supporting disabled people to work* (28 March 2019), para 1.17: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Supporting-disabled-people-to-work.pdf [accessed 23 September 2021]

458 Written evidence from the Shaw Trust (YUN0026)

459 See HC Deb, 8 March 2021, col 503.

460 Department for Work and Pensions, 'Government unveils new support for disabled jobseekers', (7 April 2021): https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unveils-new-support-for-disabled-jobseekers [accessed 13 October 2021]

461 Written evidence from the Shaw Trust (YUN0026)

462 HM Treasury, *Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021* (27 October 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1028814/Budget_AB2021_Web_Accessible.pdf [accessed 29 October 2021]

young person on a Supported Internship spoke during our engagement session in Bolton and Lancashire:

> "They teach us theory to do with interview skills, staying safe both in and outside of the workplace, economics etc. Then once the theory side is complete, they're going to get us into a place of work as an intern and the course support staff are going to be going round each of the workplaces one by one to support us in our job placement. It has been a struggle for them to find companies willing to take us on due to the COVID pandemic and working from home…".[463]

252. The Government has introduced a range of measures to support young people who have additional needs (see Appendix 7). These include the Access to Work Scheme and Work and Health Programme. Sue Lovelock, Director of Professional and Technical Education at the DfE, told us the Government has introduced incentives for apprentices with an EHC Plan totalling £1,000 per person, and that it had worked with SEND advisory groups on the development of T Levels.[464] The Government's National Disability Strategy, published in July 2021, outlined several measures for young disabled people. These included:

- A review of actions to improve outcomes for children with SEND;
- Investing £300m to improve provision in schools;
- Investing £8.6m to strengthen the participation of parents and young people in the SEND system;
- Improving the supported internship programme;
- Increasing the number of disabled people in apprenticeships;
- Piloting Access to Work adjustment passports with disabled young people in periods of transition;
- The creation of a new Centre for Assistive and Accessible Technology; and
- Evaluating the impact of investment in traineeships on young people with SEND by July 2022.[465]

253. **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.**

---

463 Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].
464 Q 9 (Sue Lovelock)
465 Department for Work and Pensions, *National disability strategy*, CP 512 (July 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1006098/National-Disability-Strategy_web-accesible-pdf.pdf [accessed 2 August 2021]

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

255. **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.**

256. **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.**

257. **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.**

Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds

258. Many young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, particularly those from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Caribbean, African and minority white groups,[466] face a range of challenges accessing the labour market. Despite improvements in the unemployment gap between ethnic minority groups and their white peers (the difference in the employment rates between white and other ethnic groups combined declined by 5 percentage points between 2004 and 2019, while the pay gap is at its smallest level since 2012),[467] their success in education is still not being translated into success in the labour market. Latest data show that the current unemployment rate for all ethnic minority young people is an average of 26.4%. Within this wider group, for young black people it reaches 36%, compared to 13% for young white people.[468]

259. Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds were already badly affected before the pandemic. The ethnic group with the highest percentage of young people in the UK who were NEET between 2017 and 2019 combined was thoe identifying as Pakistani (14.3%), followed by those identifying as Bangladeshi (12%).[469] We heard that young workers from ethnic minority backgrounds were disproportionately likely to be in less secure employment

466 There are several ways to refer to people from different ethnic groups. Data from the 2011 Census shows that the White British group makes up 80.5% of the population in England and Wales. Other groups that may be considered minority ethnic within this category include White Other, Mixed White groups, Irish, and Gypsy or Irish Traveller. White British young people may also face significant disadvantages due to other factors noted in this chapter. For reference, see Education Committee, *The forgotten: how White working-class pupils have been let down, and how to change it*, (First Report, Session 2021–22, HC 85)

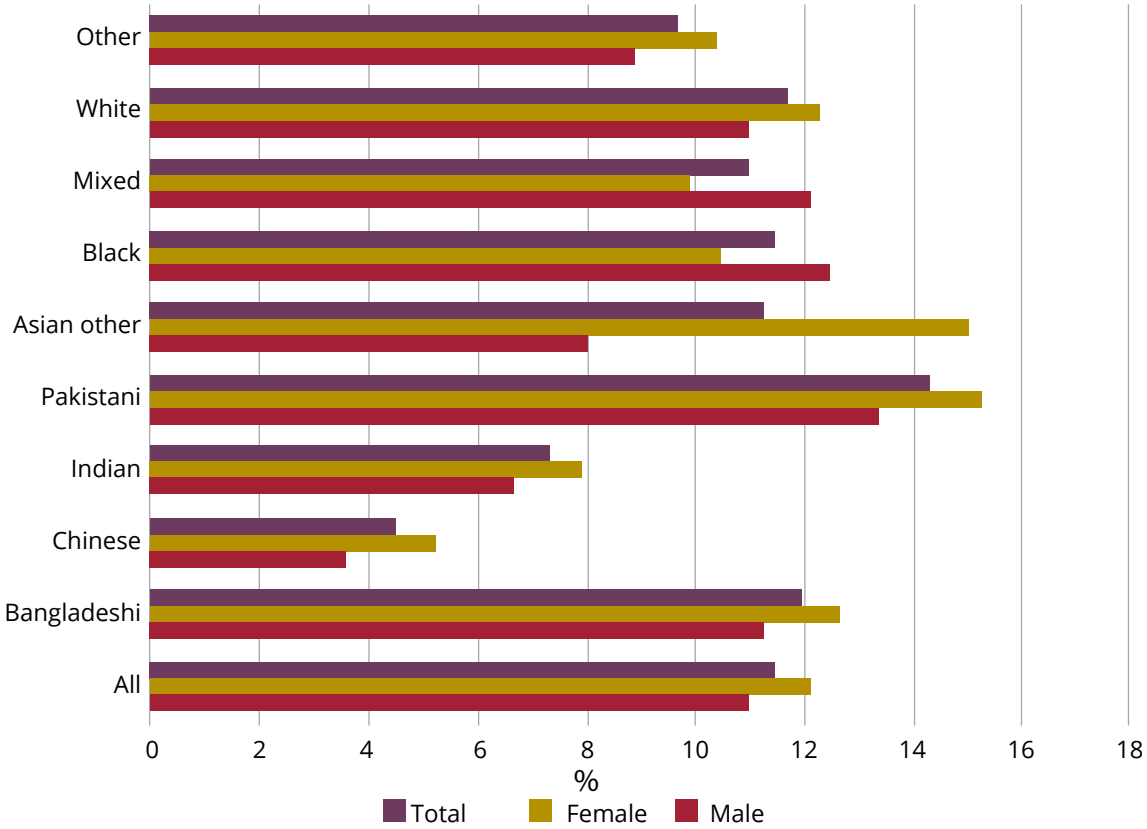
467 Office for National Statistics, 'Employment' (last updated 3 August 2021): https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/employment/employment/latest [accessed 23 September 2021]; House of Lords Library, 'Mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting': https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/mandatory-ethnicity-pay-gap-reporting/. See also written evidence from Professor Jonathan Wadsworth (YUN0046).

468 House of Commons Library, *Unemployment by ethnic background*, CBP 6385 28 September 2021

469 Office for National Statistics, 'Young people NEET', (last updated 3 August 2021): https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/unemployment-and-economic-inactivity/young-people-not-in-employment-education-or-training-neet/latest#by-ethnicity [accessed 13 October 2021]

types before the COVID-19 pandemic; in particular, they were 47% more likely to be on insecure contracts.[470]

Figure 29: Percentage of young people in the UK aged 16 to 24 who were NEET by ethnicity and gender between 2017 and 2019 (combined)



Source: Office for National Statistics, 'Young people NEET', (last updated 3 August 2021): https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/work-pay-and-benefits/unemployment-and-economic-inactivity/young-people-not-in-employment-education-or-training-neet/latest#by-ethnicity [accessed 13 October 2021]

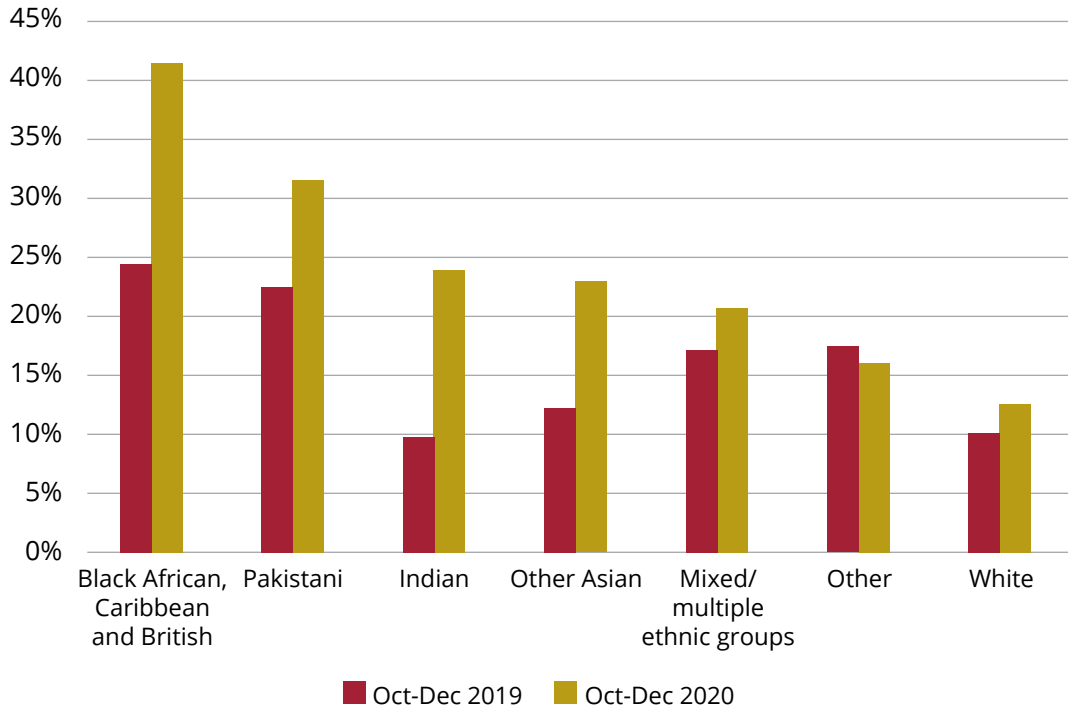
260. During the COVID-19 pandemic, young people from ethnic minority backgrounds fared significantly worse than their white peers. Research by the Institute for Employment Studies found that in the first six months of the pandemic, young people accounted for 46% of the overall fall in employment since it began, but that the fall in employment was four times higher for young black people and nearly three times higher for young Asian people.[471] The situation for young black people was particularly concerning. Unemployment for black people aged 16 to 24 increased between October to December 2019 and the same point in 2020 by 17.1 percentage points (24.5% to 41.6%). This compares to an increase of just 2.3 percentage points (10.1% to 12.4%) for young white people.[472]

470 Trades Union Congress, *BME workers on zero-hours contracts* (June 2021): https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021–06/RotAreport.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021] and Operation Black Vote, Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Carnegie UK, *Race inequality in the workforce: exploring connections between work, ethnicity and mental health* (March 2020): https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Race-Inequality-in-the-Workforce-Final.pdf [accessed 2 August 2021]. See also written evidence from NCUB (YUN0008).

471 Written evidence from Youth Futures Foundation (YUN0022). See also Youth Futures Foundation, IES, Blagrave Trust, *An Unequal Crisis: The impact of the pandemic on the youth labour market* (2021): https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/IES-Report_12Feb2021_-FINAL.pdf [accessed 27 July 2021]

472 National Audit Office, *Employment Support: Department for Work and Pensions*, p 14, Figure 6 (7 June 2021): https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Employment-support.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

Figure 30: Increase in unemployment rates for young people by ethnic group during the COVID-19 pandemic



Source: National Audit Office, Employment Support: Department for Work and Pensions, (7 June 2021), p 14, Figure 6: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Employment-support.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

261. A recent report of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee reported that "the Department (DWP) does not know why the unemployment impact of the pandemic has hit groups such as young people from minority ethnic backgrounds harder".[473] We have heard from a range of young people from these backgrounds, and groups that work with and champion them, who have outlined to us several reasons why the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing, structural and deep-seated challenges facing these communities.

262. We heard that there are high rates of poverty and widespread FSM eligibility among ethnic minority communities. The highest percentages of FSM eligibility were in white minority groups such as pupils from Traveller of Irish Heritage communities (56%), Gypsy/Roma backgrounds (39%), pupils from a Bangladeshi background (26%) and those from a Pakistani background (20%).[474] The Social Metrics Commission found in 2020 that nearly half of black African Caribbean or black British households were in poverty, compared with just under one in five white families.[475]

263. Exclusion rates for black Caribbean students in England were far higher than those of white pupils in the 2018–2019 school year. Although the rate can be higher in some parts of the country, black Caribbean students were excluded at a rate of 10.4% compared to a rate of 6% for young white people.

473 Committee of Public Accounts, *DWP Employment support* (Fifteenth Report, Session 2021–22, HC 177), p 5

474 ONS, 'Child poverty and education outcomes by ethnicity', (25 February 2020): https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/compendium/economicreview/february2020/childpovertyandeducationoutcomesbyethnicity [accessed 23 September 2021]

475 Social Metrics Commission, *Measuring poverty 2020,* (1 July 2020), p 3: https://socialmetricscommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Measuring-Poverty-2020-Web.pdf [accessed 29 October 2021]

The highest rate was for Gypsy and Roma communities at 21.3%.[476] A young person in our engagement session focused on young people from ethnic minority backgrounds told us:

> "If you get excluded from school it becomes not possible to access work—these children need more support than those staying in mainstream education, but they don't get it".[477]

264. We heard from one young person that careers advice in her Pupil Referral Unit was below the standard of mainstream schools. This is particularly concerning as young people in these types of Alternative Provision school may benefit most from quality careers advice.[478] There are currently over 32,000 young people who are unable to attend mainstream schools and are attending Alternative Provision.[479]

265. Research shows that while second-generation people from ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to achieve high educational qualifications than the white majority, this success is not translating to rewards in the jobs market.[480] Dr Gurleen Popli, senior lecturer in the Department of Economics at the University of Sheffield, said that this may be for several reasons. They might search for jobs differently to young white people or have limited access to networks that their white peers have to give them a first entry point.[481] Another young person from an ethnic minority background told us during our dedicated engagement session:

> "For families who have moved to this country, I see a real difference between those who have strong existing networks in the UK who can help them–they have done a lot better during COVID than those who don't".[482]

266. There are differing rates of progression to HE, with white pupils least likely to go to HE by age 19 in 2019–20 (38.7%) compared to Chinese (80.9%), Asian (64.3%) and young black people (59.9%). However, the progression rate to high tariff HE for black Caribbean pupils is less than half of the overall national figure (10.9%) at 5%.[483] We heard types of institution have more success with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Tom Dower of UTC South Durham told us that of disadvantaged ethnic minority students completing level 3 qualifications at UTCs, 72% go to university, compared to 59% nationally.[484] Some UTCs show particularly strong figures. The Life Sciences UTC in Toxteth, Liverpool is based in an area

476 Department for Education, 'Temporary exclusions', (24 February 2021): https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/absence-and-exclusions/pupil-exclusions/latest [accessed 3 September 2021]
477 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].
478 Engagement session with young people, 13 April 2021 [See Appendix 5].
479 Department for Education, 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics', (last updated 6 October 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics [accessed 16 November 2021]
480 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *Social mobility and ethnicity* (29 June 2021): https://ifs.org.uk/inequality/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Social-mobility-and-ethnicity.pdf [accessed 2 August 2021]
481 Q 195 (Dr Gurleen Popli)
482 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].
483 Department for Education, 'Widening participation in higher education', (14 October 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education/2019–20 [accessed 15 October 2021]
484 Supplementary written evidence from Tom Dower (YUN0075)

where young people have a very low chance of going to university. More than half of its students are from ethnic minority communities and 34 different languages are spoken by students. All 23 black students that left in July 2021 went on to university.[485]

267. One young person from an ethnic minority background spoke of his experiences of disadvantage and discrimination. He told us that:

> "I was always told I had to work ten times harder to get the same result, and had it instilled in me that education would lead to a better life. On the other hand, white peers tended to assume they would do well".[486]

268. We heard from many who gave evidence that hiring discrimination still exists in the recruitment process. Lee Jasper, co-founder of Blaksox, referred us to research showing that applicants from BAME backgrounds had to send 60% more applications to get a positive response from an employer than their white counterparts. We heard about the practice of 'playing English', where members of the GRT community hide their accent to avoid discrimination.[487] Stephen Evans of the Learning and Work Institute referred us to research that showed that black applicants to an apprenticeship were half as likely to succeed as white applicants.[488] It is also important to note that discrimination is a cross-cutting issue, and also a factor in gender divides as well as the hiring of young disabled people.

269. Some groups face very particular challenges related to their ethnic background. We heard that young asylum seekers face challenges with isolation and emotional wellbeing. They might have to condense significant formal education into a short space of time to achieve basic qualifications in English, Maths and ICT before they can go on to further study or work. Many are not ready to apply for Government schemes.[489]

270. The Government has few schemes directly targeted at supporting young people from ethnic minority backgrounds; however, it told us that it recognises the need for such support. It pointed to the role of mentoring circles, in which employers offer specialised support to jobseekers. They are available to all 16 to 24-year-olds claiming benefits, are voluntary and support groups to build employability skills. They are targeted by JCP to local need; for example, they can be targeted towards ethnic minority groups. There were 630 mentoring circles attended by 4,400 people from July 2019 to January 2020.[490] It also pointed to its work with local bodies in 'challenge areas', 20 targeted areas where it is opening opportunities for ethnic minority customers, based on research and data from the Race Disparity Audit.[491]

271. We heard that some sectors like construction and engineering can be inaccessible to young people from ethnic minority backgrounds; for example, we were told that young black people struggled to gain positions in these

485 Private correspondence from Kenneth Cornforth, Director of Education, Baker Dearing Educational Trust and Jill Davies, Principal, Liverpool Life Sciences UTC (27 October 2021)
486 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].
487 *Ibid.*
488 Q 148 (Tony Wilson and Stephen Evans)
489 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
490 National Audit Office, *Employment Support: Department for Work and Pensions* (7 June 2021): https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Employment-support.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]
491 Supplementary written evidence from the Department for Education (YUN0083)

sectors. Despite initiatives such as the publication of a toolkit by the Mayor of London, progress is slow.[492] Jeremy Crook of the BTEG referred us to the 5 Cities programme, in which the National Apprenticeship Service worked with business and public sector leaders to explore which sectors in their local area were not recruiting under-represented groups. The new LSIPs may present an opportunity to take this forward. Another young person at our session with people from ethnic minority backgrounds told us:

> "Some industries, like the creative industries, work on who you know and relationships. It can be particularly challenging for young people from diverse backgrounds to break in—'there are very few people who look like us working in this space'.".[493]

272. Despite improvements in the proportion of apprenticeship starts by people from ethnic minorities (14.2% in 2020-21 up from 12.1% in 2018–19), young people in this demographic are still underrepresented.[494] In the year to July 2019, the figures are broadly in line with the proportion of people by ethnicity in the population. However, 67.4% of black people who started apprenticeships were over 25 (compared to 44.1% of white people). While 23.1% of starts were by white people under 19, this drops to just 0.4% for black people of the same age.[495]

273. Collecting detailed information about ethnic minorities via the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is complicated by small sample sizes, while data is not regularly published on ethnic minority groups. Given that data is collected by households linked to address, reaching GRT communities can be particularly difficult.[496]

274. We heard a range of recommendations outlining what could be done to improve the situation for young ethnic minority communities:

- Dr Jason Arday of Durham University and the Runnymede Trust suggested that more could be done to formalise mentoring, guidance and coaching to support these young people and provide them with these networks;[497]
- Dr Gurleen Popli from Sheffield University told us that if an applicant's identity is kept separate from the application, hiring discrimination "almost disappears". She noted there was very little hiring discrimination in public sector jobs due to this reason. Incentivising more private sector businesses to adopt this policy would be a step forward;[498]
- Amy Fazackerley, a representative of Coach Core Foundation, told us that employers need to think more about a young person through

492 See Mayor of London, 'Inclusive employers toolkit' (September 2020): https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/inclusive_employers_toolkit_fa.pdf [accessed 10 September 2021].
493 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].
494 Department for Education, 'Apprenticeships and traineeships', (last updated 7 October 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships/2020-21 [accessed 11 October 2021]. Data applies to England.
495 Department for Education, 'Apprenticeship starts', (11 November 2021): https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/a-levels-apprenticeships-further-education/apprenticeship-starts/latest [accessed 10 September 2021]
496 Q 254 (Darren Morgan)
497 Q 198 (Dr Jason Arday)
498 Q 196 (Dr Gurleen Popli)

practical, contextual recruitment processes, and to ask themselves why they might not have certain qualifications. This will enable them to better get to know the young person and their potential;[499]

- Jeremy Crook of the BTEG recommended employers should be made more aware of their ability to use the levers given to them via the Positive Action measures outlined in the Equality Act 2010, to target ethnic minority groups and report on hiring. A young person from an ethnic minority background added that "many employers have a very reactive approach to discrimination–they don't really have a proper anti-discrimination policy and are ill equipped to deal with incidents when they arise";[500]

- Patricia Stapleton of The Traveller Movement recommended offering more tailored, wraparound support for young people, including targeted awareness-raising campaigns beyond the usual JCP channels, and additional funding for GRT young people to return to education to obtain essential qualifications;[501] and

- Mandatory ethnic minority pay reporting (as was implemented with regards to gender for companies larger than 250 employees in 2017) has been suggested by a number of high-profile groups including the TUC, CBI and the Equality and Human Rights Commission,[502] as well as Baroness McGregor-Smith's 2017 report on Race in the Workplace.[503] The Government has not responded to its own 2018 consultation or the report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, which advocated for voluntary reporting.[504] This is despite research showing the introduction of mandatory gender pay gap reporting led to the gender pay gap closing by 19% in some companies.[505] The Minister for Employment told us "pay gap reporting is important. Actively working with employers to help to increase their ethnic minority employment and reduce that gap has an important part to play".[506]

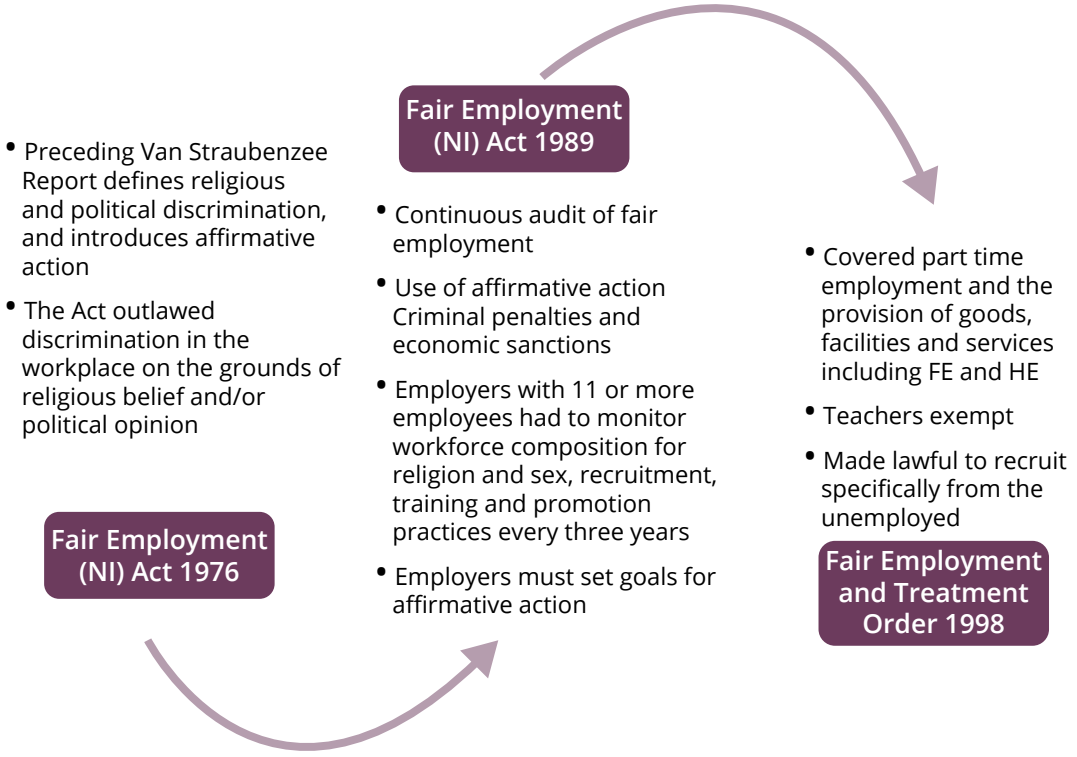
275. In a recent debate in the House of Lords, the Government acknowledged the difficulties with establishing a standard ethnicity pay reporting framework due to challenges in collecting data that is accurate and robust, devising a

499 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
500 Engagement session with young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].
501 *Ibid.*
502 'UK ethnic pay gap needs mandatory reporting, say business and unions', *Financial Times* (25 June 2021): https://www.ft.com/content/ffd69da3-849e-445e-a76f-b8cb4212043a [accessed 28 October 2021]
503 Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 'Government response to Baroness McGregor-Smith', p 3: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/594365/race-in-workplace-mcgregor-smith-review-response.pdf. This was the Government response to Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, *'Race in the workplace: the McGregor-Smith review'* (February 2017): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/594336/race-in-workplace-mcgregor-smith-review.pdf [accessed 20 August 2021]
504 Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, *Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities: The report* (March 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974507/20210331_-_CRED_Report_-_FINAL_-_Web_Accessible.pdf [accessed 18 November 2021]
505 London School of Economics, 'Gender pay gap closes by one fifth after reporting introduced' (26 March 2021): https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2021/c-March-21/Gender-pay-gap-closes-by-one-fifth-after-reporting-introduced [accessed 20 August 2021]
506 Q 243 (Mims Davies MP)

framework that ensures anonymity, making sure that differences between ethnic groups are not masked by combining all individuals into a single homogenous group, and ensuring results are not skewed due to low sample sizes.[507]

Box 11: Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998

Workforce monitoring has been proven to have an effect. In Northern Ireland, the introduction of Fair Employment Acts saw the composition of the workforce dramatically change from 1990 (65.1% Protestant and 34.9% Catholic, a shortfall of around 4 percentage points in the Catholic share)) to 2017 (51.1% Protestant and 48.9% Catholic). Between 1992 and 2017 the number of monitored Catholic full-time employees had increased by almost 73,000 (55%). The Equality Commission found the makeup of the monitored workforce in 2017 more closely reflects labour supply than when monitoring was introduced in 1990.



Source: Northern Ireland Assembly, N Edgar-Fitzsimons and Dr R T Russell, 'Fair Employment in Northern Ireland; the decades of change (1990–2017)', 10 September 2019; Ministry of Health and Social Services, Report and Recommendations of the Working Party on Discrimination in the Private Sector of Employment, 23 May 1973, (not available online); Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, 'Fair Employment in Northern Ireland, Code of Practice', see pages 8-9, 44-51; Legislaton.gov.uk, 'Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989' Legislation.gov.uk, 'Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998' and 'Explanatory Note' [all accessed 23 September 2021]

276. **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,**

507 HL Deb, 25 October 2021 cols 590-601

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.

277. **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.**

278. **The Government must ensure it publishes Equality Impact Assessments[508] 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.**

Young people who have been in care

279. National statistics show that on 31 March 2020, there were over 80,000 children looked after, up 2% on 2019. This means that 67 children per 10,000 under 18 years old were looked after.[509]

280. Care leavers face specific issues accessing the labour market. Data shows that of 11,220 care leavers aged 18 in 2020, 48% were in education, 17% were in training or employment, and 31% were NEET. Data was unknown for the remaining 5%. For 19- to 21-year-olds, there were 31,260 care leavers. 6% were in HE, 20% were in education, 26% in training or employment, and 39% were NEET. This is compared to around 13% for all young people of this age. Information was not known for the remaining 9%.[510]

281. Young people who have had experience in care may struggle to achieve the education they need to get into work. The DfE has recently established a Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) pilot running until March 2022, to test the extension of financial support to care-experienced young people in FE.[511] As they may be socio-economically disadvantaged too, young people who have been in care are also more likely to suffer from a lack of access to technologies. To address this, the Government recently announced a £126 million expansion of Get Help with Technology for children with a social worker and those leaving care. Up to half a million disadvantaged children and young people in England will receive up to 10,000 laptops and tablets as a result.[512]

282. Looked after children are also less likely to enter HE. The progression rate to high tariff HE for children who have been continuously looked after for

508 Assessments that public authorities often carry out prior to implementing policies, with a view to predicting their impact on equality. The Equality Act 2010 does not require them to be published, although they are a means of complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

509 ONS, 'Children looked after in England including adoptions', (last updated 28 April 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2020 [accessed 7 September 2021]

510 *Ibid.*

511 See Department for Education, 'Pupil Premium Plus post-16 pilot: submit an expression of interest': https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-plus-post-16-pilot-submit-an-expression-of-interest [accessed 5 October 2021]

512 Department for Education, 'Care leavers and disadvantaged pupils to benefit from £126 million investment in new laptops and tablets', (last updated 1 October 2021): https://www.gov.uk/government/news/care-leavers-and-disadvantaged-pupils-to-benefit-from-126-million-investment-in-new-laptops-and-tablets [accessed 29 October 2021]

at least 12 months has stayed flat at 1% for the last decade.[513] Just 6% of the 19- to 21-year-old care leavers in 2020 were known to be in HE.[514]

283. We heard that care leavers lack the support, opportunities and social networks that their peers may have access to. They are more likely to experience mental health problems, live on their own, and face disruption to their education.[515] Karen Glaves, a representative of Futures for You, told us that for young people who have been in care, education is not always their top priority as they are trying to adjust to independent living. This makes preparing them for the labour market difficult.[516] The Shaw Trust cited evidence from Sheffield Hallam University, which found that young people who have had experience of being in care may prioritise immediate housing needs over employment, while financial stress can pose a challenge to education and training.[517]

284. At Budget 2021, the Government brought forward a change to the care leaver exemption from the shared accommodation rate (SAR) of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA). The change extends the upper age limit to qualify for the care leaver exemption from age 22 to 25. This enables care leavers aged 18 to 22 on either Universal Credit or Housing Benefit to receive the higher one-bedroom housing support instead of the shared accommodation rate. It gives care leavers an extra three years to find employment and build networks.[518]

285. We heard about positive local interventions in Cornwall for young people in care. Meredith Teasdale, Strategic Director of Together for Families at Cornwall Council, told us the council's relationship with the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly LEP was helping to ensure young care leavers do not slip through the net. She told us:

> "We talk to the LEP about the importance of children in care and care leavers having employment opportunities in Cornwall, and we are one of the three best local authorities at ensuring that our children in care are in employment, education or training. Last year, about 72% of our care leavers were in education, employment or training, whereas the national figure is about 50%. A lot of that is about that good relationship between the local authority and the LEP, and therefore with businesses, making sure that we understand the skills that are required, as well as businesses supporting our care leavers into work. There is a demonstrable sign of that effective relationship".[519]

286. Meredith Teasdale also told us about the need to work intensely with young care leavers around practical issues such as getting to work and the appropriate clothing for interviews. She said it is essential that there is "clear guidance" to help advisers to do this, and to spot warning signs where a young person might be at risk of becoming NEET.[520]

---

513 Department for Education, 'Widening participation in higher education', (14 October 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education/2019–20 [accessed 15 October 2021]

514 Department for Education, 'Children looked after in England including adoptions', (last updated 28 April 2021): https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2020 [accessed 7 September 2021]

515 Written evidence from Access Generation CIC (YUN0036)

516 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].

517 Written evidence from Shaw Trust (YUN0026)

518 Supplementary written evidence from the Department for Education (YUN0083)

519 Q 136 (Meredith Teasdale)

520 Q 140 (Meredith Teasdale)

287. The Government told us it offers a range of measures for young care-experienced people. The DfE provides a bursary of £1,000, available to all care leavers aged 16 to 24. [521] The Second Chance Learning Scheme supports those aged 18 to 21 to catch up on education. Housing Benefit, UC or Housing Support is available to those who study full-time in secondary education and are without parental support.[522] The Government provides £1,000 to employers and training providers when they take on 19 to 24-year-old care leavers.[523] Jonathan Foot, Head of Apprenticeships and Early Careers at Compass Group, spoke positively about the Government's Care Leaver Covenant, set up to support care leavers aged between 16 and 25.[524]

288. **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.**

289. **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.**

Young people who have been in custody

290. Young people who do not achieve formal qualifications or who face time out of work may have a higher likelihood of going into crime. When they enter custody, 47% of people have no formal qualifications. 42% have been expelled or permanently excluded from school, and 57% of adults have literacy levels below what is expected of an 11-year-old.[525]

291. Today, 18- to 24-year-olds are over-represented in the criminal justice system; despite comprising just 10% of the population as a whole, they make up between 30% and 40% of the criminal justice caseload, and 16% of the prison population. They also have some of the highest reoffending rates; 75% of young adults reoffend within two years of release.[526] There was an average of just over 780 children (aged between 10 and 17) in custody at any one time in the year ending March 2020.[527]

---

521 Education and Skills Funding Agency, 'Apprenticeship funding rules', (last updated 30 July 2021): https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules#the-latest-rules-2020-to-2021 [accessed 22 September 2021]

522 Supplementary written evidence from the Department for Education (YUN0084)

523 Education and Skills Funding Agency, 'Apprenticeship funding rules', (last updated 30 July 2021): https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules#the-latest-rules-2020-to-2021 [accessed 22 September 2021]

524 Q 37 (Jonathan Foot)

525 Ofsted, 'Launching our prison education review', (10 September 2021): https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/launching-our-prison-education-review [accessed 1 November 2021]

526 Written evidence from the Prisoner Learning Alliance (YUN0014)

527 Ministry of Justice, *Youth justice statistics 2019/20: England and Wales* (28 January 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/956621/youth-justice-statistics-2019–2020.pdf [accessed 1 November 2021]

292. Engaging in education while in custody can have a significant positive impact on a person's chance of finding employment and avoiding reoffending. The Prisoner Learning Alliance (PLA) told us that most children in custody do not receive the mandated 15 hours per week due to disruptions and challenges.[528] Dame Sally Coates' 2016 review into prison education found that young people can be some of the hardest to engage in education, because they are particularly disillusioned with education.[529] Around 18% of people in custody taking at least one initial assessment were aged 18 to 24 in April 2019 to March 2020. After taking these assessments, people in custody can take part in courses, and of all of those taking courses, 18% were aged 18 to 24 (see below).[530]

Table 3: Adult (18+) FE and skills participation (2019/20) in prison education

	Below Level 2 (excluding English, Maths, ICT & ESOL)	English, Maths, ICT & ESOL	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4+	Total learners	%
Total learners	29,723	30,168	24,772	1,226	8	67,663	100.0%
18–24	6,030	5,728	4,490	170	N/A	12,402	18.4%

Source: Ministry of Justice, 'Prison education statistics tables 2019 to 2020', 5 August 2021 [accessed 1 November 2021], table 1.5

293. During the COVID-19 pandemic, lost learning affected children and young people in custody just as it affected those in schools and colleges. There was no classroom education in prisons for five months during the pandemic, while workshops for developing vocational skills were closed down.[531]

294. While the extent of illiteracy and innumeracy amongst people in custody is well documented, we also heard that there is a significant problem with digital skills amongst people in custody, which may seriously inhibit their ability to achieve work on release if not addressed urgently. The PLA told us that despite the advancement of digital literacy elsewhere, "the digital revolution has largely passed prisons by". It has called for a more in-cell devices and access to more secure digital infrastructure to support learning in custody. The lack of connectivity was a particular problem during the COVID-19 pandemic, as delivering socially distanced and blended learning was not able to be delivered as it was in other places of learning. The PLA said that "the lack of ICT and any kind of internet access has put prisoners at greater disadvantage than any other educational sector".[532]

528 Written evidence from the Prisoner Learning Alliance (YUN0014)
529 Ministry of Justice, *Unlocking potential: a review of education in prison* (May 2016): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf [accessed 1 November 2021]
530 Ministry of Justice, *Prison education statistics April 2019 to March 2020* (5 August 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1008850/Prisoner_Education_2019_20.pdf [accessed 1 November 2021]
531 Ofsted, 'Launching our prison education review', (10 September 2021): https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/launching-our-prison-education-review [accessed 1 November 2021]
532 Written evidence from the Prisoner Learning Alliance (YUN0014)

295. Children and young people in custody are not able to access the same standard of support and guidance through tutoring, careers advice and advocacy routes as their peers in the outside world. The PLA argued that careers advice should be provided by an independent organisation that does not provide additional education or training within the prison estate.[533]

296. The lack of parity in funding for education between the prison estate and other education institutions is a critical issue. This has been the topic of a number of recent reviews, not least the 2016 review by Dame Sally Coates, which found that three-fifths of people in custody leave without an employment, education or training outcome. This is difficult to analyse because, as the PLA told us, there is no published data on progression and qualifications for children studying while in custody.[534] It is also borne out by the Government's funding pledges to education during the pandemic. The Government committed to additional funding for FE, training and apprenticeships; however, education for those in custody was left out of this funding.[535]

297. Employment has been shown to have an impact on reducing rates of reoffending.[536] However, only 10% of men of all ages leaving custody had a job six weeks after leaving, and the figure is just 4% for women.[537] We heard that young people who have criminal convictions to declare face barriers to finding work.[538] Sope Otulana of the Youth Futures Foundation told us these might include being less likely to achieve qualifications needed for work compared to those not in custody,[539] while the PLA told us of structural challenges relating to "lengthy or indefinite disclosure periods [that] prevent people moving forward".[540]

298. We also heard of limitations in Government schemes for people who have been in custody. For example, the Prison Apprenticeship Pathway was introduced in the Ministry of Justice's 2018 Education and Employment Strategy. It is intended to provide a route for people in custody to gain qualifications and work experience, with training taking place during a stay in custody and an apprenticeship on release guaranteeing a job and income. This is because people in custody are not allowed to have employment contracts.[541] We were told by the PLA that release on temporary licence (ROTL)—where a person in custody who is security cleared can access day release for work or education—could be an avenue for allowing a person to start work via the pathway. The PLA added that:

> "There are no centrally collated figures of prisoners who regularly access college or university in the community for courses or training. ROTL

533 *Ibid.*
534 *Ibid.*
535 Written evidence from the Prisoner Learning Alliance (YUN0014)
536 Ministry of Justice, *Unlocking potential: a review of education in prison* (May 2016): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf [accessed 1 November 2021]
537 Written evidence from the Prisoner Learning Alliance (YUN0014)
538 See written evidence from the CSW Group (YUN0003), Catch22 (YUN0055) and the Prisoner Learning Alliance (YUN0014).
539 Q 24 (Sope Otulana)
540 Written evidence from the Prisoner Learning Alliance (YUN0014)
541 Written evidence from the Prisoner Learning Alliance (YUN0014) and Criminal Justice Alliance, *Education: are prisoners being left behind?* (January 2021): https://www.criminaljusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/CJA-Resource-3-Prison-Education-Inquiry-FINAL-1-Jan-2021.pdf [accessed 14 October 2021]

could also be used as a key part of the apprenticeship pathway so that apprentices are able to become familiar with and start working at their placement before they are released from prison".[542]

299. We heard that some employers have built successful pipelines to employment for people who have been in custody. For example, Timpson utilises ROTL to employ people who have been in custody to work in their shops as an "essential bridge between custody and release". It runs training academies inside prisons where people in custody can take on vocational training to help them prepare for work in a Timpson store.[543] However, the PLA told us that this approach, while hugely valuable, is too piecemeal and there is not enough support for employers to actively engage with the those in custody.[544]

300. The Government told us that it has introduced 158 new work coaches in prisons and is currently working with the Ministry of Justice on traineeships. The Government also told us that people who have left custody have—and will continue to have—priority access to the Work and Health Programme, Kickstart and Restart.[545] However, without adequate CEIAG and funding for education on the prison estate, people in custody will not be properly placed to take advantage of these schemes and their impact may be limited.

301. **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.**

302. **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.**

303. **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**

542 Written evidence from the Prisoner Learning Alliance (YUN0014)
543 See Timpson, 'Timpson Foundation': https://www.timpson-group.co.uk/timpson-foundation/ [accessed 1 November 2021]
544 Written evidence from the Prisoner Learning Alliance (YUN0014)
545 Q 9 (Sue Lovelock and Tammy Fevrier)

- **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.**

CHAPTER 7: GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

304. The issue of youth employment sits between different ministerial portfolios. This is due to the multiplicity of factors that can lead to a young person becoming unemployed, and the range of issues that can arise from unemployment itself. As a result, UK government policy tends to be produced in a siloed fashion with lack of a clear steering hand or accountability from any one minister or department. The range of policy initiatives enacted to tackle the issue, which are many at present, are spread across departments and are not clearly aligned nor joined up with one another, which makes navigating them difficult for employers, local authorities, youth work practitioners, and young people themselves. Many of these schemes were introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic and are in their infancy so it is not possible at this stage to undertake a detailed examination of their merits and outcomes.

Current cross-departmental approach

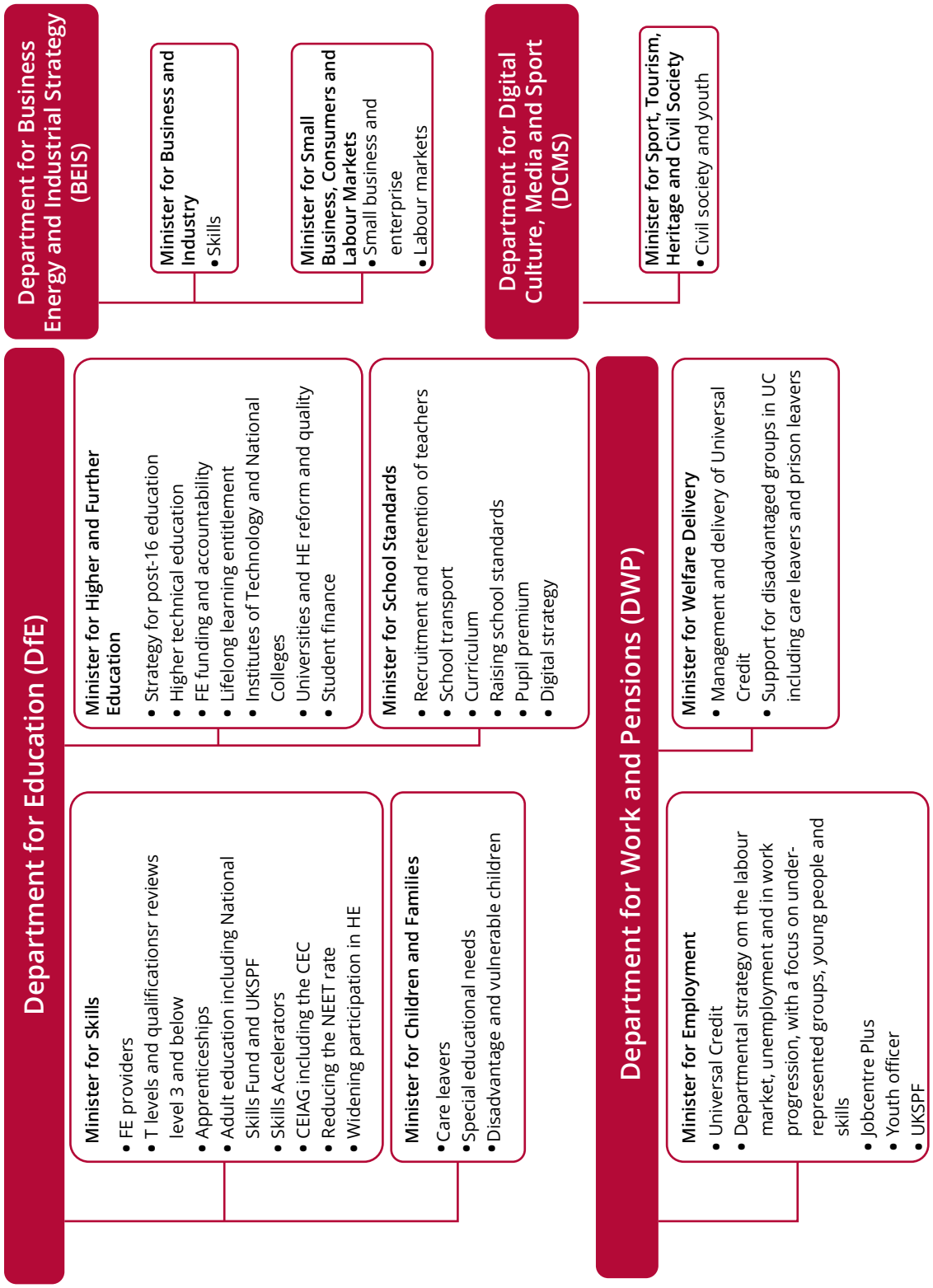
305. Evidence we heard from the Government suggested a strong working relationship between the DfE and DWP. Keith Smith, Director of Post-16 Strategy at the DfE, told us that "relationships have never been stronger than they are now". He went on to reiterate that "in order to get the skills system really world class, it is important that we connect across all government departments."[546]

306. However, the Youth Employment Group gave evidence that the spread of responsibility across government departments means that young people can fall through the cracks and end up "the responsibility of no department".[547] The Association of Colleges told us that many people are not being redirected to advice and training because of a disconnected system in which programmes and schemes do not effectively coexist alongside one another.[548] Lauren Roberts, Youth Engagement Executive at the City & Guilds Group, told us that there is widespread confusion:

> "You have employers that are very keen to invest in young people and want to do all they can to offer opportunities, but when there are so many schemes to pick from, how do you know which one is best for your business needs? As a young person myself who was NEET only eight or nine years ago, what scheme do you go for? Do I do an apprenticeship? Do I do a T Level? Do I join a Kickstart programme? Do any of those lead me to a real job at the end of the day?".[549]

546 Q 2 (Keith Smith)
547 Q 21 (Sam Windett)
548 Written evidence from the Association of Colleges (YUN0057)
549 Q 33 (Lauren Roberts)

Figure 31: Key departmental responsibilities



Source: HM Government, 'Welcome to GOV.UK: https://www.gov.uk/ [accessed 1 November 2021]

307. The disconnect between the departments can also be confusing for businesses looking to implement government programmes and schemes. In the East Midlands, we were told by one organisation working with young people that there are too many overlapping programmes from government departments and, as such, the system needs to be radically simplified to properly support young people.[550] Esther O'Callaghan OBE, CEO of Hundo Careers, told us that young people need more than a range of disparate interventions and support, but a "coherent and consistent systemic roadmap from education to employability skills and ultimately employment."[551] Jason Holt CBE, of the Holts Group, expressed similar sentiments on coordination:

> "My observation is that there needs to be clarity around how Kickstart interlinks with apprenticeships. That is not clear to me. Maybe it is partly due to the fact that there are two government departments responsible—DWP for Kickstart and the Department for Education for apprenticeships. How that interlinks might need clarity because I am not sure that those two pipes connect perfectly".[552]

Box 12: Scotland's Youth Employment Minister

In 2011, in response to the financial crisis, the Scottish Government appointed a dedicated minister for youth employment following rising youth unemployment rates. This was accompanied by an additional £30 million in funding.[553] Once appointed, the Minister's draft strategy included proposals for the following:

- Clear and targeted approach to support young people as they look for jobs;
- Development of opportunities within the apps programme;
- Targeted support to help young people into the energy and low carbon economy;
- Support via the My Work Coach programme under development at the time; and
- Financial support to employers to encourage them to employ young people from disadvantaged groups.[554]

550 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
551 Written evidence from Esther O'Callaghan OBE (YUN0082)
552 Q 53 (Jason Holt)
553 'New youth employment minister for Scotland as crisis hits', *Huffpost* (1 December 2011): https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2011/12/01/new-youth-employment-minister_n_1123290.html [accessed 3 August 2021]
554 'Scottish government unveils youth unemployment strategy', *BBC News* (February 2012): https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-16807572 [accessed 3 August 2021]

The role has since been expanded into the current ministerial post of Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training, who has responsibility for the Young Person's Guarantee, apprenticeships, youth employment, FE and HE, STEM and widening access.[555] The Scottish Government also has a Minister for Children and Young People, whose portfolio includes the school leavers toolkit and wraparound childcare.[556] Both sit under the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.[557]

The Young Person's Guarantee—developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic—drew heavily on the Edinburgh Guarantee that offered six months' paid work experience for all unemployed 16- to 24-year-olds following the financial crisis. The Edinburgh Guarantee was a private sector employer-led scheme that worked with the Chamber of Commerce to target SMEs, with placements underwritten by the council. The Young Person's Guarantee expands on this and aims to connect young people across Scotland with an opportunity, whether that is a job, apprenticeship, FE or HE, training or volunteering.[558]

308. We heard that Youth Hubs may prove a vehicle through which to connect the varied programmes and provide wraparound, joined up provision for young people accessing careers, learning and employment support.[559] Youth Hubs were announced in the Plan for Jobs as part of the Youth Offer. They are created in partnership with JCP and aim to provide employability and skills advice. They are co-located with other organisations to provide access to a range of services in one place. Young people on the 13-week Youth Employment Programme may be referred to Youth Hubs, where they can get extra support from a Youth Hub work coach for up to six months. Some Youth Hubs may offer a drop-in service for all young people who need support to find work, including those not claiming Universal Credit. As of September 2021, there are over 115 Youth Hubs in existence and the DWP plans to place one in every JCP district. The Government plans to open 150 in total by the end of 2021. The Government has also employed 150 Youth Employability Coaches.[560] The Youth Employment Group offered praise for Youth Hubs:

> "The new 'Youth Hubs' that bring together different local partners are a promising way of transforming the landscape for young people in the long term and can help ensure there is 'no wrong door' for young people who do not engage with Jobcentre Plus. These need to be properly resourced as a hub for all local partners, employers and institutions to provide joined up support".[561]

555 Scottish Government, 'Minister for Higher Education and Further Education, Youth Employment and Training': https://www.gov.scot/about/who-runs-government/cabinet-and-ministers/minister-for-higher-education-and-further-education-youth-employment-and-training/ [accessed 3 August 2021]

556 Scottish Government, 'Minister for Children and Young People': https://www.gov.scot/about/who-runs-government/cabinet-and-ministers/minister-children-young-people/ [accessed 3 August 2021]

557 Scottish Government, 'Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills': https://www.gov.scot/about/who-runs-government/cabinet-and-ministers/cabinet-secretary-education-skills/ [accessed 3 August 2021]

558 See Scottish Government, 'Young person's guarantee' : https://youngpersonsguarantee.scot/ [accessed 18 November 2021]

559 Written evidence from the Youth Futures Foundation (YUN0022)

560 National Audit Office, *Employment Support: Department for Work and Pensions* (7 June 2021), p 27: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Employment-support.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]. See also HM Government, *Plan for Jobs: progress update* (13 September 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1016764/Plan_for_Jobs_FINAL.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

561 Written evidence from the Youth Employment Group (YUN0029)

309. Youth Hubs must ensure that they follow a 'what works' approach as they are established. Louise Doble, Chair of the ACE Youth Trust, told us that after the age of 16 engaging young people was a struggle best overcome by one-to-one engagement, but that there were funding challenges.[562] Tony Wilson from the Institute for Employment Studies agreed that one-to-one support was crucial in ensuring that support was effective for young people.[563] The CSW Group reflected on the approach of the Connexions service, which offered bespoke support to young people to address their barriers and offered ongoing support until they were in work.[564]

310. 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.[565]

311. **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.**

312. **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.**

313. **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.**

314. **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**

562 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
563 Q 150 (Tony Wilson)
564 Written evidence from the CSW Group (YUN0003)
565 Q 24 (Laura-Jane Rawlings)

to the public directly via Parliament, for which the Commissioner should produce an Annual Report.

315. **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.**

316. **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.**

Kickstart

317. The Government has a range of employment support programmes on offer, further details of which are outlined in Appendix 7. The primary response is led by Jobcentre Plus (JCP), which delivers benefits like Universal Credit (UC). The DWP plans to increase its spending on support programmes from £0.3 billion to £2.5 billion between 2020–21 and 2021–22. The majority of this will be spent on Kickstart (£1.9 billion).[566]

318. Kickstart is the Government's primary youth-focussed response to the pandemic. It provides government-subsidised jobs for 16- to 24-year-olds. The Government pays the age-appropriate minimum wage for 25 hours per week plus National Insurance and pensions contributions.[567] We heard several calls for the extension of the scheme. Belfast Met told us that "short term projects of less than two years are not a workable model for youth labour market interventions".[568] In October 2021, the Government announced an extension of the scheme until March 2022. The Government has confirmed that as of November 2021, the scheme has supported over 100,000 young people.[569]

319. Reaction to the ambitions of the scheme has generally been positive. Employers in particular told us that it enabled them to build their talent pipeline.[570] The Minister for Employment told us that the scheme was proving valuable in getting young people a foot on the jobs ladder who might not have previously got through the CV screening process.[571] This suggests that the scheme is providing valuable opportunities for young people who might otherwise have slipped through the net into becoming NEET. We heard positive feedback

566 National Audit Office, *Employment Support: Department for Work and Pensions* (7 June 2021), p 26: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Employment-support.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

567 Department for Work and Pensions, 'Apply for a Kickstart Scheme Grant': https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-kickstart-scheme-grant [accessed 10 May 2021]

568 Written evidence from Belfast Met (YUN0004)

569 Department for Work and Pensions, 'Over 100,000 young careers boosted by Kickstart scheme' (16 November 2021): https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-100-000-young-careers-boosted-by-kickstart-scheme [accessed 17 November 2021]

570 Q 38 (Jonathan Foot)

571 Q 237 (Mims Davies MP)

from young people regarding the scheme, including one young person at our Bolton and Lancashire engagement session, who told us that "there are some good opportunities in Kickstart and I'm looking at doing one—a chance to start work and get a bit of money".[572] A young person at our engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds told us:

> "I joined the Kickstart scheme through UC and the role that I have been doing has given me a lot of access that I didn't think I would have had before–a really good opportunity".[573]

320. Tony Wilson of the Institute for Employment Studies said:

> "we are never going to solve everything with one intervention. It will never all lead to permanent jobs, but it gives people work experience, addresses signal that employers receive when people are out of work, gives people confidence to look for new jobs, gives them workplace skills and helps them to find a new job. This is a well-proven intervention that works, and we should be doing more of it".[574]

321. However, we have also heard that there are a number of barriers to taking up a placement. These include:

- Limiting eligibility to UC recipients—16 and 17-year-olds can only claim UC in certain circumstances, and therefore they are barred from the Kickstart Scheme. We also heard that vulnerable young people in care may not claim UC but would benefit from a placement.[575] Kevin Blacoe, Head of Partnerships, Nations and Regions at Channel 4, told us that there were challenges linked to recruitment via JCP.[576] We also heard frustration that Kickstart excludes young people with disabilities if they are claiming Employment Support Allowance rather than UC.[577] Sope Utulana of the Youth Futures Foundation also told us that "being a universal credit claimant provides a simple tool for targeting, but it risks missing those young people who are from disadvantaged backgrounds but have not made a claim and would not enter a jobcentre";[578]

- High entry requirements—Barbara Strang, Business Partnerships Manager at ThinkForward, noted that Kickstart placements often listed a range of required skills in their advertisements, which the young people she works with have not yet developed.[579] A young person at our engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds told us that "people are joining my team at work on Kickstart but I was shocked by the qualifications of the people joining–many of them have Masters degrees. What is really out there for people who don't have GCSEs or A-Levels or who have gone through a lot in their personal life?";[580] and

572 Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].
573 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].
574 Q 155 (Tony Wilson)
575 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
576 Q 44 (Kevin Blacoe)
577 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
578 Q 22 (Sope Otulana)
579 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
580 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].

- Lack of choice—Alex Reader of Nottingham Works for You at Nottingham City Council told us that it was unhelpful that work coaches chose which opportunities to put in front of a young person, which often meant that a young person may have no interest in an area in which they are placed.[581]

322. We also heard that there were a number of challenges for employers who may be interested in setting up placements for young people.

- Short-term length—The North East LEP told us that Kickstart could be a "great progressive opportunity" for the development of a pipeline moving towards apprenticeships. However, its finite nature means that employers cannot build it into their long-term strategy;[582]

- Exclusion of very small businesses—Kickstart has a suggested ratio of three employees to one Kickstarter. Whilst this does not automatically result in rejection, it is likely that an application from a microbusiness would be rejected.[583] David Barker told us that this limits the scheme's capacity to scale up;[584]

- Connection to apprenticeships—Jason Holt told us that the links between Kickstart and apprenticeships are not clear enough for employers to understand;[585] and

- Taking on Kickstarters permanently—We heard that some employers may not be able to offer a permanent position after the COVID-19 pandemic. Emma Taylor, People Director for UK and Ireland at Tesco PLC, said that converting 60% of their 900 placements into permanent employment was a "realistic ambition" for Kickstarters.[586] One youth organisation in the East Midlands suggested there should be more support or incentives for businesses who do not have capacity to offer Kickstarters permanent work to help them source this elsewhere.[587]

323. The Government told us that examples had been learned from the Future Jobs Fund (FJF) when creating Kickstart.[588] The FJF was set up in 2009 following the financial crash. It was available for those who were out of work for six months and offered subsidised employment, training, or work experience for up to six months, largely in the public and third sector, at a minimum of 25 hours a week. It was cancelled by the Government in 2011 on the grounds it did not help to secure sustainable employment, with 45% claiming benefit seven months after starting the scheme.[589] Tony Wilson told us that of all the people who went through the scheme 40% moved into permanent employment. However, there was a 10% increase in the likelihood of being in permanent work for those who went through the scheme.[590]

---

581 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
582 Written evidence from the North East LEP (YUN0017)
583 Written answer 136046, Session 2019–21
584 Q 55 (David Barker)
585 Q 55 (Jason Holt)
586 Q 38 (Emma Taylor)
587 Engagement session with young people in the East Midlands, 25 May 2021 [see Appendix 5].
588 Written evidence from the Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions (YUN0062)
589 Work and Pensions Committee, *Youth unemployment and the Future Jobs Fund: Government response* (First Report, Session 2010–11, HC 844) and House of Commons Library, *Future Jobs Fund,* SN05352 15 December 2011
590 Q 155 (Tony Wilson)

324. Proper evaluation of the success of the Kickstart scheme will rely on publication of data on take-up and outcomes broken down by type of user. This data is not released on a frequent or regimented basis. Kickstart data is able to be broken down by region, but not as yet by other personal characteristics such as ethnicity, gender or age, which makes it difficult to see which groups have benefitted most from the scheme. The Youth Employment Group called for the Government to measure outcomes from the scheme, not only placements that have been created.[591] The Government has assured us that work is being undertaken to record how many Kickstarters go on to sustained work.[592]

325. **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.**

326. **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.**

327. **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.**

328. **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.**

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund

329. As a member of the EU, the UK received funding from EU structural funds. The European Social Fund (ESF) in particular supported many youth interventions focussing on employment, including third sector interventions. The Youth Employment Initiative was administered through the ESF. New funding through the EU structural funds has now ceased. The Government

591 Written evidence from the Youth Employment Group (YUN0029)
592 QQ 11–12 (Sue Lovelock, Keith Smith, Tammy Fevrier and Tom Younger)

promised to replace these funds with a UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), due to launch in 2022. Belfast Met told us:

> "A lack of certainty over the allocation of Shared Prosperity creates a risk that a substantial number of the most disadvantaged young people who actively participate in ESF funded programmes at entry - level 1 in colleges and the community and voluntary sector will be further impacted in the future".[593]

330. In March 2021, £220m was allocated to the UK Community Renewal Fund to invest in skills (25%), local business (23%), investing in communities and place (20%) and supporting people into employment (32%) in preparation for the UKSPF.[594] As of October 2021, no funds have yet been allocated.[595]

331. Professor Sue Maguire, Honorary Professor at the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Bath, told us that there is concern about how funding for philanthropic and social finance and support can be replaced post-Brexit, with no current commitment to sustained funding via the UKSPF.[596] The Shaw Trust said that the UKSPF will be "crucial in supporting skills and employment support programmes for disadvantaged young people" and urged the Government to publish its proposals.[597] Careers England told us that as EU funding winds down, the UKSPF should be targeted to ensure that funding is focussed on NEET young people.[598] However, Janet Jackson, Partnership Manager at Lancashire Skills Trust, told us that project-based funding models can be limiting in terms of sustained momentum and longevity.[599]

332. Metro Mayor for Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Steve Rotheram said that ESF funding was "brilliant because it was targeted", in comparison to the "cluttered landscape" of current Government schemes.[600] The DWP's Deputy Director for Youth and Skills Tammy Fevrier said that the UKSPF, as the domestic successor to the ESF, would look to streamline and speed up the delivery of services and support to better align it with domestic priorities.[601]

333. **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.**

334. **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**

593 Written evidence from Belfast Met (YUN0004)
594 Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 'UK Community Renewal Fund: frequently asked questions' (3 November 2021): https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-community-renewal-fund-frequently-asked-questions [accessed 11 November 2021]
595 'After 7 months, the £220m levelling up fund still hasn't been given out to deprived communities by ministers', *The i* (10 October 2021): https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/220m-level-up-fund-deprived-communities-not-been-given-out-by-ministers-7-months-on-1242208 [accessed 13 October 2021]
596 Written evidence from Professor Maguire (YUN0015)
597 Written evidence from the Shaw Trust (YUN0026)
598 Written evidence from Careers England (YUN0038)
599 Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].
600 Q 129 (Steve Rotheram)
601 Q 15 (Tammy Fevrier)

youth employment, particularly targeting the NEET group, at an equivalent or increased level to that of the European Social Fund.

Data collection and publication

335. Previous chapters of this report have noted the challenges of data collection, publication and assessment that exist at present, for example in recording and publishing skills gaps and the challenges of identifying and recording young people who are NEET. Some of the greatest challenges presented to effective data collection and evaluation are due to the limitations of ONS data.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS)

336. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) main labour market survey, based on household responses from across the UK. The LFS is a rolling household survey that takes place on a quarterly basis and has been running since 1992. Each sample is made up of roughly 40,000 responding households. LFS microdata captures characteristics including age, sex, qualifications, employment status (full or part-time, public or private, permanent or temporary), ethnicity, and disability.[602]

337. The ONS recognises its main limitations as follows: the survey is not industrially stratified so provides no guarantee of adequate coverage of any industry; coverage omits those in communal establishments (except NHS housing, students in halls of residence and at boarding schools), members of the armed forces who are not living in private accommodation, and workers aged 16 and under; and the survey is not designed to measure migration flows.[603] The LFS faces several additional challenges that can distort our understanding of unemployment:

- We were told that collecting data for young people and students can be challenging due to physically reaching them.[604] Students are hard to reach as those in halls of residence are collected at their home address but those in private rental homes can be sampled at their place of study. This means that large student households being rolled in and out can have a noticeable impact on a sample. The proxy response for those aged 16 to 17 was 94.2% in April to June 2021;[605]

- Young people tend to have more casual interaction with the labour market.[606] The LFS records microdata on employment status, including whether a person is full or part-time, public or private, permanent or a temporary worker. However, it is difficult to produce official data on the number of people engaged in the 'gig economy'. Research published

602 Office for National Statistics 'A guide to sources of data on income and earnings', (last updated 1 March 2021): https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/methodologies/aguidetosourcesofdataonearningsandincome [accessed 18 August 2021]

603 Office for National Statistics, 'Labour Force Survey Performance and quality monitoring report: April to June 2021': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/methodologies/labourforcesurveyperformanceandqualitymonitoringreports/labourforcesurveyperformanceandqualitymonitoringreportapriltojune2021 [accessed 18 August 2021]

604 Q 245 (Darren Morgan)

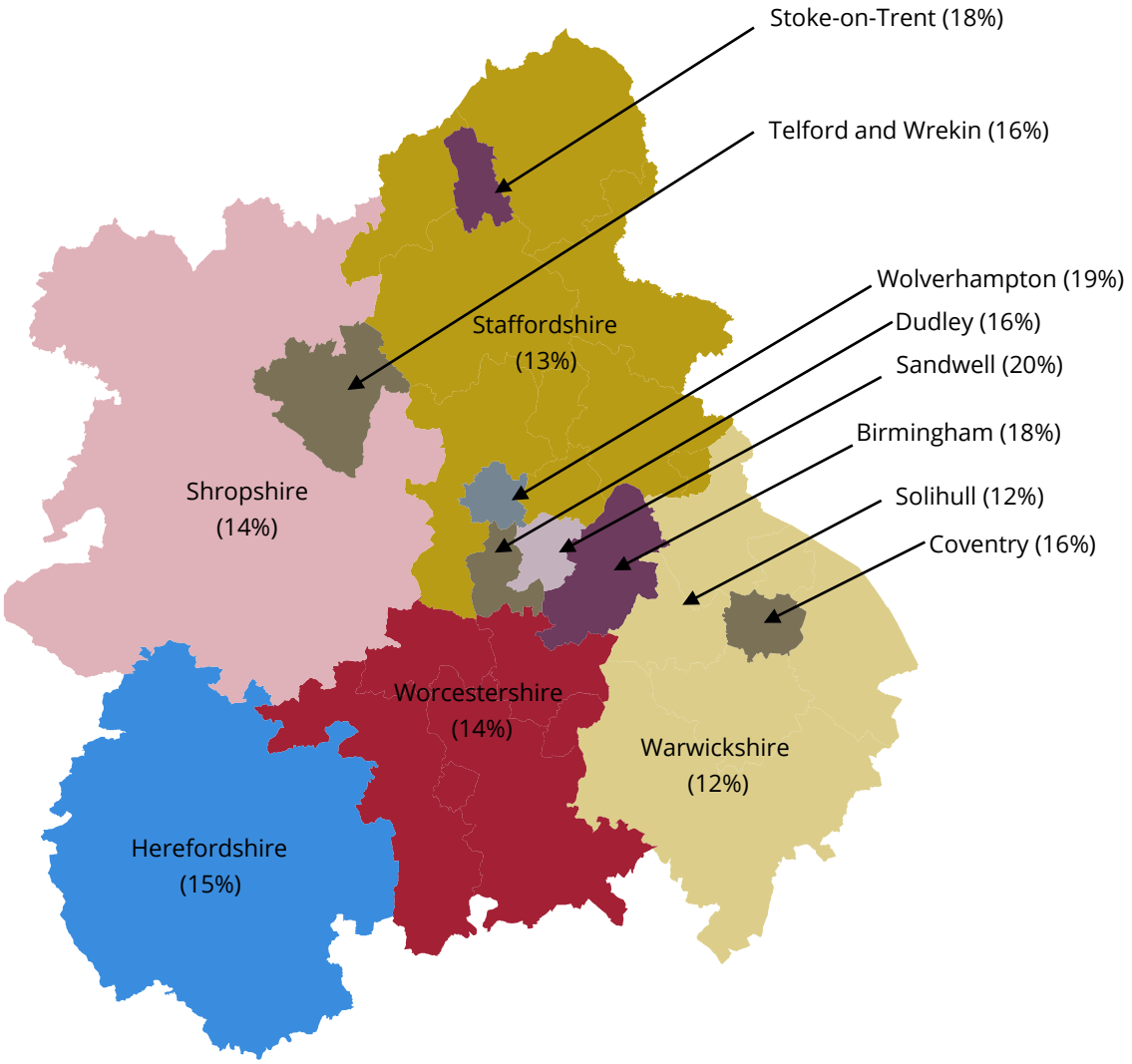
605 Office for National Statistics, 'Labour Force Survey Performance and quality monitoring report: April to June 2021': https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/methodologies/labourforcesurveyperformanceandqualitymonitoringreports/labourforcesurveyperformanceandqualitymonitoringreportapriltojune2021 [accessed 18 August 2021]

606 Q 245 (Darren Morgan)

by the TUC estimates that three in 20 adults regularly find work through online platforms once a week.[607] The ONS accepts there is no universally accepted definition of this system, and it is not aware of all the businesses included within it. It is exploring whether its definition should be updated;[608]

- We heard that unemployment varies significantly between local authority areas within a region more than between different regions (see Figure 32). Sam Windett, Co-Chair of the Youth Employment Group, told us that "if you look pan-regionally or even nationally, you will not understand NEET young people in the statistics. You have to look at a very local level."[609]

Figure 32: Local variations in the NEET rate for 21-year-olds in the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area at March 2017



Source: Private seminar delivered by B Gadsby (9 March 2021). See also Impetus, 'Youth jobs gap': https://www.impetus.org.uk/policy/youth-jobs-gap [accessed 15 October 2021]; Impetus, The Employment Gap in the West Midlands (July 2019), p 23, table 6: https://www.impetus.org.uk/assets/publications/Report/Youth-Jobs-Gap-The-Employment-Gap-in-the-West-Midlands.pdf [accessed 15 October 2021]

607 Trades Union Congress, 'Gig economy workforce in England and Wales has almost tripled in last five years: new Trades Union Congress research' (5 November 2021): https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/gig-economy-workforce-england-and-wales-has-almost-tripled-last-five-years-new-tuc-research [accessed 5 November 2021]

608 Office for National Statistics, 'The feasibility of measuring the UK sharing economy: October 2020 progress update': https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/economicoutputandproductivity/output/articles/thefeasibilityofmeasuringthesharingeconomy/october2020progressupdate [accessed 18 August 2021]

609 Q 19 (Sam Windett)

- Despite these large variations, the ONS do not recommend breaking down LFS data below headline measures at a regional level due to small sample sizes. This is a significant barrier to effectively diagnosing and tackling the problem;[610]

- Hidden NEETs[611]—Careers England told us that local councils, who have a statutory duty to monitor and engage NEETs, have lost track of over 150,000 young people aged 16 to 18, and over 50,000 of these are believed to be NEET. They argued that local authority data can differ depending on priorities and standards, leading to inaccuracies and at worst a "perverse incentive" not to track young people.[612] Young people may not engage with JCP for several reasons, including ineligibility to claim Universal Credit; difficulties attending JCP during the COVID-19 pandemic; backlogs of cases at some jobcentres; and stigma, lack of digital skills and lack of understanding of the process;

- Self-perceptions of proficiency are unreliable. The Bell Foundation told us that the LFS is not a good measure for the need for provision for people whose first language is not English (ESOL) because it is based on self-perception of proficiency.[613] This is also the case for disability;

- There are small sample sizes for ethnic minority communities. While the LFS is weighted for demographics and it does capture data on ethnicity, Darren Morgan confirmed that small sample sizes were a challenge. He said: "we do not regularly publish data on ethnic minorities";[614]

- Darren Morgan confirmed that the LFS cannot be broken down by socio-economic disadvantage, questioning what definition would be appropriate. While it collects data indicative of economic background such as the area respondents live, the main wage earner and their occupation, this information is not published.[615] This is a fundamental barrier to ensuring an accurate picture of the labour market that captures and reflects the socio-economic makeup of the working population. Using FSM eligibility as a proxy for disadvantage may present a straightforward solution.[616] The ONS has since informed us that it is exploring whether it can publish a breakdown of labour market status by economic background;[617] and

- Other factors are not measured. Researchers from the University of Lincoln told us that data is not routinely collected and analysed on how many unemployed young people are also parents, for example.[618]

338. Professor Jonathan Wadsworth, Professor of Economics at Royal Holloway University of London, told us that it was best to look at a range of indicators rather than focussing on the unemployment rate, due to the limitations of

610 Q 253 (Darren Morgan)
611 A person is 'hidden NEET' if they are not registered with a Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and claiming benefits.
612 Written evidence from Careers England (YUN0038)
613 Written evidence from The Bell Foundation (YUN0010)
614 Q 254 (Darren Morgan)
615 Supplementary written evidence from the Office for National Statistics (YUN0085)
616 Q 250 (Darren Morgan)
617 Supplementary written evidence from the Office for National Statistics (YUN0085)
618 Written evidence from the University of Lincoln (YUN0013)

the LFS.[619] The most important measures are the unemployment rate, the unemployment to population ratio, and the NEET rate. In addition to this, Darren Morgan noted experimental payroll data sourced from HMRC, which allows greater regional analysis.[620]

339. Darren Morgan told us that the ONS is developing a new survey to succeed the LFS, with a larger sample size of 120,000 households. He also told us that the ONS would be publishing recommendations and launching a new inclusive data task force.[621]

Government interventions

340. We have heard a number of further concerns about data collected and published about the labour market, which influence our understanding of the effectiveness of programmes intended to tackle it. The Government does not release regular updates on all of its employment initiatives. In September 2021, the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee reported that shortcomings in the DWP's data "presents a potential barrier to evaluating the effectiveness of its schemes for different groups robustly".[622] For example, in 2020, the DWP only had data on the ethnic background of 40% of benefit claimants. This has since increased to 74%.[623] This makes it difficult to analyse how well interventions are working for different ethnic groups.

341. The National Audit Office has previously pointed out that user views are not systematically and routinely gathered from participants of the DWP's employment interventions.[624] This limits its capacity to improve upon them. We heard the following view from one of our participants in the engagement session with young people from ethnic minority groups:

> "I've had a mixed experience with Universal Credit. You get some CV workshops and a personal adviser who can help you with support. But it is not tailored to help you with your career development. I didn't feel they allowed me to be ambitious in what I wanted to do. It is not set up to support people with careers, it is just set up so people can get off UC or not use it in the first place".[625]

342. To take the example of Kickstart, for which data is neither frequently nor regularly published, the Government told us that the DWP was focussing on "data-led analysis of sector and geographical spread of Kickstart vacancies and employer engagement to agree targeted interventions to increase participation where gaps are identified".[626] Due to the urgency with which the scheme was rolled out, there are gaps in data collected about the scheme

---

619 Written evidence from Professor Jonathan Wadsworth (YUN0046)
620 Q 252 (Darren Morgan)
621 QQ 250 and 253 (Darren Morgan)
622 Committee of Public Accounts, *DWP Employment support* (Fifteenth Report, Session 2021–22, HC 177), pp 5–6
623 National Audit Office, *Employment Support: Department for Work and Pensions* (7 June 2021), p 17: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Employment-support.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]
624 National Audit Office, *Supporting disabled people to work* (28 March 2019), p 59: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Supporting-disabled-people-to-work.pdf [accessed 23 September 2021]
625 Engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021 [see Appendix 5].
626 Written evidence from the Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions (YUN0062)

that will be fundamental to understanding its impact. In September 2021, the Employment Minister told the House of Commons that "mechanisms that record the number of disabled young people participating were not included within the initial design of Kickstart. However, disability status is recorded on the wider Universal Credit systems".[627] She said that the DWP continues to evaluate the success of Kickstart for various demographic groups "throughout and after its implementation" through a planned participant survey.[628]

343. However, while based on a small sample, a recent process evaluation for skills bootcamps found that while there were positive results from participation, data collected did not consistently cover all bootcamps nor geographic areas, while there was "incomplete" data on employment and salary outcomes.[629]

344. We have heard the case that data on the Government's varied interventions must focus on long-term outcomes. Stephen Evans of the Learning and Work Institute told us that the DWP needed to produce more comprehensive data on how many people its interventions get into work and their progress, rather than simply recording when they are no longer claiming benefits.[630] Professor Sue Maguire of the University of Bath also told us that:

> "Programme evaluation has highlighted the importance of targeting. This is dependent on having tracking systems that can produce robust, reliable and efficient data on young people's intended and actual destinations, alongside accurate labour market information, which is sensitive to the needs of regional and local labour markets".[631]

345. Tom Younger, Deputy Director for Labour Market Analysis at the DWP, told us that the Government was carrying out process evaluations to review how interventions are working in practice, including via evidence gathering from JCP work coaches. He caveated that "it still is early days in terms of outcomes and impacts. As time goes on and more people go through these programmes, we will be keeping a very close eye on outcomes before carrying out formal impact evaluations later down the line".[632]

School leaver destinations

346. We have heard that data on school leaver destinations is a critical means of measuring the effectiveness of careers guidance. The DfE collects destination data; however, Professor Sir John Holman told us that there is a lag between collection and publication. The Government have only recently published destination data from the 2017-8 cohort of Year 11s. He suggested that technological improvements should speed this process up.[633]

347. Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data links education records to tax and benefits information, showing whether graduates were employed and how much they were paid. However, there is a time lag in the publication

627 Written answer 25250, Session 2021–22
628 Written answer 21984, Session 2021–22
629 Department for Education, *Skills Bootcamps process evaluation* (October 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1027163/Bootcamps_wave_1_final_evaluation_report.pdf [accessed 1 November 2021]
630 Q 150 (Stephen Evans)
631 Written evidence from Professor Maguire (YUN0015)
632 Q 4 (Tom Younger)
633 Q 169 (Professor Sir John Holman)

of this data, and schools and colleges may struggle to access, interpret and analyse the data to better understand outcomes given their limited resources.[634]

348. The Gatsby Benchmarks advocate for schools themselves to record destinations data for their students for three years after a student has left, but this requires significant resource. Professor Sir John Holman also told us:

> "If a school does that and has really good records about where everyone ends up, up to three years later, that is a tremendous resource that it can draw on, because it can use that data to analyse how well it is doing in the careers guidance that it is providing—for example, how well it is countering gender stereotypes. What is more, once it knows where everyone has gone, it can build a very strong record of alumni and invite those young people to come back later on and tell their fellow students about their experiences".[635]

349. **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.**

350. **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.**

351. **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.**

352. **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.**

353. **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.**

---

634 See Office for Students, 'Graduate earnings data on Discover Uni from the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data': https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/graduate-earnings-data-on-discover-uni/ [accessed 31 August 2021].

635 Q 169 (Professor Sir John Holman and Oli de Botton)

Local and regional policy implementation

354. The themes discussed in this report have often been the subject of a national response, reflecting the fact that youth unemployment is a national challenge. We also know, however, that different challenges exist in different regions and localities. There are also a range of levers and initiatives that can be initiated at local and regional level to reflect differences in youth unemployment rates, local labour markets, or other specific local challenges.

355. A recurring theme of the evidence we heard was the extent of inequality both within and across regions relating to youth employment prospects. This is a reflection of the economic disparities in localities that are often very close to one another, and to which national policy is not always effectively attuned.

356. Regional inequalities are often exacerbated by 'brain drain', where young people leave an area in search of better opportunities elsewhere, generally gravitating to large cities. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities recently said that a person shouldn't have to "leave the place you love in order to live the life you want".[636] However, the Youth Voice Census 2021 found that only 9.9% of respondents said they were confident that they would be able to find quality work where they live.[637]

357. Meredith Teasdale of Cornwall Council told us that "in any conversation you have with somebody in Cornwall, they will talk about a young person leaving Cornwall and going somewhere else". In part, she suggested that this is because there are fewer large businesses in Cornwall, and so locations such as Bristol or London might present better opportunities to join a big firm.[638] We heard similar views from young people in our meetings; for example, when speaking to young people from Bolton and Lancashire, we were told that opportunities available locally for apprenticeships that are in the right sector for them are limited.[639]

358. Research from the IFS shows that at age 27, 35% of graduates and 15% of non-graduates have moved away from the area where they lived at age 16. Around a quarter of graduates who move go to London. People from ethnic minority backgrounds and lower income backgrounds are less likely to move than their white and more affluent peers, and the effect of HE on mobility is much weaker for these groups. The IFS concludes that "patterns of mobility exacerbate regional inequality in skills", with many areas with low levels of HE participation losing their graduates to cities with already high rates of HE participation.[640]

359. In recent years there have been significant changes in English regional governance which has changed the context in which initiatives to tackle youth unemployment operate. In particular, many areas have seen the advent of mayoral combined authorities (MCAs), especially in metropolitan areas.

---

636 'Do or die: Tories risk betraying Brexit voters if they fail to 'Level Up' Britain, warns Michael Gove', *The Sun* (1 October 2021): https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/16306313/gove-warns-level-up-fail/ [accessed 11 November 2021]

637 Youth Employment UK, *Youth Voice Census Report 2021* (15 September 2021): https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/themes/yeuk/files/youth-voice-census-report-2021.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]

638 Q 138 (Meredith Teasdale)

639 Engagement session with young people in Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021 [see Appendix 5].

640 Institute for Fiscal Studies, *London calling? Higher education, geographical mobility and early-career earnings* (17 September 2021): https://ifs.org.uk/uploads/Higher-education-geographical-mobility-and-early-career-earnings.pdf [accessed 11 November 2021]

MCAs have been granted powers over adult education budgets since 2019, including education and skills training for learners above the age of 19.

360. Each mayoral combined authority is led by an elected mayor commonly known as a 'metro mayor', who runs the authority in cooperation with the council leaders in the areas they cover. As well as adult education, the mayors also have access to a capital investment fund and (in most cases) can raise a council tax precept to fund their activities. The high profile of metro mayors also means they can exercise 'soft power' to promote initiatives of their choosing and working with other organisations to take action. Some MCAs have used both formal and 'soft' powers to pursue initiatives to tackle youth unemployment.

361. Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, told us that in order for devolution to the regions to work properly, "we need proper finances. There needs to be appropriate resource if devolution has the chance of success… We absolutely want to be held responsible and accountable for what we do, but that means that the Government need to work with us. At times, it seems that we are pulling in opposite directions".[641]

362. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)—formal partnerships between businesses and local authorities in functional economic areas, often crossing council boundaries—also have a major role to play in addressing youth unemployment, particularly in relation to skills needs and supporting local economic priorities. In areas without a Mayoral Combined Authority (or the Greater London Authority) LEPs are the principal drivers of Skills Advisory Panels, which are local partnerships that work to identify and address local skills priorities. The Government states that "they aim to strengthen the link between employers and skills providers including colleges, independent training providers and universities", and receive Government grants for this purpose.[642]

363. We heard evidence from a number of regional authorities and LEPs as to the initiatives they were undertaking and the powers they would need to tackle youth unemployment more effectively. For example, the Liverpool City Region told us of its plans to implement a "Young Person's Guarantee". This would mean a commitment of a job, training or an apprenticeship opportunity for every young person who is out of work for more than six months (see Box 12 on Edinburgh's Youth Guarantee). This will begin with a focus on school leavers, and the City Region aims to extend this to everyone under 25. It also discussed its work with the Department for Work and Pensions to establish a Youth Task Force, with face-to-face support being delivered through Youth Hubs. The City Region also noted that it had established a single and integrated CEIAG portal via its Employment and Skills Board.[643]

364. The Tees Valley Combined Authority told us how it used its powers and resources to support youth employment. For example, it told us that it had implemented a "Routes to Work" pilot to support residents most distant from the labour market into or closer to sustainable employment. It stated that through this, "over 3,420 people have already been engaged and over 670

641 Q 126 (Steve Rotheram)
642 Department for Education, 'Skills Advisory Panels', (last updated 5 July 2021): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-advisory-panels [accessed 14 October 2021]
643 Written evidence from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (YUN0064)

assisted into employment". It said it had offered grants allowing the creation of over 300 apprenticeships; had set up an online careers education hub to "deliver high quality careers education to 100,000 children and young people"; and had established a "partnership of local colleges, training organisations and employers designed to meet the skills needs of Teesworks—the UK's largest industrial zone, centred on advanced manufacturing, innovation and clean growth".[644]

365. The Combined Authority also advocated that future interventions should not be targeted towards specific groups, regions or sectors on a national level, but that national policy should take a regional approach, in which sub-regional bodies such as Combined Authorities are given additional responsibilities and resources. As noted, an amendment to the Skills Bill requires that LSIPs should be developed in partnership with local authorities including Mayoral Combined Authorities and FE providers.[645]

366. The North East LEP told us that its Skills Advisory Panel has conducted a series of research projects into the skills demands and needs in the region. It noted that one particular ongoing project "is looking into the future skills needs in the area in particular, the green economy sector and health and social care. This will inform the LEP and the area's learning and skills partners around where provision and assets that may be needed in the future". It added that:

> "interventions for young people are best targeted at a local level to local young people with control of funding and strategic oversight at a regional level through Strategic Advisory Panels or MCAs… localised support at the right level for the young people who have initial barriers around accessing transportation, confidence and self-belief and at the same time delivery can key in regional skill demands from employers and sectors".

367. Local authorities also have a role in addressing employment challenges in their areas. The LGA told us that, as well as their general duties to support their local economies, local authorities also have several statutory duties in relation to supporting the education and employment prospects of young people, in particular in ensuring that all young people up to the age of 18 are in education or training. However, the LGA also told us that "councils have very few formal levers over commissioning or coordination of provision to ensure their statutory duties are met".[646]

368. The LGA stated that "coordination of these funding streams to target them to the needs of communities and individuals is crucial" and called for a new approach based on its 'Work Local' model, which it described as follows:

> "This would give combined authorities and groups of councils, working in partnership with local and national partners, the powers and funding to plan, commission and oversee a joined-up system, by bringing together advice and guidance, employment, skills, apprenticeships and business support for individuals and employers, at the local level. We are

644 Written evidence from Tees Valley Combined Authority (YUN0040)
645 See Skills and Post-16 Education Bill [HL], part 1(7) [Bill 176 (2021–22)]
646 Written evidence from Local Government Association (YUN0043)

calling on the Government to back and fund the trialling of the Work Local model".[647]

369. The Government's written evidence stated that it "recognises that young people's needs will vary depending on where they live and their own individual circumstances. This diversity will be essential when it comes to helping our country recover after Coronavirus pandemic". It gave the example of Youth Hubs, which are located across the country, and which "use the knowledge of staff from the local area to provide young people with the most suitable provision". It also noted that "we have also worked in partnership to create local Kickstart opportunities that meet the need of each local community. Our Work Coaches are best placed to identify young jobseekers in their areas who would most benefit from the scheme. Local partnership managers and Kickstart District Account Managers are working with employers and partners locally to help align Kickstart to economic recovery plans and works alongside the Scottish and Welsh offers".[648]

370. **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.**

371. **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.**

372. **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.**

373. **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.**

647 *Ibid.*
648 Written evidence from Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions (YUN0062)

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF MEMBERS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members

Lord Baker of Dorking
Baroness Blower (from 22 July 2021)
Baroness Clark of Kilwinning (until 26 May 2021)
Lord Clarke of Nottingham
Lord Davies of Oldham
Bishop of Derby
Lord Empey
Lord Hall of Birkenhead
Lord Layard
Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall
Baroness Newlove
Lord Shipley (Chairman)
Lord Storey
Lord Woolley of Woodford

Declarations of interests

Lord Baker of Dorking
Chair of Baker Dearing Educational Trust
Baroness Blower
No relevant interests to declare
Lord Clarke of Nottingham
No relevant interests to declare
Baroness Clark of Kilwinning
Member of the Co-operative Party
Member of GMB trade union
Member of TSSA trade union
Member of Unison trade union
Member of Unite trade union
Lord Davies of Oldham
No relevant interests to declare
Bishop of Derby
Vice Chair of Trustee Board of The Children's Society
Chair of the Cranmer Committee
President of the Board of Derby Diocesan Board of Education
Chair of Trustees for the Multi-Faith Centre Derby
Council Member of St John's College, Durham
Member of University of Derby Court
Lord Empey
No relevant interests to declare
Lord Hall of Birkenhead
No relevant interests to declare
Lord Layard
No relevant interests to declare
Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall
No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Newlove
No relevant interests to declare
Lord Shipley
Vice-President of the Local Government Association
Lord Storey
Patron of Careers Connect
Vice President of the Local Government Association
Lord Woolley of Woodford
Board member and founder of the Youth Futures Foundation

A full list of Members' interests can be found in the Register of Lords' Interests: http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/

Specialist advisers

Dr Kathleen Henehan
Senior Research and Policy Analyst at the Resolution Foundation
Oliver Newton
Executive Director of the Edge Foundation
Governor and Enterprise Adviser to Firth Academy
Member and Volunteer of the UK Scout Association

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF WITNESSES

Evidence is published online at https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/506/youth-unemployment-committee/publications/ and available for inspection at the Parliamentary Archives (020 7219 3074).

Evidence received by the Committee is listed below in chronological order of oral evidence session, and then in alphabetical order. Those witnesses marked with ** gave both oral evidence and written evidence. Those marked with * gave oral evidence and did not submit any written evidence. All other witnesses submitted written evidence only.

Oral evidence in chronological order

**	Keith Smith, Director of Post-16 Strategy, Department for Education	QQ 1–6
**	Sue Lovelock, Director of Professional and Technical Education, Department for Education	QQ 1–16
**	Tammy Fevrier, Deputy Director, Youth and Skills, Department for Work and Pensions	QQ 1–16
**	Tom Younger, Deputy Director, Labour Market Analysis, Department for Work and Pensions	QQ 1–16
**	Sam Windett, Co-Chair, Youth Employment Group	QQ 17–27
**	Laura-Jane Rawlings, Chief Executive, Youth Employment UK	QQ 17–27
**	Sope Otulana, Head of Research, Youth Futures Foundation	QQ 17–27
*	Jane Gratton, Head of People Policy, British Chambers of Commerce	QQ 28–35
**	Lauren Roberts, Youth Engagement Executive, City and Guilds Group	QQ 28–35
*	Mark Cameron, CEO-Designate, The 5% Club	QQ 28–35
*	Jonathan Foot, Head of Apprenticeships and Early Careers, Compass Group	QQ 36–42
*	Emma Taylor, People Director for UK and Ireland, Tesco plc	QQ 36–42
**	Richard Hamer, Education and Skills Director, BAE Systems	QQ 43–51
*	Kevin Blacoe, Head of Partnerships, Nations and Regions, Channel 4	QQ 43–51
*	John Grainger, Executive Director, Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster	QQ 52–58
**	Jason Holt CBE, The Holts Group, and Chair of the Apprentice Ambassador Network, and Co-founder, Association of Apprentices	QQ 52–58

*	David Barker, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Techcentre, and Director and Trustee, Livery Schools Link	QQ 52–58
*	Andrew Chamberlain, Director of Policy, Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed	QQ 59–66
*	Mike Cherry OBE, National Chairman, Federation of Small Businesses	QQ 59–66
*	Michelle Ovens CBE, founder of Small Business Britain	QQ 59–66
*	Sir Kevan Collins, Education Recovery Commissioner, Department for Education	QQ 67–83
*	Baroness Wolf of Dulwich CBE, Professor of Public Sector Management, King's College London	QQ 84–98
*	Phil Avery, Director of Education, Bohunt Multi-Academy Trust, Hampshire	QQ 99–109
**	Tom Richmond, Founder and Director, Education and Skills (EDSK)	QQ 99–109
*	Andy Sprakes, Co-founder and Chief Academic Officer, XP School, Doncaster	QQ 99–109
*	Neil Bates, Managing Director, Seetec Outsource Training Ltd and Chairman, Edge Foundation	QQ 110–122
*	Sally Dicketts CBE, Chief Executive, Activate Learning	QQ 110–122
**	David Hughes, Chief Executive, Association of Colleges	QQ 110–122
**	Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.	QQ 123–133
**	Michelle Rainbow, Skills Director, North East Local Enterprise Partnership	QQ 134–140
*	Meredith Teasdale, Strategic Director–Together for Families, Cornwall Council	QQ 134–140
*	Stephen Evans, Chief Executive, Learning and Work Institute	QQ 141–156
*	Tony Wilson, Institute Director, Institute for Employment Studies	QQ 141–156
**	Professor Ewart Keep, Professor Emeritus, University of Oxford	QQ 157–161
*	Professor Sandra McNally, Professor of Economics, University of Surrey	QQ 157–161
**	Ryan Gibson, National Careers Champion, Academies Enterprise Trust	QQ 162–169
**	Oli de Botton, Chief Executive, Careers & Enterprise Company	QQ 162–169

**	Professor Sir John Holman, Emeritus Professor, University of York	QQ 162–169
*	Tony Ryan, Chief Executive, Design and Technology Association	QQ 170–176
**	Jennifer Coupland, Chief Executive, Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE)	QQ 170–176
**	Tom Dower, Principal, UTC South Durham	QQ 170–176
*	Sean Harford HMI (Her Majesty's Inspector), National Director for Education, Ofsted	QQ 177–194
*	Dr Jason Arday, Trustee, Runnymede Trust	QQ 195–207
*	Dr Gurleen Popli, Senior Economics Lecturer, University of Sheffield	QQ 195–207
**	Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, Minister for School Standards, Department for Education	QQ 208–218
**	Gillian Keegan MP, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, Department for Education	QQ 219–227
**	Mims Davies MP, Minister for Employment, Department for Work and Pensions	QQ 228–243
**	Darren Morgan, Director of Economic Statistics Development, Office for National Statistics	QQ 244–258

Alphabetical list of all witnesses

	Access Generation CIC	YUN0036
*	Activate Learning (QQ 110–122)	
	Dr Jake Anders, Deputy Director and Professor Lindsey Macmillan, Director, University College London Centre for Equalising Opportunity	YUN0032
**	Association of Apprentices (QQ 52–58)	YUN0050
**	Association of Colleges (QQ 110–122)	YUN0057
	Association of Employment and Learning Providers	YUN0005
	Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services	YUN0001
*	Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed (QQ 59–66)	
**	BAE Systems (QQ 43–1)	YUN0042
	Baker Dearing Educational Trust	YUN0059 YUN0080
	Barclays	YUN0060
*	Neil Bates, Managing Director, Seetec Outsource Training Ltd and Chairman, Edge Foundation (QQ 110–122)	
	Belfast Met	YUN0004
	The Bell Foundation	YUN0010

*	Bohunt Multi-Academy Trust, Hampshire (QQ 99–109)	
*	Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster (QQ 52–58)	
*	British Chambers of Commerce (QQ 28–35)	
	The Career Development Institute	YUN0018
**	Careers & Enterprise Company (QQ 162–169)	YUN0035 YUN0073
	Careers England	YUN0038
	Catch22	YUN0055
*	Channel 4 (QQ 43–51)	
	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development	YUN0030
	Chartered Management Institute	YUN0069
	Chimera Consulting	YUN0041
	Christopher Nieper Foundation	YUN0066
**	City and Guilds Group (QQ 28–35)	YUN0051
	City of London Corporation	YUN0058
	Classof2020	YUN0024
	Collab Group	YUN0053
*	Sir Kevan Collins, Education Recovery Commissioner, Department for Education (QQ 67–83)	
*	Compass Group (QQ 36–42)	
	Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, and Centre for Cultural Value	YUN0023
	CSW Group	YUN0003
	Nasimah Dauda	YUN0061
**	Mims Davies MP, Minister for Employment, Department for Work and Pensions (QQ 228–243)	YUN0062 YUN0084
**	Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions (QQ 1–16)	YUN0062 YUN0084
*	Design and Technology Association (QQ 170–176)	
	Disability Sub-group of the Youth Employment Group	YUN0056
**	Tom Dower, Principal, University Technical College South Durham (QQ 170–176)	YUN0075
**	Education and Skills (EDSK) (QQ 99–109)	YUN0065
	Employment Related Services Association	YUN0025
	EngineeringUK	YUN0044
*	Federation of Small Businesses (QQ 59–66)	
*	The 5% Club (QQ 28–35)	

**	Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, Minister for School Standards, Department for Education (QQ 208–218)	
**	Ryan Gibson, National Careers Champion, Academies Enterprise Trust (QQ 162–169)	YUN0072
	Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisation	YUN0027
	Professor Francis Green, Dr Golo Henseke, Dr Hao Phan and Professor Ingrid Schoon, University College London Institute of Education	YUN0011
	Ian Green, Section Manager, Nissan Motor Manufacturing	YUN0002
	The Health Foundation	YUN0045
	Dr Golo Henseke et al, University College London Institute of Education	YUN0011
**	Professor Sir John Holman, Emeritus Professor, University of York (QQ 162–169)	YUN0076
**	Jason Holt CBE, The Holts Group, and Chair of the Apprentice Ambassador Network and Co-founder, Association of Apprentices (QQ 52–58)	YUN0050
	Hundo	YUN0082
	Ingeus	YUN0007
**	Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (QQ 170–176)	YUN0078
*	Institute for Employment Studies (QQ 141–156)	
**	Gillian Keegan MP, Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, Department for Education (QQ 219–227)	YUN0083
**	Professor Ewart Keep, Professor Emeritus, University of Oxford (QQ 157–161)	YUN0067
*	Learning and Work Institute (QQ 141–156)	
	The Leigh University Technical College	YUN0068
	Leonard Cheshire Disability	YUN0047
*	Livery Schools Link and Techcentre (QQ 52–58)	
	Local Government Association	YUN0043
	London Councils	YUN0006
	Professor Lindsey, Macmillan, Director and Dr Jake Anders, Deputy Director, University College London Centre for Equalising Opportunity	YUN0032
	Professor Sue Maguire, Honorary Professor, University of Bath	YUN0015
	Annabel May	YUN0063
	McDonald's UK	YUN0028

*	Professor Sandra McNally, Professor of Economics, University of Surrey (QQ 157–161)	
	National Centre for Universities and Business	YUN0008
	The National Deaf Children's Society	YUN0009
	National Foundation for Educational Research	YUN0049
	National Youth Agency	YUN0016
	NatWest Group	YUN0034
**	North East Local Enterprise Partnership (QQ 134–140)	YUN0017
**	Office for National Statistics (QQ 244–258)	YUN0085
*	Ofsted (QQ 177–194)	
	The Open University	YUN0020
	Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group	YUN0074
	Dr Hao Phan et al, University College London Institute of Education	YUN0011
*	Dr Gurleen Popli, Senior Economics Lecturer, University of Sheffield (QQ 195–207)	
	The Prince's Trust	YUN0039
	Prisoner Learning Alliance	YUN0014
	Rethinking Assessment	YUN0081
**	Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (QQ 123–133)	YUN0064 YUN0079
	Roundhouse	YUN0012
*	Runnymede Trust (QQ 195–207)	
	Ingrid Schoon et al, University College London Institute of Education	YUN0011
	Shaw Trust	YUN0026
*	Small Business Britain (QQ 59–66)	
	Andrew Speight, Member of Youth Parliament for Blackpool, UK Youth Parliament, and Chair, Blackpool Youth Council	YUN0071
	The Sutton Trust	YUN0033
*	Techcentre and Livery Schools Link (QQ 52–58)	
	Tees Valley Combined Authority	YUN0040
*	Tesco plc (QQ 36–42)	
*	Together for Families, Cornwall Council (QQ 134–140)	
	Trade Union Congress	YUN0048
	Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance	YUN0054

	University of Lincoln	YUN0013
	Virtual Internship Partners Ltd	YUN0077
	Professor Jonathan Wadsworth, Professor, Royal Holloway University of London	YUN0046
*	Baroness Wolf of Dulwich CBE, Professor of Public Sector Management, King's College London (QQ 84–98)	
*	XP School, Doncaster (QQ 99–109)	
	Young Enterprise	YUN0019
	Young Women's Trust	YUN0021
**	Youth Employment Group (QQ 17–27)	YUN0029
**	Youth Employment UK (QQ 17–27)	YUN0052
**	Youth Futures Foundation (QQ 17–27)	YUN0022

APPENDIX 3: CALL FOR EVIDENCE

Aim of the inquiry

The House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee was appointed in January 2021 to consider youth unemployment, education and skills for those aged 16 to 24 in England. It is chaired by Lord Shipley.

Youth unemployment is a longstanding issue in the UK, with rates of unemployment typically higher amongst those aged 16 to 24 than amongst older adults. The youth labour market is characterised by an historic focus on academic study, technical and vocational skills gaps, and challenges facing young people who may be from disadvantaged backgrounds or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, youth unemployment rates were falling; however, COVID-19 has profoundly affected the labour market and economy. Research shows that young people are being disproportionately affected, which may have a scarring effect on their prospects.

This Committee will consider what measures should be taken to protect and create jobs for young people. It will also examine how the labour market for young people may change due to current events such as COVID-19, Brexit, and technological developments in the longer term. It intends to report before the end of November 2021.

How to make your voice heard

This is a public call for written evidence to be submitted to the Committee. The deadline is 4.00pm on 10 May 2021. You can follow the progress of the inquiry on Twitter @LordsYouthUnemp.

The Committee is looking to hear from as diverse a range of views as possible. Diversity comes in many forms and hearing a range of different perspectives means that Committees are better informed and can more effectively scrutinise public policy and legislation. Committees can undertake their role most effectively when they hear from a wide range of individuals, sectors or groups in society. We encourage anyone with experience of or expertise in an issue we are investigating to share their views with the Committee, with the full knowledge that their views have value and are welcome. If you think someone you know would have views to contribute, please do pass this on to them.

The Committee is particularly keen to hear from young people over the course of its inquiry, especially those who have experienced or are experiencing unemployment. We want to ensure that their voices are central to this inquiry, and also welcome the sharing of views on youth unemployment in other forms.

If you would like to share your views in a different or shorter form on any issue relating to youth unemployment, you can send a direct message to our Twitter account @LordsYouthUnemp or contact the Committee's WhatsApp account at [number now deactivated]. You can share your views in any form this way, including short videos of up to 2 minutes or text. If sharing your views in this way, you are welcome to focus on your own views, perspectives and experiences concerning youth unemployment; there is no obligation to answer the below questions directly unless you would prefer to do so. Please see the *Guidance for Submissions* section for further information on sharing your views in this format. Messages shared in this way will not be shared or published in any way without the permission of the sender, and no contact information will be shared or published.

If you or your organisation works closely with young people, we would also encourage you to promote this consultation to them for direct responses, and also to incorporate their views and insights into your own response as appropriate.

Questions

The Committee is happy to receive submissions on any issues related to the subject of the inquiry but would particularly welcome submissions on the questions listed below. You do not need to address every question. Respondents may interpret the questions broadly and are encouraged to provide as much information as possible. Instructions on how to submit evidence are set out at the end of this document.

Challenges

(1) What are the main challenges facing young people seeking employment today? How do structural factors impact youth unemployment, and how might these be addressed?

(2) What are the main challenges facing employers in the labour market today? What barriers do they face in recruiting young workers and setting up apprenticeships and traineeships?

(3) What future social, economic and technological changes are likely to impact youth unemployment? What impact might these changes have, and how should this be planned for and addressed?

(4) Is funding for education, training and skills enough to meet the needs of young people and of the labour market? How can we ensure it continues to reach those who need it most?

Primary and secondary education

(5) Does the national curriculum equip young people with the right knowledge and skills to find secure jobs and careers? What changes may be needed to ensure this is the case in future?

(6) Is careers education preparing young people with the knowledge to explore the range of opportunities available? What role does work experience play in this regard?

(7) What lessons can be learned from alternative models of education and assessment? What are the challenges with, and obstacles to, the adoption of such models?

Further education, higher education and training

(8) What more needs to be done to ensure parity of esteem between vocational and academic study in the jobs market and society? How can funding play a role in this?

(9) What is the role of business and universities in creating a thriving jobs market for young people? How should they be involved in developing skills and training programmes at further and higher education level?

(10) What can be done to ensure that enough apprenticeship and traineeship placements are available for young people? Is the apprenticeship levy the right way to achieve a continuing supply of opportunities?

Jobs and employment

(11) What lessons can be learned by current and previous youth labour market policy interventions and educational approaches, both in the UK and in other countries?

(12) What economic sectors present opportunities for sustainable, quality jobs for young people? How can we ensure these opportunities are capitalised on and that skills meet demand, particularly for green jobs?

(13) How might future youth labour market interventions best be targeted towards particular groups, sectors or regions? Which ones should be targeted?

APPENDIX 4: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BAME	Black, Asian or minority ethnic.
Basic skills	Literacy, numeracy and basic digital skills.[649]
CEIAG	Careers education, information, advice and guidance
Children and young people in custody	Children in custody are those aged 10-17. We have defined young people in custody as those aged 18 to 24 in line with the definitions used throughout the rest of this report.
Claimant count	The number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits such as Universal Credit and Jobseeker's Allowance.
Digital skills	No universal definition exists. Broadly, digital skills are those skills needed to use computers and other digital technologies to carry out activities and achieve outcomes.[650]
Disadvantaged	Young people as those who are known to have been eligible for free school meals (FSM) in the past six years (from Years 6 to 11), if they are recorded as having been looked after for at least one day or if they are recorded as having been adopted from care. Technically disadvantaged young people are not the same as young people who may face disadvantage in the labour market for a range of other reasons.
Economically active	People aged 16 or over who are either in employment or are unemployed.
Economically inactive	People without a job who have not actively sought work in the last four weeks and/or are not available to start work in the next two weeks.
Employment	People aged 16 and over who did paid work (as an employee or self-employed), those who had a job they were temporarily away from, those placed with employers or government-supported training and employment programmes, and those in unpaid family work.

649 Skills Builder Partnership, *Essential skills and their impact on education outcomes: A quantitative analysis of the British Cohort Study* (January 2021), p 6: https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5a86b2cd68b41700017162ca/5ffdd7ccbac83e760a171cee_Essential skills and their impact on education outcomes.pdf [accessed on 21 July 2021]

650 Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology, *Developing essential digital skills*, PN643

Employment rate	Calculated by dividing the employment level for an age group by the population for that age group.
Essential skills	Transferrable skills that everyone needs to do almost any job, which support the application of specialist knowledge and technical skills e.g., communication, teamwork, flexibility and problem solving.[651] These are sometimes referred to as 'employability skills'.
FSM	Free school meals
NEET	A person who is not in education, employment or training. A person is NEET if they are not in education or training and are also either unemployed or economically inactive.[652]
Skills gaps	The percentage of the workforce not proficient at their job.[653]
Skills mismatches	An imbalance in the supply and demand of skills in the economy. Also used to refer collectively to skills gaps and skills shortages.
Skills shortages	When vacancies cannot be filled because applicants lack the skills, experience or qualifications employers require.[654]
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
Technical skills	Skills that are specific to a sector (such as the 'green economy') or role (such as electrical engineering) and are not easily transferred.[655]

651 Skills Builder Partnership, *Essential skills and their impact on education outcomes: A quantitative analysis of the British Cohort Study* (January 2021), p 6: https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5a86b2cd68b41700017162ca/5ffdd7ccbac83e760a171cee_Essential skills and their impact on education outcomes.pdf [accessed on 21 July 2021]

652 House of Commons Library, 'Why has the NEET gender gap disappeared?' https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/why-has-the-neet-gender-gap-disappeared/

653 Department for Education, *Employer skills survey 2019*, (October 2020), p 10: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/955172/Employer_skills_survey_2019_research_report.pdf [accessed on 21 July 2021]

654 Department for Education, *Employer skills survey 2019*, (October 2020), p 9: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/955172/Employer_skills_survey_2019_research_report.pdf [accessed on 21 July 2021]

655 Skills Builder Partnership, *Essential skills and their impact on education outcomes: A quantitative analysis of the British Cohort Study* (January 2021), p 6: https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5a86b2cd68b41700017162ca/5ffdd7ccbac83e760a171cee_Essential skills and their impact on education outcomes.pdf [accessed on 21 July 2021]

Unemployment	Defined by the International Labour Organisation as those who are without a job, have actively been seeking work in the past four weeks and are available to start work in the next two weeks; or who are out of work, have found a job and are waiting to start it in the next two weeks.
Unemployment rate	Calculated by dividing the unemployment level for an age group by the total number of economically active people in that age group.
Young people	Young people are defined as those between the ages of 16 and 24 unless stated otherwise

APPENDIX 5: ENGAGEMENT SESSION NOTES

First engagement session with young people-13 April 2021

On 13 April 2021, Youth Unemployment Committee spoke to young people who have been nominated by youth organisations and education providers. This note is intended to provide a written summary of the information given by the participants, who were:

- Josh Adcock, Youth Voice Forum Co-Chair, Youth Employment Group/ Youth Employment UK
- Lauren Aird, Future Voice Group, Youth Futures Foundation
- James–Student rep, Backstage Academy
- Jamilah Simpson, Apprentice Panel, Apprenticeships and Technical Education
- Ciara O'Donnell, Youth Ambassador, Youth Employment UK

The discussion is summarised by theme below.

Introductions

Lord Shipley asked the young people to introduce themselves.

Josh (24) lives in the East Midlands and is studying for a Level 4 Policy and Research Apprenticeship at Youth Unemployment UK having previously worked for a supermarket. He has a BA (Hons) degree and a young family.

Lauren (23) lives in Leeds. She is an ambassador for the Future Voices Group with the Youth Futures Foundation. She started at college in September studying health and social care, having previously been self-employed in beauty therapy.

James (20) is studying at Backstage Academy, a live events university in West Yorkshire. He was previously a freelancer in the industry. He noted his disability.

Ciara (20) is from Reading. She is a youth ambassador for Youth Employment UK and is an engineering apprentice at the Ministry of Defence, which she started studying for in September 2020. She finished her A Levels in 2019, followed by a gap year.

Jamilah (21) lives in London. She is a former Google digital marketing apprenticeship and now works at Multiverse, a tech start-up building an alternative to university and corporate training through apprenticeships. Her role is to provide apprentices with networking and professional development opportunities. She also sits on the Institute for Apprentices' Apprentice Panel and hosts a podcast called 'Youth Unlocked', which provides guidance about work for young professionals who are from minority backgrounds.

School, skills and qualifications

The Lord Bishop of Derby asked about the young people's routes through education.

Ciara said that she enjoyed school and did well in her SAT exams; she did not find the jump from primary school to secondary school particularly hard. However, she was critical of the careers education she received. In Year 10, she had a compulsory appointment with a careers adviser, which she found daunting. They went through

10 to 15 questions, with careers advice given based on these answers, which didn't offer space for questions around interests, soft skills and qualifications that she might like to take. She studied academic A Levels in the humanities and had considered careers including Law and joining the RAF.

Jamilah started in primary school in London school and before moving abroad where she was home schooled aged seven to ten. She found the transition back into a mainstream school challenging on returning to the UK, however she moved from primary to secondary school with many of her friends. The transition from her single sex secondary school to a co-educational college was a more difficult adjustment. She chose to go to a college to study A Levels in Photography, Psychology and Geography, Geography, and it was one of the only local colleges which offered Photography as an A Level as opposed to a BTEC. She enjoyed independent learning and believes this eased her into her apprenticeship.

James attended primary school in Hertfordshire, which he enjoyed, however he had trouble finding a school that would work for him given his disability. While he stated that he wasn't hugely academic, he found the transition from primary to secondary school relatively easy and felt he did well in education.

Lauren raised her experience of being bullied in school, which had a negative impact on her education. She was transferred to a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), where she explained the careers advice was not up to the standard that it was in a mainstream school, while the academic curriculum focussed only on passing Maths and English. She explained that she didn't know what she wanted to do at college, and she chose hairdressing because her friends were also doing it. She suffered from a lack of confidence and felt couldn't achieve what she wanted to, nor could she go down an academic route.

At school, Josh was wrongly diagnosed with ADHD, which has now been correctly identified as Bipolar disorder. This led to him being labelled as someone with a lack of concentration and interest in study. He said that he was often asked to leave classrooms and struggled in school, where he felt that he had limited support. Upon losing a friend to gang violence in Year 9, Josh said that he considered himself at a turning point. He gained three A Levels and went on to University, where he found his place and enjoyed independent learning.

Influences and life skills

The Lord Bishop of Derby asked the young people to explain who made a difference in their education and asked if life skills were nurtured through their education or elsewhere.

Josh said that he had one teacher who showed faith and an interest in his future. He was encouraged into boxing and football clubs and these helped him to develop life skills. His peers nurtured these skills at university where he had very good friends. These peers saved him from going down a 'bad route', he explained, particularly at secondary school.

Ciara said that her family has been influential, particularly her mother who championed women in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). Her father was also a large influence on her choice of engineering because of his background in telecoms. At school, she said her teachers were very influential and helped her with public speaking, which she was nervous about. She was in a youth orchestra that gave her discipline and helped her to develop teamwork skills and form good relationships with people from different backgrounds. She took a gap

year, which she found a lonely time as she didn't know what she wanted to do. Her friends were also a good support network, she stated.

James said that he was considered a difficult student. He moved schools in his last year of secondary, which was hard for him. He struggled with Maths and believed he would get a D at best. He was not encouraged by his teacher, who did not boost his confidence. This gave him the motivation to try harder, and he achieved a C grade.

Jamilah said that her family were very supportive, particularly as she chose to do an apprenticeship and was the first person in her family to do one. She decided she wanted to learn on the job having seen her sister's experience of university. She had support with applications from her mother and had a mentor during her apprenticeship. Jamilah said that life skills are not taught at school; she had not been told how to do her taxes or open savings accounts and had no guidance on basic soft skills. She argued that if these were taught at school, it would be much easier for people going into the working world. She was lucky to have someone to ask about these issues, she stated.

Lauren said that teachers should show an active interest in your goals. When she started college, she wasn't in contact with her family so teachers had to step in to give this support. She stated that they helped her significantly and teachers have a bigger effect on young people than they might realise.

Barriers to work

Baroness Newlove asked about barriers to work and why the young people thought they might be overlooked when applying for work.

Josh said that, being from a low-income background, he had no savings and struggled to find a job in his local area. In his first job at university, he struggled to pay the bus fare to get to work. He was fortunate to have an employer who paid him a week's wages up front so that he could afford this. He said he knew lots of young people who face financial barriers and who struggle to find a job that meets their needs and is accessible as a result.

Ciara raised the falsity of outward confidence. She stated that careers advisers did not support her when she was not confident in what she wanted and was instead encouraged to 'fake it till you make it'. Baroness Newlove concurred that just because you don't have mental health issues outwardly, it does not mean a person is fine.

Jamilah said that not having a degree is sometimes considered a barrier in looking for work. She said some industries still regard an academic degree as the most important feature in an applicant. However, she feels that the value of apprenticeships is now being realised. Jamilah also argued that young people with names that sound 'ethnic' may receive fewer interview offers, as ethnic minorities send 60% more applications to get a positive response from employers. However, she had not experienced this personally. Baroness Newlove referred to statistics that argued this was the case for some Muslim women.

Lauren spoke of financial barriers that she faced when moving into her own flat at a young age. Being on income support was a difficult barrier to navigate, particularly as she wanted to work, given that she was restricted by the number of hours she could do whilst still receiving support and making enough to live on.

James said that it took him a year to find his first job and argued that supermarkets are inclusive of people who do not have degrees or much experience. He said that they make being employed while in education easy; he can study and return to work whilst at home.

Baroness Newlove asked the young people to expand upon the experience of finding work and working when from a low-income family background.

Josh said that being from a low-income family affected many parts of life, and even small things like nutrition were affected by financial practicalities. He said that his family couldn't access benefits because of the jobs they were in, and as such he and his siblings had to get jobs aged 16 to support the family. He said that he felt financial anxiety on the part of his parents. For example, he was anxious about ruining his football boots because he didn't want his parents to have to buy new ones.

Ciara said that her mother had instilled a work ethic in her early on, which meant that she wanted to work from an early age to make her own money. Her dad also encouraged her to be independent and this helped to instil a strong work ethic. She said that she had many friends who had suffered from depression due to financial anxiety. Jamilah raised the benefits of the apprenticeship Oyster card in London due to the low starting salaries of apprenticeships. James raised the problems of juggling his medical appointments and her work, which resulted in her stepping down from her role in a supermarket. Lauren spoke about not being aware of bursaries or financial support available for travel when she applied for college.

COVID-19

Baroness Newlove asked about the impact of COVID on the young people's lives.

Ciara spoke about barriers for people with mental health problems during the pandemic, and the impact on those with gaps in their education. She noted that employers had to become more adaptable to young people who might not have learned soft skills at school and who didn't have the opportunities to go to extra-curricular clubs to make up for this. She also noted that those who do not easily manage or have access to technology may face barriers applying for work, which employers should consider when designing application processes.

Josh said that he changed employers at the start of lockdown having been manning the door at a supermarket, where people were rude to him. Josh said that employers should want to do right by their employees. He said that in his current role he was supported with regards to his mental health from the first interview stage, which he has not experienced at all his employers. At the start of the pandemic, this was a particular problem, he said.

James also worked in a supermarket during the pandemic. He said that he felt unprotected and stressed because PPE was not immediately in place. Furthermore, he felt that people were rude to supermarket workers. The COVID crisis has also impacted his university course, which has a practical component that he has not been able to take advantage of during the crisis. This is a particular disadvantage as he is entering an industry that is practical by nature. He felt that he had lost out on experiences for learning and making mistakes.

Before the pandemic, Lauren had begun her own business in beauty whilst she was in college, however the COVID crisis effectively shut down this sector. Eventually, the constant opening and closing of the salon business meant that she had to shut

the business down entirely. She argued that lots of self-employed friends had to do the same.

Jamilah was relatively new into her role when the lockdown started, which had an impact on her wellbeing as she likes working in an office environment. She raised figures from the Institute for Apprenticeships that showed that 58% of respondents had their apprenticeships impacted and noted that the delivery of onboarding and training was heavily impacted. Onboarding was stressful, she argued. She also said that, initially, she found speaking through virtual means daunting as you cannot read people's expressions, but her confidence has since grown.

Confidence

Baroness Newlove asked about what would give young people more confidence entering the world of work.

Ciara said that young people were being told to be ambitious, but not taught how. She highlighted that she wouldn't know how to start a business or be self-employed and suggested that some careers advisers are not up to speed with the careers and routes available. This was the role of schools, she said, not of employers, and it shouldn't rely on the good fortune of going to a good school or having good teachers or advisers. Lauren concurred that careers advice in PRUs was not strong enough, and they were not well equipped for the transition back into mainstream education.

Josh said that more mental health support was needed in the workplace. He highlighted that he has a mental health day written into his contract. He argued that it was important employers treat their staff as humans, rather than assets. James concurred that universities also have a role and highlighted that his offers mental health first aider training. He highlighted the importance of knowing that there was someone available to talk to. Jamilah agreed that apprentices often struggle with motivation and loneliness, and as such her company has peer-to-peer support.

Pressure

Baroness McIntosh asked about the pressure on young people to go down a certain route i.e. academic or vocational. She questioned whether there was a feeling that schools were 'let down' by pupils who choose not to go to university and asked whether schools know how to support people who don't take this route.

Jamilah said that schools could do more to help young people explore all their options. She was expected to go to university because she was a high achiever, so it was a shock to her teachers that she chose an apprenticeship and she did feel pressure from them to go to university, particularly Oxbridge. She highlighted statistics showing that a third of applicants for apprenticeships received no information from their school when applying, while lots of parents do not know you can get a degree through an apprenticeship. Jamilah has previously gone into schools to speak to young people to raise awareness as she felt there wasn't an ample range of resources that showcased this route. She suggested that schools themselves are not that well informed.

James said that his college was supportive about his choice to attend university. He said however that choosing to go to a college over a sixth form was seen as a poor choice, particularly emphasising that the number that go on to sixth form

is measured as a success factor by schools. Those who chose another route other than A Levels were not considered important, he said.

Josh commented that he was encouraged to go down the vocational route having been told that he wouldn't succeed at A Level or at university. He was also encouraged to explore University Technical Colleges. He was predicted DDE at A Level; however, he was offered a conditional offer of BBC by his choice of university, whom he asked to ignore his predicted grades at interview. Josh succeeded in getting ABB at A Level. Lauren also agreed that she was told to go down the vocational route as she was a girl and it was expected that the vocational beauty route would be easier for her. She thought she wasn't good enough for university.

Practical and basic skills

Lord Empey asked whether there should be more guidance at school around practical skills such as tax and finances. He also asked about potential improvements to careers advice.

Josh stated that he was in debt at university having taken out credit cards when he didn't know how they worked. He said that if your parents do not teach you practical skills for life then you must learn them at school to avoid making mistakes in future. James also said that he has a student credit card and overdraft. At school, he didn't get help on managing his finances, paying rent or council tax, or student loans. He argued that it is sometimes hard for parents to provide information that student finance systems require, for example if they do not have a P45 or P60. This can sometimes have negative consequences for the young person receiving finance. James said that he must work six days a week to get through university due to not receiving the right amount of student finance because of this.

Jamilah agreed that young people are trying to adjust to a lot after school and there is significant financial pressure. In her current role at Multiverse, they offer workshops and webinars where they teach apprentices about personal finances and other soft skills. Lauren agreed that as someone who moved out of home at a young age, she would have benefited from this kind of education, and she knew people who had been in care who would too.

Careers advice

Lord Hall asked about careers advice and the impact of professionals coming into schools.

Josh agreed that employers should engage from school through to college or sixth form and university to help young people learn about work. He highlighted that it is no longer the case that young people get jobs for life but instead they often have 'portfolio careers'. It would be good to know more about the variety of careers available, and the earning potential of those roles, he stated. Jamilah agreed that she was inspired by professionals who spoke to her in Years 9 and 10 and being able to visualise roles and hear the journey to achieving success helped her to see herself doing these roles in future.

Concluding remarks

Lord Shipley asked whether there was anything else that the young people would like to say.

Josh highlighted regional disparities, particularly noting the Social Mobility Commission's report on hot and cold spots. He stated that the playing field is not equal and a young person's future can be decided by the history of their school's attainment record, their parents, age, race, gender, family income, whether you are on free school meals, and additional needs and disabilities. Josh shared statistics from the Youth Voice Census (2020) on the inequality of careers information; for example, those on free school meals are more likely to be told about Jobcentres but only 23% of young people overall know how to access a Jobcentre. 33% of black respondents had never had apprenticeships discussed with them, while 22% had never had going to university discussed with them. Young men are sold the vocational route, whilst young women are sold the academic route. Those with additional needs are far less likely to hear about all of the options available to them.

Lord Shipley thanked the participants for their time and closed the session.

Second engagement session with young people—East Midlands, 25 May 2021

On Tuesday 25 May 2021, the Youth Unemployment Committee held an engagement session with young people and youth organisations based in the East Midlands. The intention of this event was to gain an insight into the perspectives of young people who have experienced or are experiencing unemployment in the region, and those who work to support them locally. This note provides a written summary of the information given by participants. Organisational representatives present at the event were:

- Martin Buchanan, Cook E-Learning Foundation
- Rebecca Campbell, Futures For You
- Louise Doble, ACE Youth Trust
- Richard Farrell, FareShare Midlands
- Amy Fazackerley, Coach Core Foundation
- Stacey Foster, Nottingham City Council
- Karen Glaves, Futures For You
- Irene Kenny, Think Forward
- Alex Reader , Nottingham Works For You, Nottingham City Council
- Emma Shakesby, Education Business Partnership, EBP
- Barbara Strang, ThinkForward
- Paul Thompson, South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership
- Jimmy Zachariah, Baca Charity

Attendees were divided into three groups. One group comprised young people from the region, while the second and third groups consisted of representatives of youth organisations. Each group was invited to discuss a number of general themes of relevance to the inquiry. The session with young people was facilitated by trained youth facilitators. Key points are summarised by theme below. All contributions from young people have been anonymised.

The role of education in preparing young people for work

Comments made by young people on this subject included:

- A part time job in retail was where I got the majority of my skills. I didn't formally learn employment related skills until I went to University, which was a bit too late to learn those skills. At GCSE level it would be very difficult to go into your career as you don't get taught employability skills.
- The skills that I learned in school did not prepare me at all. Had to focus on apprenticeships myself. Didn't know what was available and wasn't given support to enter them. Wasn't given help to support me in the workplace. Had to do courses outside of school and wouldn't have learned those skills without them.
- Retail helped me develop confidence and communication skills which were not learned at school. Project based activities and teamwork would be helpful.
- We had a careers adviser at our school but they didn't have meetings with people going on to sixth form. People who didn't know what they were doing had that meeting but others didn't get that experience. I didn't know what job I wanted to do or what experience I would need.
- If careers education was compulsory so you could speak before you picked your A Levels it might be helpful. If I was choosing again I may choose differently based on career or life opportunities.
- I hoped to study social care at sixth form but didn't get the grades and was not well supported when looking into college options. My college didn't meet my needs or support me well, so I left. I then got support from a charity organisation which was really positive. I took an apprenticeship and moved into teaching assistant role. I learned so many skills and became so much more confident. It was good to be in a supportive learning environment where I could learn from my mistakes.
- Mainstream schools drill into you that "mainstream" learning (academic study) is what you will do—but you are not well supported if mainstream learning doesn't work for you. If you had knowledge and experience of alternative options it would be very beneficial.
- There needs to be more support and advice on options for college courses that you can go into that will help you with your career aspirations.
- There was strong peer pressure after GCSEs to go down the A-Level route.
- T levels could potentially be good for those who want to get some experience in the workplace.
- We were not taught useful life skills in relation to issues such as rent payments, utility bills or council tax. If I had been taught about it at school I might have made different life decisions. Information on things like mortgages might encourage us to make different decisions.
- Life skills definitely should be taught to students. I am in the process of moving into my own flat and there were lots of things I didn't know about. Schools and colleges should teach us about these things to prepare us if we are leaving the family home after school.

Karen Glaves said that education for care leavers is very different. There is a lack of consistency in their educational backgrounds and it's not always their top priority as they are trying to get into independent living.

Alex Reader said that the skills that employers are looking for are not those that are tested for and taught in schools. GCSEs aren't always a good measure of how someone will perform in an organisation. Apprenticeships are a good first step into a job but you have to get Grade 4 in order to be considered, which bars some people from that first stepping stone.

Barbara Strang said that schools' offer of work experience can greatly vary. Offering work experience in Year 10 at any point has proven successful but some schools don't offer any work experience before Year 11. It's important to develop work-ready competencies i.e. what makes you a good employee, which is important for those who don't achieve Maths and English qualifications.

Jimmy Zachariah said that support must be wraparound with many groups coming together to support a young person. There must be a coherent support offer for those who perhaps don't have much formal education behind them.

Louise Doble said that offering alternative provision working alongside schools had been successful for those who are not academically able. They ran a bootcamp that addressed confidence and resilience, which was successful. Job readiness and personal skills were key. These young people need to be encouraged to stay in education until 18 or 19 to give them time to develop and achieve the qualifications others might achieve at 16.

Amy Fazackerley said that practical recruitment processes need to be put in place. They try to get to know the young person, without taking into consideration qualifications or work experience as a formal CV might not give much insight into the individual. They also run a Level 2 qualification, so young people can achieve the Maths and English functional skills qualification that they might not have achieved at school or college, which opens doors for them. She said the process should be about assessing their potential to develop and grow.

Other points made by organisational representatives on this subject included:

- The current education system is not fit for purpose in setting young people up for their future careers.
- The curriculum is too crowded—young people don't need to sit 8 or 9 GCSEs, they aren't going to use half of them.
- The system needs to move away from just focusing on academic skills to value and include creative and technical skills.
- There should be much more digital training available within school.
- There should be more opportunities for work experience, particularly in Year 11-13.
- It is important that headteachers and education leaders see careers as being about inspiration and aspiration.
- Careers needs to be properly embedded within the curriculum so that young people are gaining the skills they need for work and seeing the relevance of their education to their future.
- Careers guidance mustn't be separated out from the curriculum and 'school time'—it needs to be fully embedded as one of the key things that young people focus on in their education every day.
- Pre-16 education is not fit for purpose in preparing young people. There is some progress being made post-16 but it needs to go further.

- There isn't really an opportunity to do one job for life any more, so it is important that young people build a wide range of transferable skills so that they can move between multiple careers over their lifetime.
- A lot of young people report that they would have liked to develop practical 'life skills' whilst they were at school and college—such as handling money and developing a CV.
- Schools do not have the resources and capacity to respond to the needs of young people and preparing young people for employment.
- Schools are being driven by a very narrow and traditional curriculum which leaves very little time for developing employability or life skills.
- Many of the young people moving into careers in IT fields have not learned any of those skills in school—they have developed those outside school in clubs and personal development and supported by voluntary sector organisations.
- No matter what kind of organisation a young person moves into, they will need digital skills. These are simply not being delivered in formal education.
- We should stop talking about 'soft skills'—things like communications, team working–these are the core competencies that employers are all looking for.
- Digital literacy is a core competence—it is not something that is optional any more.
- Schools and parents may be pressuring young people into the academic route because it is seen as the default and higher status even if it is not the most suitable for them.
- Need maths and English courses for those working at Entry Level 1-3 who cannot engage in a full time course.
- Experience is vital to gain employment. It is as important, if not more important than qualifications. Universities and some colleges ensure students have a number of hours work experience in the industry sector they are studying, however schools seem to lack at providing significant opportunities.
- There is a very helpful placed-based approach in Milton Keynes where head teachers are working collaboratively and want to make the whole city the classroom.
- Teachers and staff within education are unable to focus on the issues and suggestions made because there is a focus in education on the wrong areas—marking, moderation, lesson planning, paperwork. Huge changes need to be made to education to support the future generation.

The role of local business, employers and apprenticeships

Comments made by young people on this subject included:

- Bringing employers into education would be helpful. Businesses have a part to play in this—local employers did not come in to speak to discuss career options.
- If you join a smaller organisation you get those bits of exposure to the workplace which help you stand out from the crowd. It also gives you more to say at interviews.
- I was aware that I wanted to do apprenticeship but didn't know much more about it until I spoke to an employer; I didn't get exposure to the opportunities available before then.

- Since university there have been lots of careers talks with employers. But for those who don't want to go to university there are not those opportunities.
- Learning about how people started in their careers would be very helpful in school.
- If I hadn't had the opportunity for work experience with my family I wouldn't have got the experience I needed to begin my career.
- Mentality of young people is sometimes that they are going to walk into a higher paying job but it isn't always the case. SMEs and local businesses often prefer the apprentice route, and for first jobs, experience is more important than salary.
- People have view that apprenticeships may be an inferior option despite the range of things that you learn. If you don't learn them then you might have to pay someone else to learn them later down the line. I don't know how we get out of the mentality of apprenticeships being seen as lower status to degrees.
- When I was doing A-Levels I looked at doing a degree apprenticeship, but didn't know how to go about it.
- When I was in school in year 11 apprenticeships were not really spoken about, i didn't know anything about them. Even now I don't really hear a lot about them. I only first heard about them at the time I applied for one.
- People who are offering apprenticeships should be brought into school to discuss what they are and why they would be a good option.

Barbara Strang said that work experience is crucial, even half a day in length. Employers of all sizes should be encouraged to offer meaningful introductions to work. Young people need to hear other people's career journeys and see for themselves; this is more powerful than someone telling them how it works. Barbara tries not to talk about sectors as most businesses require a range e.g. HR, marketing and finance functions; de-sectoring is helpful to help young people find an environment that's right for them. This can best be done by "walking through the door". She added that a lack of drive can also be a problem.

Jimmy Zachariah said that stigma was a problem, which restricts access. He raised concerns about politicising the nature of the young people he works with. There is a disconnect between present and future needs; preparing young people for this is trickier to resolve.

Louise Doble said that rural areas face different challenges. Agriculture is a tricky one to motivate young people to get into as it has long days and early morning starts. There is a lack of incentives here and employers face challenges taking on apprentices. Large employers like Amazon are not geared up for apprenticeships; they need to have support to set up meaningful work experience.

Amy Fazackerley said that there were challenges with respect to employers' own understanding of the value that young people can bring. She said they struggled with a perceived lack of time to properly support them. Employers also need to think more about the young person through a contextual recruitment process, and to ask why they might not have qualifications. They have too much of a set view of what an employee should look like, and often it's shaped by what they look like.

Karen Glaves said that care experienced young people need more support than their peers. Accessing work experience can be a particular problem as they have

to source these opportunities alone without the pressure of mum and dad at their heels. Employers need to be aware of these barriers when offering work experience.

Alex Reader said that employers are willing to provide work experience opportunities, but they need more help to do it, particularly if they've never offered it before. They need help planning a work experience week or day, specifically what that actually looks like.

Other points made by organisational representatives on this subject included:

- Young people need to experience work—through work experience or through part-time work–to develop the behaviours and 'work ethic' they need for employment.
- Large businesses have the time and capacity to engage but that is not the case for small businesses. They need additional support to engage.
- It is really difficult for young people to get a job, even a Saturday job, under the age of 16, so in reality they are entering the labour market four years later than earlier generations. This means that they have very little early interaction with adults to learn the ways that people do things whilst they are at work.
- Key work readiness skills include self-assurance, self-awareness, resilience, being receptive, driven and organised.
- Students do not currently gain enough experience in a range of industry sectors, which leaves them vulnerable to the influence of others who may not be well informed—including parents and carers.
- Intu University work with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Part of what they do is get professionals to talk about their jobs, to give young people the understanding of different careers. Unfortunately, there isn't the follow-up to understand the impact that the programme has long-term.
- It is good practice to introduce young people to the world through a series of work insight visits to employers.
- Schools are as frustrated as anyone about the stifling effect of the narrow curriculum—they are crying out for employability skills, there just isn't the time or focus of the curriculum to allow it.

Experience and perceptions of Government schemes

Comments on this subject from young people included:

- The Young Enterprise Programme was very helpful. Enterprise programmes can give people the "confidence to fail"—not every school offers that opportunity. Lots of friends of mine did not have a similar opportunity.

Jimmy Zachariah said that he hasn't had experience with these schemes as the people he works with are further behind and so aren't ready to apply for them.

Amy Fazackerley said that the extension of enhanced apprenticeship incentives has enabled greater access and opened the door for more conversations to take place with employers. She asked what the next steps for young people going through Kickstart would look like. She added that there is a potential gap with Kickstart for any young people who aren't claiming Universal Credit, whether that be due to lack of awareness or lack of support. To add to this, SMEs have been so adversely affected by COVID-19 that even the financial support available

through apprenticeship incentives is not enough to support sufficient costs over a minimum 12–18 month period of employment, so only a select few employers are likely to benefit.

Karen Glaves said on Kickstart that it was a great opportunity. However, a barrier for looked after young people aged 16 to 18 is that they don't claim Universal Credit and are highly vulnerable. They would really benefit from taking up a placement.

Alex Reader said that the Kickstart scheme faces challenges because young people can't express a preference, which is the job of the work coach. This means that these young people might have no interest in an area they are placed into, and that others who might have an interest aren't put forward; the matching process doesn't work in practice. Nottingham City Council acts as a gateway, and there's a pool of people who want jobs, but there's no way to link the two up. Furthermore, he expressed concerns about what will happen to ESF-funded schemes after the closure of the funding stream in 2023.

Barbara Strang said that she only knew of three vacancies on Kickstart. She noted a range of required skills for a Kickstart placement, which the young people she works with do not have and need to develop. There has been a lot of success with Traineeships and there is a clear path to apprenticeships here, but a young person must have independent drive and support to be successful.

In relation to Jobcentres, Alex Reader noted that they have been closed during the COVID-19 pandemic and so there has been a lack of face to face support, which makes it hard to get to know young people. There is also a backlog so that Jobcentres are swamped. They are, in normal times, a good resource both for delivery partners and organisations, and for young people.

Other points made by organisational representatives on this subject included:

- There are overlapping remits and programmes coming from DfE, DWP and other services. The system needs to be radically simplified to properly support young people.
- There is a real disconnect between the work of different government departments. Department staff should spend time at the front line to really understand these issues.
- There is significant inexperience amongst officials in DfE and DWP, particularly of how things really are on the ground. They should spend some time on the ground with LEPs or Jobcentres to really understand how things are working.
- Some young people who would be eligible for an Education Health and Care Plan aren't being put forward for an assessment–once young people have left school they are almost important to get.
- Kickstart is very similar to the Future Jobs Fund that some of the employers have been involved in before. There should be an incentive or support structure in place to help the businesses involved in Kickstart to find the young people they have worked with a job in another business if they do not have space to take them into a full time role.
- Kickstart excludes young people with disabilities if they are claiming Employment Support Allowance.

- There is a huge focus on apprenticeships. They work really well in certain sectors and businesses, but for SMEs they are a struggle—the bureaucracy is too much and there is not enough flexibility in the standards. In a small business, the nature of the work is that employees need to get involved flexibly in different areas of the work and there is not enough flexibility in the programme to allow this.

Biggest challenges in working with young people

Louise Doble said that when young people reach 16 it's often difficult to continue to engage them in education and the transition to apprenticeship or college is difficult. Transportation can also be a barrier. Engagement on a one to one basis is the most successful but it can be hard to get funding, particularly in rural settings.

Amy Fazackerley said that there are two main challenges. The first is supply and demand; there is lots of interest and applications for their apprentice programme, but a lack of supply from the employer side. Finding the right employers with support, infrastructure, finances etc. can be hard. Secondly, preparing young people for entering that work environment can be tricky and there are gaps in terms of life and professional skills. Work is different from school and college and this is a hard transition for some young people. They try to avoid talking about the educational element of apprenticeship as 'college' because they want them to think of it as work.

Karen Glaves said that for care experienced young people it's hard for them to be job ready. During COVID-19 there have been challenges with mental health and IT equipment. Those living on their own have been particularly isolated.

Alex Reader said that when young people leave school, the next step can be bewildering. Lots of them want to work but they might not be able to secure an apprenticeship due to the academic rigour needed, and the traineeship option is unpaid so not as attractive. SMEs may not have the time to support young people; they may want someone already 'up and running'.

Barbara Strang said that the biggest challenge post-16 is parental engagement. If the parents don't support their young people, they are often restricted. Some students feel they cannot leave the course they are on because their parents will lose their benefits. There's also a reputational element attached to apprenticeships; parents see it as "slave labour".

Jimmy Zachariah said that the starting point for young people who are asylum seekers is very different. These young people have limited ability to plan for the future even though they are very resilient. Emotional wellbeing is a challenge so it can be difficult to build that support around them. They might also have to squeeze lots of formal education into a short space of time to get those basic qualifications in English, Maths and ICT before they can go on and get apprenticeships or further opportunities. They are also particularly isolated.

Other points made by organisational representatives on this subject included:

- Young people with disabilities often only get a diagnosis late on which can really hamper their chances of getting additional support when they need it.
- There is a challenge with the benefits system, particularly for young people with disabilities, where they are not able to go on post-19 to access education and training opportunities they may have missed out on in younger years.

- There isn't enough support out there for parents and carers. They are a really strong influence on young people's choices but their evidence and perspectives are often very out of date—for instance, pushing children down careers routes that are prestigious but not right for them.
- The only way things are going to change is if we can get employers in front of pupils and their parents.
- Critical to get young people online early using platforms like Teams and Zoom that they will use in any future workplace.
- The loss of benefits can be a significant negative influence on narrowing career choices.

Impact of COVID-19

Jimmy Zachariah said that mental wellbeing was the biggest issue amongst the groups that he works with. This will have a huge knock on impact on their experience of formal education and training in the future.

Louise Doble concurred that mental and emotional issues would be a huge problem, particularly for Year 11 who have spent the last year in a difficult situation having left school without support. They have faced social isolation and disengagement, which has put them at a huge disadvantage.

Amy Fazackerley said that COVID challenges included mental and emotional wellbeing and lack of access physically to their jobs (in sports) during the lockdowns. They will need to be able to demonstrate competency in those roles going forward that allow them to move on in future beyond the course. 70% of their young people had been furloughed, which has led to a high degree of uncertainty. Even those who in employment are concerned about the future.

Karen Glaves said that there was a lack of IT equipment and internet access for a lot of young people, without which they cannot upskill and move forward.

Louise Doble said that the hospitality sector has been a great route for young people, which COVID-19 has hit hard. The access to courses in this sector has also been impacted.

Third engagement session with young people - Bolton and Lancashire, 22 June 2021

The Youth Unemployment Committee held an engagement session with young people and youth organisations based in Bolton and in nearby towns in Lancashire, including Blackburn and Burnley. The intention of this event was to gain an insight into the perspectives of young people who have experienced or are experiencing unemployment in the region, and those who work to support them locally. This note provides a written summary of the information given by participants. Organisational representatives present at the event were:

- Katrina Berwick, Connexions
- Sharon Bruton, CEO, Quest Trust
- Wayne Carter, OnSide Youth Zones
- Janet Jackson, Partnership Manager, NEETs, Lancashire Skills Trust
- Philip Jones, Director, Calico
- Salma Kathrada, Trainee Councillor, IMO Charity

- Alison Malcolm, Employability Manager, Burnley FC
- Michelle Monks, Careers Adviser, Connexions Bolton
- Mohamed Nakhuda, Employment Lead, IMO Charity
- Kelly Perkin, Chief Executive, Alliance Learning
- April Rankin, Youth and Community Worker, URPotential
- Gemma Rush, Skills Construction Centre
- Gary Whiting, Acting Principal, University Collegiate School, Quest Trust

Attendees were divided into three groups. Two groups comprised young people from the region, while the third group consisted of representatives of youth organisations. The session with young people was facilitated by trained youth facilitators. Each group was invited to discuss a number of general themes of relevance to the inquiry. Key points are summarised below. All contributions from young people have been anonymised.

Changes needed to improve youth prospects

Points raised by young people on changes needed to improve youth prospects included:

- More support in helping young people to pursue their career aspirations rather than just pushing them into any role available. More support to help young people decide their career path.
- Reform the work of Jobcentres to better encourage careers support.
- More awareness in schools of what jobs and careers are available.
- A clearer focus on mental health and mental wellbeing in education and understanding of the demands as young people move from school to work or further and higher study—including in terms of study pressures and life changes.
- Greater understanding and compassion for young people with disabilities
- A bigger push towards apprenticeships, which many students would be well suited for but have no idea about.
- More engagement with young people to understand their needs.
- Fairer geographical spread of good jobs.
- More work experience opportunities supported through colleges, and more work experience opportunities that might actually lead to future work.
- A greater focus on peaceful resolution of disputes.
- Encouraging greater support for the development of life skills, so people have awareness of those skills that they can take forward.
- Great focus on supporting young people to stay in education and achieve their goals.
- For young people to learn about different faiths in schools and learn how to question the news.

Philip Jones from Calico recommended localised investment in employment and skills, and more incentives for employers to work with young people.

Katrina Berwick from Connexions said that nothing could be done in isolation and partnership was key, however she highlighted the need to understand NEET indicators, increase support to meet the Gatsby Benchmarks, greater parental involvement, and more reengagement provision.

Janet Jackson from Lancashire Skills Trust raised the need to increase parental awareness of technical routes, including the opportunities at Level 4 and 5.

Gary Whiting from Quest Trust talked about the development of key life skills and experience to help pupils engage with the curriculum and make them work ready.

Gemma Rush from Skills Constriction Centre said engagement with learners was key as not all students are academic, and for these young people, on the job training needs to be valued more.

April Rankin from URPotential said raised the need for targeted employment investment towards young people.

How well does school and college prepare young people for the world of work?

On this subject, points raised by young people included:

- Schools and colleges do offer support with things like employment opportunities and CV writing, but they are usually tucked away and you really have to seek them out.
- Two changes are needed–employability skills should be compulsory for all young people because everyone is going to need them. Support for employment preparation should be really visible and clear in schools and colleges, not tucked away.
- Schools and colleges should be much more proactive in sharing entry level job opportunities.
- Schools and colleges could be doing a lot more to prepare young people better for employment.
- To get a good understanding of the world of work you need to do hands on work to get a sense of how things work in real life.
- You can do interview practice at school but it's hard to know what to expect in a real world situation.
- Technical skills tend to come from formal education.
- More could be done to support communication skills. A lot of people in school are introverted and don't know how to express themselves verbally—more support for this is needed.
- It depends on the type of skill. Lots of my soft skills were developed outside of formal learning. Duke of Edinburgh and National Citizenship Service helped me improve my communication skills. My current apprenticeship is more hands on and so useful for the hard skills.
- Skills learning depends on what career path you want to go on for academic routes, a study-based focus makes sense. But other skills like saving, finance and "life skills" would be very helpful to learn at school.
- Experience for job applications tends to come from outside formal education e.g. volunteering

- There is not much school support on things such as CV writing. Some schools have displays or guidance but pupils are not always directed towards them as they might be.
- The education system is far too focused on end point exams. Should bring back coursework that helps young people to build a portfolio and more teacher-assessed work.
- Being autistic, exams are a real struggle—couldn't we just move to teacher assessment as the way forward rather than exams. What is important is for teachers to be really clear about the process.
- Concerns with teacher assessment as the only form of assessment as they can be subject to bias, including unconscious bias.
- Worried about the level of pressure provided by intensive written exams.
- Perhaps a blended system would work best—with some exams and some coursework and teacher assessment. Aim to give young people a broader range of opportunities to shine.
- Most of the young people had significant volunteering experience that they felt was really important to helping them find future employment (e.g. one young person volunteered in a care environment and that helped as a stepping stone towards a career in care).
- The current exam system focuses just on written answers, it doesn't encourage equipping young people with the communication skills that they need.
- I also feel that I learnt more of use, in regards to skills to help me into work, at College in two years than at Secondary School in five.
- Found it a lot easier in College to focus on developing these skills than in school.
- School didn't really help with teamwork as we didn't really work with each other. Going on a football course was much more important to helping me to learn skills like communications, team working, problem solving.
- My form tutor put up informal sessions in the mornings on personal finance, investing and other things like this. It should be more freely talked about.
- In terms of digital skills, tended to get these outside of school rather than in school/college.
- In high school, learned a bit about using basic Microsoft programmes, but not transferable skills in relation to digital learning.
- Some kids in the family have been trying to learn online during the pandemic but haven't access to the equipment or skills they needed to properly engage.
- Schools and Colleges do try and offer some support to prepare for employment but it's usually 'tucked away'.
- The exam system really values one particular set of skills and we should think about a range of different forms of assessment that value young people's broader skills.
- Skills learned outside of formal education, in particular in volunteering are often instrumental in finding work and often help to develop much more intensively skills like teamworking, communications and problem solving.

Sharon Bruton from Quest Trust said that there should be a cradle to grave approach focusing on a curriculum for life. She said that common perceptions around job

profiles should be challenge as young people had a lack of understanding of real job roles. In part, this relied on meaningful engagement with local employers. Life skills, multi-disciplinary and digital skills were also crucial, as was lifelong learning.

Gary Whiting added that the curriculum model at UCS Bolton focuses not only on traditional qualifications, but also a commitment to a bespoke parallel curriculum that develops key life skills and experiences that bring the curriculum to life, increase engagement through practical experiences and provide transferable skills that allow students to access the world of work (and be ready for jobs that may not have been created yet). He noted that the commitment associated with this is around time and financing; if schools see a value in it, both will be found. Finally, there has been lots of good remote learning, but the pandemic has highlighted the opportunity to rethink the curriculum and whether it is fit for purpose.

Kelly Perkin from Alliance Learning raised the issue of resilience and a lack of understanding of what work requires. She noted challenges around getting good Maths and English grades, and the high prevalence of mental health needs that suggest wellbeing should be central to the curriculum. Finally, she noted that there will be a "ripple effect" from the pandemic, and young people needed to increase their confidence talking to 'real' people off-screen.

Philip Jones from Calico said that there is a disconnect between education and business realities. In his business, he assumed that in the first 12 months of employment, a young person won't add any value due to training needs. He suggested that the curriculum should be updated to reflect modern industry needs.

Mohamed Nakhuda from IMO Charity talked about transferable skills and having the right mindset for work. He noted the need for digital skills for Industry 4.0 and noted that T Levels were moving in the right direction.

April Rankin from URPotential raised the desire from young people for a curriculum for life, as voted for by the UK Youth Parliament. She asked what support could be offered for these ideas to be taken further.

Careers support and work experience

Points raised by young people included:

- Our school had an in-house careers adviser: you could go to her at any time. She really helped you to work out what you wanted to do—whether you needed help with work experience or wanted to talk to somebody.
- Year 10 is the perfect time to get careers support and work experience—if in year 9 and worrying about careers, it's a lot to take on especially if you are doing your GCSEs.
- Year 10 is the right time for work experience because the mindset is on what you want to do after school.
- A lot of young people in attendance relied on family members for guidance on careers and work experience. They noted that not everyone would have this advantage might be useful to have someone outside the family to go to for advice.
- There is a significant stigma around seeking help from Jobcentres and other employment support services, although actual experience of them has tended to be positive.

Katrina Berwick from Connexions said that as a careers adviser, she tells young people to think about jobs that don't exist yet, but raising aspirations was a challenge. She said that lots of young people don't have access to CEIAG in a school environment, particularly those who haven't attended school or who move a lot, such as international new arrivals, people outside mainstream education or who are 'hidden'.

In answer to a question from Lord Clarke about why work experience has declined, Janet Jackson from Lancashire Skills Trust said that there were few school sixth forms in the area—most schools are pre-16, and they have lost funding. She raised that the Wolf Report reorientated funding towards those aged 16 to 18 rather than those in Year 10. Careers Hubs are doing good work to link schools with employers, she said. Furthermore, she said that while most schools were making progress towards the Gatsby Benchmarks, this wasn't necessarily enough. She referenced the ASK project in Lancashire focussing on meeting the Benchmarks.

Sharon Bruton from Quest Trust said that there was a logistical challenge around sustained and effective employer engagement despite that there is a willingness from employers. Careers Hubs are doing this well, she said. On T Levels, she said that they were a great option but required a high degree of commitment from employers to create meaningful experiences. She also noted the cycle of unemployment that traps young people in a position where they cannot see themselves in new jobs such as cybersecurity, nor the stepping stones to get there. Gary Whiting added that employers are willing to engage. However, CEIAG needs to receive adequate funding and schools must employ a carers leader whose sole focus is careers.

April Rankin from URPotential discussed the need for tailored programmes helping young people with mock interviews and CV writing. She said that young people who had been disengaged for a while faced particular challenges here. She added that few schools do work placements, which could be beneficial for those who don't do as well academically.

Lord Woolley asked whether the problem was a lack of opportunity or a lack of aspiration. Philip Jones from Calico said that jobs are available but young people don't understand what an entry-level job looks like so understanding of pathways into a career must be increased. Employers have a role to play in this by sharing examples.

Kelly Perkin from Alliance Learning said that not all schools are meeting the Gatsby benchmarks.

The role of apprenticeships and traineeships

Points raised by young people included:

- Benefit of apprenticeship is no student debt and more experience. In an apprenticeship you are working somewhere for 3 or 4 years and you get more skills out of it.
- Signing up for an apprenticeship was quite a straightforward process. We went to the apprenticeship careers fair, spoke to the employers, and applied to the ones that sounded good.
- Recently started a groundwork apprenticeship. just started that three months ago. It opens you up to the different trades and gives you new opportunities. I didn't find any challenges getting the apprenticeship.

- They should be encouraged more, as people would benefit from the work experience compared to universities.
- Just left Year 11 and didn't get any guidance or information about non-university routes.
- We had several assemblies about apprenticeships when at school.
- Apprenticeship opportunities are very limited in my geographical area. Would have liked this option but it simply wasn't feasible in terms of opportunities.
- There often isn't as much information as needed about apprenticeships. Even where there is, the main issue is with the amount of opportunities available locally and in the right sector.
- Apprenticeship are good as they can teach you the soft skills that you don't always learn elsewhere—graduates sometimes don't learn these skills in their courses so they end up working in jobs that are not related to their studies.
- The course that I am taking part in right now is known as a supported internship course. They teach us theory to do with interview skills, staying safe both in and outside of the workplace, economics etc. Then once the theory side is complete, they're going to get us into a place of work as an intern and the course support staff are going to be going round each of the workplaces one by one to support us in our job placement. It has been a struggle for them to find companies willing to take us on due to the COVID pandemic and working from home but we are going to be getting one once the restrictions allow.
- There really aren't a wide range of apprenticeships available in my area—particularly not in a range of different sectors. If a young person looks for one and doesn't see a sector they're looking for in their area, they aren't really an option.
- I am doing a 12 week traineeship with four weeks work experience. My college didn't have any information about traineeships, so I ended up looking up all the biggest employers and offered to work for free to get foot in door. None were interested—it seemed like it was more of a hassle for them to offer apprenticeships rather than training more experienced staff. Traineeship gives us a chance to get the foot in the door and show what we can do. Traineeship has worked better for me than apprenticeship.

Kelly Perkin from Alliance Learning said that low parental perception of apprenticeships was a barrier. She said they regard them with "snobbery". Furthermore, while new standards are "fantastic", there is a lack of Level 2 standards, which are a great stepping stone for those not ready right away for Level 3.

Philip Jones from Calico supported the consultation on flexible apprenticeships, and the wider support for apprenticeships more generally. He pointed to the Youth Futures Foundation's recommendations on changing the Levy to boost apprenticeship numbers.

Janet Jackson from Lancashire Skills Trust said that there is not enough supply of apprenticeship places compared to demand. In some cases, young people are not always prepared for them and the gap in traineeships at 16 to 18 removes a vital stepping stone. T Levels are another positive route. Equally, some apprenticeships are hard to fill because the job might be far away (and Wheels to Work is not

available) or they might be split-shift. Bigger companies had a role in supporting SMEs to ensure no opportunities are lost, she said.

Gary Whiting from Quest said that the value of apprenticeships in the wider community needs to be promoted as university is still seen as the destination of choice, especially for second and third generation parents for whom a pathway from school straight into employment was the social norm. Sharon Bruton said that parental perceptions were a challenge, and a change in mindset was required.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

Points raised by young people included:

- Seen young people in Blackpool during the pandemic going around to every shop and stall handing over their CVs—it can be very demoralising.
- There is so much competition for jobs and opportunities that it can be very hard for young people.
- There is a real stigma around the terms and approach to 'job hunting' and being a 'job hunter'.
- College work was all online and it was quite hard—hard to get the motivation and engage with work when online. Much better to learn in person.
- People didn't know how long this would last for so a lot of people fell behind on college work—could have been more support for online learning
- It just pushed me to follow my career path as I was at home, so it gave me more time to think about it.
- Challenge of employer application processes—often include sifts that mean that young people are knocked out before the employer can get to know them.
- Challenge from the pandemic—domino effect of older experienced workers being made unemployed.
- I graduated last July during the pandemic. It was quite hard, going from being at university and face to face delivery and then having to go online—there wasn't much support from uni when we went online.
- My original plan was to get a job in a law firm, get a foot in the door—I struggled with it because a lot of places working only remotely weren't taking people on. I have more recently found a job in a law firm. Gained skills in this job which my new employers valued because they saw you made the best of a bad situation. It has worked out ok for me.
- Affected me by not being able to have face to face contact with my peers. Makes it harder to get feedback and share learning/knowledge.
- Took all the distractions away and let me focus on what I needed to be doing—let me focus on the future—I feel like I've made much more progress in the last year than I had done before.

Challenges in working with young people

Alison Malcolm from Burnley FC said that 50% of young people who are referred to them do not engage after the initial conversation due to a range of issues such as mental health issues.

Philip Jones from Calico spoke about the need to ensure that provision and commissioning models were localised so that providers have relevant local knowledge.

Katrina Berwick from Connexions said that careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) needed to be improved. She said that young people at the bottom of the ladder were not always ready for a traineeship, and COVID has exacerbated this issue because young people have been at home for 12 months and are disengaged. Katrina also raised administrative challenges with ESF-funded programmes.

Mohamed Nakhuda from IMO Charity said that the main challenge was having the correct employability skills to start work, particularly communication skills.

Janet Jackson from Lancashire Skills Trust raised the issue of project-based funding delivered by community or voluntary groups, which can have a limiting effect on keeping momentum going. Although they are trying to map opportunities, project funding dampens the longevity of any programme, and roll-on/roll-off provision is hard to fund.

Gary Whiting from Quest Trust said that trying to navigate the range of opportunities available was a challenge, particularly as young people don't know what options are available to them in the first place. He raised the need to actively develop the curriculum with employers, and highlighting Speakers for Schools as a successful initiative.

Gemma Rush from Skills Construction Centre agreed that learners don't know the options that are available to them, nor the ways of getting into, for example, an apprenticeship.

April Rankin from URPotential said that Blackpool faced a lot of problems with zero hours contracts and seasonal work, as do many coastal communities.

Good practice and local/national initiatives

Points raised by young people included:

- There are some good opportunities in Kickstart and I'm looking at doing one—a chance to start work and get a bit of money.
- Other young people in attendance had not heard of Kickstart or were unaware of the opportunities it offered.
- If young people thought Kickstart was beneficial to them it might be something they would be more likely to look into.

Alison Malcolm from Burnley FC talked about the value of Skills Builder as a tool to manage progress around 'soft' skills. She raised their Dragons' Den programme and other initiatives to increase presentation and communication skills.

Salma Kathrada from IMO Charity said that there was a need to understand local problems, including wellbeing and challenges around schools. Working on a 1:1 level and actively reaching out is very important.

Janet Jackson from Lancashire Skills Trust talked about the beneficial model of the Careers Hub, particularly its engagement with employer groups e.g. Chambers of Commerce and Cornerstone employers, who link up the supply chain. She also highlighted their Skills Pledge that is awarded to employers when they engage

with schools or take on an apprentice. This is particularly helpful for SMEs. Janet noted that the Gatsby Foundation has been funding the development of T Levels in the area, providing half day training for schools' careers advisers on how to talk about technical education.

April Rankin from URPotential said that their business is a Kickstart employer and that has worked well with the two young people on admin and IT. They are also looking for funding to employ them permanently. They also have a volunteering programme.

Wayne Carter from OnSide Youth Zones said there was a need to raise aspirations and provide opportunities, noting their 'Get a Job' scheme, which offers enterprise and employability skills such as CV building.

Fourth engagement session with young people - ethnic minority backgrounds, 6 July 2021

The Youth Unemployment Committee held an engagement session with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds and the organisations that support them. The young people and organisations were predominantly located in and around London. The intention of this event was to gain a further insight into the specific experiences of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds in seeking employment and pursuing their career aspirations. This note provides a written summary of the information given by participants. Organisational representatives present at the event were:

- Jeremy Crook, Black Training and Enterprise Group
- Lee Jasper, Blaksox
- Patricia Stapleton, The Traveller Movement

Attendees were divided into three groups. Two groups comprised young people, while the third group consisted of representatives of youth organisations. The two groups comprising young people were facilitated by trained youth facilitators. Each group was invited to discuss a number of general themes of relevance to the inquiry. Key points are summarised below. All contributions from young people have been anonymised.

Experiences of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds seeking employment

Key points made by young people on this subject included:

- For families who have moved to this country, I see a real difference between those who have strong existing networks in the UK who can help them–they have done a lot better during COVID-19 than those who don't.
- Many employers have a very reactive approach to discrimination—they don't really have a proper anti-discrimination policy and are ill equipped to deal with incidents when they arise.
- As a test I submitted two pieces of work under two different names, one my own and one belonging to a white, female friend, in my undergraduate degree, and under my name I received four fewer marks.
- When I go home to the West Midlands, I feel my white working class peers are resentful of the support that I gets as a black working class young person. I am seen as someone who gets a lot of help due to my race when they share the same socio-economic background.

- I was not encouraged to go to university at school even though I was achieving A and A*s. There were not many black young people at my school.
- I was always told I had to work ten times harder to get the same result, and had it instilled in me that education would lead to a better life. On the other hand, white peers tended to assume they would do well. This was a cultural divide.
- I come from a British Indian background—parents immigrated in 1994. Parents did not have the 'stereotypically Indian view' of careers and encouraged us to follow our passion rather than pushing us towards particular careers.
- My family strongly influenced my choices–their view was 'you have to go to university to get a job' and pushed me strongly towards HE.
- For people whose parents come from different countries, they can have very different perspectives on the question of what it means to be successful.
- There is serious employment discrimination for people from GRT backgrounds.
- I changed my name on my CV because of experience of discrimination at the application stage.

Patricia Stapleton said that people from GRT communities often hide their ethnicity and 'play English' in a job interview by hiding their accent. She suggested there was discrimination in recruitment.

Role of education in preparing young people for work

Key points made by young people on this subject included:

- School doesn't prepare young people for employment: they offer clichéd advice such as 'just apply for jobs'. That was the advice they were giving me. University equipped me with more skills that I would need later on for my career.
- There is pressure in secondary to go onto higher education; if you wanted to go into work or other education the options are not made very clear. I went to University but a lot of my family didn't want to pursue that path, and you are just left to your own devices to go and find a job. There are not a lot of resources to help them in that way.
- School tells you what you need—I'm aware that I need a CV or that I need experience—but I've never been told how to write a CV or been given any work experience opportunities from school.
- If you had no intention of going to university it was almost like you were not thought about. There was a big push towards encouraging A-Levels and then University.
- You don't gain the skills for work until after University. When you leave University you discover that things you could have learned in high school were not learned, so you have to try to find them at a later stage.
- Felt there was a narrow focus on university; regardless of whether you wanted to go or do something else, you are then heavily advised to go to uni. Having a greater understanding of transition from university life to graduate life would really help.

- Not enough emphasis on employability throughout school. I had one appointment with a careers officer. Even then that was focused on university rather than what career I was interested in. Other than a day visit to a bank I was not introduced to any other sectors, so I had a limited understanding of career options.
- Work experience opportunities feel very inaccessible—they're rare, they're unpaid, they're far away.
- I was quite a high achieving student, so the school pressured me into going into HE—I got the feeling that this was to get them better statistics and 'bragging rights' rather than in my best interests.
- It's difficult for teachers as they've all gone through the standard education and HE pathways, they don't necessarily have information or insight into the industries that their students want to go into.
- Our school did have a few lessons on CVs but 'they showed us how to fit in, not how to stand out'. When I had a session with professionals after leaving school they told us almost the opposite—how to really stand out to employers.
- School system needs to be overhauled to help young people prepare for adult life—having skills to cook or budget would make a big difference in terms of employability.
- There's an over-focus on STEM compared to humanities and creative subjects—it feels like these are not valued as highly.
- Interview techniques were discussed at school but mostly applied to University applications, not the workplace. Team working was sometimes covered as well.
- During the early part of the lockdown period I used experience of online communication to help me gain experience of doing interviews. When I was in high school I had no awareness of these things.
- If you get excluded from school it becomes not possible to access work—these children need more support than those staying in mainstream education, but they don't get it.
- I was heavily supported in pursuing my career aims by friends and connections I had made, but not everyone has this advantage.

Lee Jasper said that there is lots of poverty and widespread FSM eligibility among many ethnic minority communities. He talked about a 'London effect', where an emphasis on disadvantage has resulted in additional education support, which has in turn started to result in comparable grades in Maths and English. He noted community support for Saturday or supplementary schools and learning, and wraparound support with a focus on the most disadvantaged.

Lee Jasper also pointed to Equality Trust analysis, which showed that if a family is in poverty education stops being a priority. First and second-generation migrants are more committed to education because they appreciate its value to a greater extent.

Patricia Stapleton said that files don't follow GRT children when they move schools, and schools vary in cultures. She suggested London schools are better than others because they have more funding, and because teaching staff are more diverse, which is a major factor in retaining GRT children. Traditionally, too, GRT people want to do practical subjects like home economics, which are supported to

a greater extent in London schools. She suggested that children aren't tracked by local authorities as well as they could be, and off rolling was prevalent. Despite better wraparound provision in primary schools, by 15 or 16 young people from GRT communities are far behind, and COVID catch up will be important.

Patricia Stapleton also said that if young people from the GRT community make it to GCSE they were still 32 months behind their peers pre-COVID. She talked about their fear of going back into school after COVID. She highlighted her organisation's national tutoring scheme to help 120 young people return to school post-pandemic, and their Maths and English functional skills support programme, noting that the baseline is low for Maths and English in the community.

Impact of COVID-19

Key points made by young people on this subject included:

- On a personal level, been difficult to remain positive.
- In my particular industry—creative arts—it has been hit particularly hard by Covid with lots of performances cancelled. Feels like a 'never-ending struggle'.
- For Higher Education students, it has been particularly hard to keep up motivation and lots of young people's mental health has been affected.
- Been very concerned about parents and family workers who work in the care sector.
- COVID has impacted young people the most—people being made redundant are people who have been there the shortest time. This is preventing young people from succeeding in their career. No balance or equality between age groups and generations.
- Had a job in a supermarket during Covid—didn't have proper PPE and it was a very scary experience. Felt that the job was labelled as 'low skilled' and had a bad reputation.
- Did a fine art degree at university and was really disappointed that end of course show was cancelled—it just wasn't the same online.
- Mental health really went downhill for about 9 months during the pandemic because of a lack of support and career direction.
- Work with young people and families with learning disabilities. Things have been particularly challenging for them during the pandemic with reduced support.
- Been at sixth form during COVID-19 and it has been completely disrupted. Concerned that estimated exam results won't properly reflect them or that future employers will judge them as the 'Covid generation'.
- Was in the year group where we didn't get to take our GCSEs—the estimated grades don't feel fair. Also concerned starting A-Levels that haven't had any practice taking exams and worried that DfE have said that they aren't prepared to make any modifications to A-Levels next year.
- COVID-19 made young people feel pressure about what they were going to do. There were not a lot of jobs to go around, so it made people feel pressure about how they were going to get a job. A big mental health impact when it came to employment.

- It has been difficult to get into the main job market during the pandemic. Since graduating the only opportunities I have had have been targeted to young people—outside of this, it is harder to access the mainstream job market. I am constantly getting rejections because people wouldn't take a young graduate rather than an older worker who has recently been made redundant. By default we are disadvantaged.
- Lots of experience of graduates who are not getting jobs in the covid-19 era. If you don't have experience and are trying to compete with adults, as a young person you are usually at the bottom of the pool. It has made it a lot more difficult for young people.
- There is so much competition, it is quite disheartening—it affects your confidence as a graduate. Being faced with so many rejections is very heartbreaking. There are simply not enough jobs for all of us. We are competing with people who are being made redundant.
- COVID has been awful. We are competing with people who have been made redundant and employers are uncertain about young people. Lots of people are working from home. There are technical challenges for home working such as the availability of equipment and working space.
- I have found the time quite useful to reflect and assess what I want in life. This time has been quite invaluable.

Government schemes and availability of employment

Key points made by young people on this subject included:

- People are joining my team at work on Kickstart but I was shocked by the qualifications of the people joining—many of them have Masters degrees. What is really out there for people who don't have GCSEs or A-Levels or who have gone through a lot in their personal life?
- The jobs market is so challenging at the moment.
- The housing market is really depressing for young people particularly in London—it means that end goal is not really a possibility and that is very demotivating.
- Nobody told me what a CV was—I had to google 'CV' to find out how to put one together.
- Young people need lots of opportunities to try out different careers and fields.
- Found the Kickstart programme to fall quite flat—"when I saw The Chancellor introducing the scheme I was really excited but as time went on, nothing has really come about through it."
- Some industries, like the creative industries, work on who you know and relationships. It can be particularly challenging for young people from diverse backgrounds to break in—'there are very few people who look like us working in this space'.
- I've had a mixed experience with Universal Credit. You get some CV workshops and a personal adviser who can help you with support. But it is not tailored to help you with your career development. I didn't feel they allowed me to be ambitious in what I wanted to do. It is not set up to support people with careers, it is just set up so people can get off UC or not use it in the first place.

- Not everyone knows of the support facilities that are in place. Letting more people know about these things would be very helpful. I know people who are out of work who don't know about the support available through the UC system, such as work coaches.
- I have had a lot of experience in terms of work experience and internships. When I did graduate, finding a job was really hard. I was only told about UC by a friend—I didn't know about it otherwise. I joined the Kickstart scheme through UC and the role that I have been doing has given me a lot of access that I didn't think I would have had before—a really good opportunity.
- They say that you should gain experience to begin your career, but if you can only get unpaid experience it is not fair. I have had a supportive family. I started as unpaid research assistant and then it turned into paid work. Without the means of supporting yourself it is difficult to take this route.
- If you need experience to get experience, it is a Catch 22 situation.
- I teach through a company but count as being self-employed. You are not given any information about personal finance or taxation arrangements in this situation.
- I have been to a Jobcentre and am hesitant to go to one because of discrimination due to my name.

Jeremy Crook suggested that few young people would use a Jobcentre, and mainstream services like this aren't attractive enough to young people. He said that BTEG had spoken to 200 young people who felt there was a 'stigma' attached to visiting one, adding that a third of young black men don't claim Universal Credit or other benefits they're entitled to. He suggested a review of take up of JCP services amongst minority ethnic groups was needed.

Role of employers

Jeremy Crook raised low start rates for apprentices from ethnic minority backgrounds, and the lack of progress on these figures over a decade. He suggested sectoral issues for construction and engineering and said that young people from ethnic minority backgrounds were better represented in IT than other sectors. He suggested the reasons for this included a lack of good quality CIEAG at school, lack of employer engagement, and low awareness. Jeremy also highlighted that the Government does not publish data on degree level apprenticeships, which have particularly high take up amongst Indian individuals.

Jeremy Crook cited statistics showing 8% for 18–20-year olds who start in construction apprenticeships are from ethnic minority backgrounds. He said the BTEG was working with construction companies but even though the Mayor of London published a toolkit to help ethnic recruitment in construction, progress is very slow. He suggested that employers know what they need to do but they still don't do the basics. He suggested demand among young black people was high for construction roles, citing an example of an employment day by JLA at which 350 young black men were present, but the issues were with recruitment, fairness, and transparency. He raised data that showed 25% of applications for apprenticeships were from ethnic minority individuals but only 10% started an apprenticeship. The DfE no longer captures this data, he said.

Jovan Owusu-Nepaul from My Life My Say said that there needs to be a better understanding of how worthwhile training and/or education is in opening doors to a good life. He also noted that many young people are deflated by the prospect

of giving a large share of their wages to landlords and facing a high cost of living, despite doing what they have been told to do to be successful.

Patricia Stapleton said that young people don't know where to start, how to apply, or in some cases that apprenticeship opportunities even exist. On encouraging take up, Jeremy Crook pointed to the Five Cities programme, which he said mobilized public sector leaders to look at local apprenticeships data and explore which sectors weren't recruiting. He suggested more money was needed to target the effort to get more employers to recruit ethnic minority young people. They need to be encouraged to change their behaviours, he said. He also noted that public procurement was an effective but underused tool.

Lee Jasper agreed, arguing that Brexit provides the country with the opportunity to look at new solutions, labour schemes and public sector spending and procurement issues. He pointed to the Northern Ireland Fair Employment Act, which he said helped with Catholic employment and eliminated economic disadvantage. He also flagged China's state subsidiary for enterprise development, which focuses on bringing together business, enterprise, vocational education to upskill young people.

Challenges of supporting young people into work

Lee Jasper said that levels of youth unemployment for people from ethnic minority backgrounds were comparable now to that of the 1980s. He said that the issue was less about education, where young black people are doing well in terms of FE participation, graduate rates and school attainment, but more about how this translates into labour market success. Other issues included: racism in recruitment; poor-quality employment e.g. more likely to be on zero hours contracts and in low-paying roles; a lack of training in digital and IT; discrimination against young people with an African-sounding name, who are two thirds less likely to get an interview than their white counterparts; and high levels of school exclusion.

Patricia Stapleton highlighted two key issues, which were leaving school early (and being overrepresented in exclusion statistics), and not having functional skills in English and Maths. She said this restricts young Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) people from accessing FE colleges, apprenticeships and basic career paths. Other issues included racist bullying, lack of access and/or understanding of furlough, and digital exclusion, as one in four cannot access sufficient data and WiFi.

Recommendations

Organisational representatives made the following suggestions for recommendations that the Committee might make:

Patricia Stapleton:

- Allowing young people to go into vocational routes earlier.
- More and better career guidance.
- Additional funding for people aged 19–24 going back into education to obtain essential qualifications.
- More wraparound support for young people from the GRT community.
- More targeted support (and campaigns to promote awareness) for the GRT community including catch-up tuition.

- Monitoring of recruitment practices and ethnic minority recruitment.
- Targeted awareness raising campaigns around apprenticeships beyond the usual JCP channels e.g. via social media.
- DWP to establish joint working groups with BEIS and DfE to improve coordination and work with big organisations like the National Youth Agency to collaborate and reach the young people in need.

Lee Jasper:

- Need targeted Government action, particularly within Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Muslim communities.
- Wraparound schools should be explored as potential community centres.
- More opportunities for young people from ethnic minority backgrounds to grow businesses.
- Blind applications so all names are removed.
- Blind exam papers.
- Measures to bring the public in line with the private sector on ethnic pay reporting and recruitment monitoring and/or targets.

Jeremy Crook:

- Improvement of CEIAG so young people know where to find information.
- To bridge class divides in young people who do and don't have access to networks via parents, schools should provide access to mentors and employer encounters.
- Young people should be taught at secondary school about coping and understanding the world of work, including discrimination, bias and resilience.
- A national review of take-up of Jobcentre Plus services by minority ethnic young people.
- Encourage employers to use the levers given to them via the Positive Action measures outlined in the Equality Act 2010, to target people from ethnic minority backgrounds and report on hiring.

APPENDIX 6: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT INDICATORS

Table 4: Latest youth unemployment indicators July to September 2021, UK

	16–17	18–24	16–24	16+	Explanatory note
Total population	1.5m	5.3m	6.8m	53.6m	Figures for age groups are separated as those aged 16-17 are required to be in full time study/ training
Total economically active population	419k	3.7m	4.1m	34m	Unemployed + employed
Levels					
Unemployment	96k	379k	475k	1.4m	
Long-term unemployed	20k	143k	163k	475k	Defined as 6+ months for people under 25 and 12+ for people aged 25+
Total inactive	1m	1.7m	2.7m	19.6m	Neither employed nor unemployed
Inactive (in full time study)	976k	1.2m	2.1m	-	
Inactive (not studying)	64k	516k	581k	-	
NEET	-	-	631k	-	Not in education, employment or training
Rates and proportions					
Unemployment rate	23.0%	10.4%	11.7%	4.3%	% of economically active
Unemployment to population ratio	6.6%	7.1%	7.0%	2.7%	% of population
Long term unemployed rate	4.8%	3.9%	4.0%	1.3%	% of economically active
Long-term unemployed proportion	1.4%	2.7%	2.4%	0.8%	% of the population (including students not looking for work)
Total inactive	71.3%	31.4%	40.0%	36.6%	% of population
Inactive (in full time study)	66.9%	21.7%	31.4%	-	% of population
Inactive (not studying)	4.4%	9.7%	8.6%	-	% of population
NEET	-	-	9.3%	-	% of population

Source: Office for National Statistics, 'Labour Market Overview, UK: November 2021', A02SA, A06SA, UNEM01SA : https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/november2021/relateddata *[accessed 17 November 2021]*

APPENDIX 7: A RECENT HISTORY OF YOUTH ALMPS

Active labour market policies (ALMPs) are used to help the unemployed find work. They have generally been introduced to address challenging periods for the labour market. Professor Sue Maguire, Honorary Professor at the Institute for Policy Research (IPR) at the University of Bath told us that ALMPs generally vary between 'work first' and 'train first' approaches. However, across both types of support, there are common factors that lead to successful outcomes. These include early identification and intervention, person-centred responses tailored to the individual, decisions made on evidence of what works, support whilst on-programme, and post-programme follow-up support and intervention.[656]

The below table summarises recent ALMPs introduced by the DWP (unless specified otherwise) in recent years. This list is not exhaustive.

Table 5: DWP-led ALMPs directed at tackling youth unemployment

Name	Type	Detail
Youth Obligation (2017–20)	Job-search assistance	Offered intensive support for those aged 18-21 claiming Universal Credit, including the promise of a traineeship or work placement if still unemployed after six months.
Reinforced Youth Guarantee (2014–)	Guarantee	Commitment by EU Member States to ensure that all young people under 30 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or traineeship within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education.[657]
Youth Contract (2012–15)	Multi-element programme with an integrated offer	For those aged 18 to 24 offered 'payment by results' for employment support providers, plus training, experience and a job interview at a local firm, and work placements for those who had been unemployed for 13 weeks.
The Work Programme (2011–15)	Job-search assistance	Supported those receiving Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for nine months, or those at most risk, and offered payment for results to welfare to work companies. It faced criticism for 'creaming and parking', where the job-ready were helped more than those with complex needs.
Young Person's Guarantee (2010)	Guarantee	Offered those aged 18 to 24 who had been claiming JSA for six months a job, training, or work experience.

656 Written evidence from Professor Maguire (YUN0015). NB this appendix was substantially influenced by the written submission of Professor Maguire.

657 European Commission, 'The reinforced Youth Guarantee': https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en [accessed 2 June 2021]

Name	Type	Detail
Future Jobs Fund (2009–11)	Subsidised employment	Set up following the financial crash. It was available for those who were out of work for six months and offered subsidised employment, training, or work experience for up to six months at a minimum of 25 hours a week.[658] Examples from the devolved regions include Jobs Growth Wales (2012–current) and Scotland's Employer Recruitment Incentive (2015–recently succeeded by No One Left Behind).
New Deal for Young People (1998–2009)	Multi-element programmes/ integrated offer	Responsibility for the New Deal sat with The Employment Service (DWP). Mandatory for those who were unemployed for six months. It offered a job, voluntary placement, or full-time education or training.
Youth Training Scheme (1983–90)	Training programme	Responsibility for lay with the Manpower Services Commission (Department of Employment). Backed by £1 bn public money, it provided 20 weeks off-the-job training on a two-year programme.

Source: Work and Pensions Committee, Youth Unemployment and the Youth Contract (Second Report, Session 2012–13, HC 151); 'The Work Programme's only success is at 'creaming and parking'', The Guardian (20 February 2013): https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/feb/20/work-programme-success-creaming-parking [accessed 1 February 2021]; Work and Pensions Committee, Youth unemployment and the Future Jobs Fund: Government response (First Report, Session 2010–11, HC 844); House of Commons Library, Future Jobs Fund, SN05352 15 December 2011; University of Warwick, Institute for Employment Research, Young people, employment programmes and the new deal: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/publications/bulletins/ier49.pdf [accessed 23 September 2021]; 'New Deal or no deal', The Guardian (14 May 2007): https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/may/14/newdealornodeal [accessed 26 January 2021] and 'The Government's Kickstart scheme resembles one previous job creation project: the Youth Training Scheme', FE News (10 July 2020): https://www.fenews.co.uk/featured-article/37733-working-class-youth-and-the-old-youth-training-scheme [accessed 2 June 2021]

The Government currently has a range of ALMPs in place, some of which pre-date the coronavirus pandemic, and others of which were introduced in response to the pandemic.

658 It was cancelled by the Coalition Government in 2011 on the grounds it did not help to secure sustainable employment, with 45% claiming benefit seven months after starting the scheme. However, Tony Wilson of the Institute for Employment Studies described the Fund as a "phenomenal success", raising the number of unemployed who went into permanent work by a quarter. See 'Young people face a jobless future – unless ministers learn from the past', *The Guardian* (1 May 2020) https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/may/01/young-people-jobless-future-labour-employment-schemes [accessed 1 June 2021]

Table 6: Key ALMPs announced in the Plan for Jobs

Name	Type	Detail	Take up
Apprenticeship incentives (2020–22)	Wage subsidy	The Government gives employers £3,000 for every apprentice they hire (of any age), which equates to a 35% wage subsidy for an apprentice on the Apprentice Minimum Wage	101,460 apprentices, 76% aged between 16 and 24.
Coronavirus Job Retention 'Furlough' Scheme (CJRS)	Wage subsidy	Set up to support employers to retain and pay their employees on temporary leave throughout the pandemic.	11.6m jobs furloughed to September 2021
Find a job (2020)	Job-search assistance	Free website run by the Government Digital Service.	N/A
Job entry targeted support (JETS) (2020–22)	Job-search assistance	Employment support for unemployed people who have been claiming UC or new style JSA for 13 weeks. Available in England and Wales.	138,000 users with over 25,000 job outcomes
Job finding support (2021–January 22)	Job-search assistance	Online service to help people who have been unemployed for up to 13 weeks who do not need extensive support.	30,000 up to the end of August 2021
Job help (2020)	Job-search assistance	Free to access website open to all and run by the Government Digital Service.	N/A
Kickstart (2020–22)	Subsidised employment/ work experience	Kickstart provides work placements for young people claiming UC for at least 25 hours a week for six months, with additional employment support. It is funded at £6,700 per person.	100,000 young people helped as of October 2021
Restart (2021–24)	Job-search assistance	Mandatory post-referral for UC claimants in the Intensive Work Search group for over 12 months. Intended to support 1m unemployed people in England and Wales over the next three years.	N/A

Name	Type	Detail	Take up
Sector Based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) (2011–)	Training programme	Expanded in 2020. Employment support scheme for people looking to swap sectors. Includes pre-employment training, work experience and a guaranteed interview. Only available in England and Scotland.	65,000 in 2020 and over 30,000 supported since April 2021
Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)	Wage subsidy	Set up to support self-employed people during the pandemic.	3m supported at the end of September 2021
Traineeship expansion	Work experience	The Government pledged to triple the number of traineeships available.	17,000 as of July 2021
Youth Offer (2020–25)	Multi-element programme with an integrated offer	Support for those aged 18 to 24 (extended to 16- and 17-year-olds in October 2021) claiming UC in the Intensive Work Search group. It has three components: 1. Youth Employment Programme offering 13 weeks of support with referrals to support (mandatory) 2. Youth Hubs offer support alongside co-located partners 3. Youth Employability Coaches provide up to six months specialist support for those with complex barriers to work	166,000 people between September 2020 and March 2021, 115 Youth Hubs open

Source: National Audit Office, Employment Support: Department for Work and Pensions, (7 June 2021), p 27: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Employment-support.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]; HM Government, Plan for Jobs: progress update (13 September 2021): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1016764/Plan_for_Jobs_FINAL.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]; HM Treasury, Department for Work and Pensions, 'Chancellor praises workers as Plan for Jobs enters next stage': https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-praises-workers-as-plan-for-jobs-enters-next-stage [accessed 30 September 2021]; Department for Education, 'Apprenticeships and traineeships: academic year 2020/21': https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships [accessed 11 October 2021]. Nb. data applies to England. Department for Work and Pensions, 'Over 100,000 young careers boosted by Kickstart scheme': https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-100-000-young-careers-boosted-by-kickstart-scheme [accessed 17 November 2021]

Table 7: ALMPs directed at tackling unemployment amongst specific groups

Name	Target group	Detail	Take up
Work and Health Programme (2017–)	Disabled people, long-term unemployed, ex-carers, ex-forces	Offers 15 months of support and up to six months in-work support. It uses private, public and voluntary and community providers to help people get into and stay in work using coaching and action-planning.	134,000 starts as of November 2020
Access to Work (1994–)	Disabled people and those with significant health conditions	Offers grant funding for people with a health condition or disability where their needs exceed standard adjustments all employers are required to provide under the Equality Act 2010. The Government has a target of getting one million more disabled people into work by 2027.	350,000 people received a payment from April 2009 to March 2020
Intensive Personalised Employment Support (IPES) (2019–)	Disabled people and those with complex barriers	Provides up to 21 months' support and six months intensive in-work support. It is due to run until November 2023 having been launched in December 2019.	3,100 people at February 2021
Challenge areas	BAME young people	Following the 2017 Race Disparity Audit, 20 areas within England, Scotland and Wales with a high minority ethnic population and a high gap between the minority ethnic and white employment rate were chosen as Challenge Areas. People receive tailored support through work coaches in their area.	
Mentoring Circles (2018–)	BAME young people, young people on benefits	Originally launched in 2018, mentoring circles are available to all 16 to 24-year-olds claiming benefits. They are voluntary and support groups to build employability skills. They are targeted by JCP to local need, for example they can be targeted towards minority ethnic groups.	630 circles attended by 4,400 people from July 2019 to January 2020

Source: National Audit Office, Employment Support: Department for Work and Pensions, (7 June 2021), p 27: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Employment-support.pdf [accessed 10 November 2021]

APPENDIX 8: THE GATSBY BENCHMARKS

Table 8: The Gatsby Benchmarks for Good Career Guidance

	Summary	Criteria
1	**A stable careers programme**	
	Every school and college should have an embedded programme of career education and guidance that is known and understood by pupils, parents, teachers and employers.	Every school should have a stable, structured careers programme that has the explicit backing of the senior management team and has an identified and appropriately trained person responsible for it. The careers programme should be published on the school's website in a way that enables pupils, parents, teachers and employers to access and understand it. The programme should be regularly evaluated with feedback from pupils, parents, teachers and employers as part of the evaluation process
2	**Learning from career and labour market information**	
	Every pupil, and their parents, should have access to good quality information about future study options and labour market opportunities. They will need the support of an informed adviser to make the best use of available information.	By the age of 14, all pupils should have accessed and used information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options. Parents should be encouraged to access and use information about labour markets and future study options to inform their support to their children
3	**Addressing the needs of each pupil**	
	Pupils have different career guidance needs at different stages. Opportunities for advice and support need to be tailored to the needs of each pupil. A school's careers programme should embed equality and diversity considerations throughout.	A school's careers programme should actively seek to challenge stereotypical thinking and raise aspirations. Schools should keep systematic records of the individual advice given to each pupil, and subsequent agreed decisions. All pupils should have access to these records to support their career development.–Schools should collect and maintain accurate data for each pupil on their education, training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave the school
4	**Linking curriculum learning to careers**	
	All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. For example, STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of career pathways.	By the age of 14, every pupil should have had the opportunity to learn how the different STEM subjects help people to gain entry to, and be more effective workers within, a wide range of careers.

	Summary	Criteria
5	**Encounters with employers and employees**	
	Every pupil should have multiple opportunities to learn from employers about work, employment and the skills that are valued in the workplace. This can be through a range of enrichment opportunities including visiting speakers, mentoring and enterprise schemes.	Every year, from the age of 11, pupils should participate in at least one meaningful encounter with an employer. A 'meaningful encounter' is defined by Gatsby as "one in which the student has an opportunity to learn about what work is like or what it takes to be successful in the workplace".
6	**Experience of workplaces**	
	Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of the workplace through work visits, work shadowing and/or work experience to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.	By the age of 16, every pupil should have had at least one experience of a workplace, additional to any part time jobs they may have. By the age of 18, every pupil should have had one further such experience, additional to any part time jobs they may have.
7	**Encounters with further and higher education**	
	All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.	By the age of 16, every pupil should have had a meaningful encounter with providers of the full range of learning opportunities, including sixth forms, colleges, universities and apprenticeship providers. This should include the opportunity to meet both staff and pupils. By the age of 18, all pupils who are considering applying for university should have had at least two visits to universities to meet staff and pupils.
8	**Personal guidance**	
	Every pupil should have opportunities for guidance interviews with a Careers Adviser, who could be internal (a member of school staff) or external, provided they are trained to an appropriate level. These should be available whenever significant study or career choices are being made. They should be expected for all pupils but should be timed to meet their individual needs.	Every pupil should have at least one such interview by the age of 16, and the opportunity for a further interview by the age of 18.

Source: Gatsby, Good career guidance: Reaching the Gatsby Benchmarks: A handbook for secondary schools, (2018), p 9: https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/good-career-guidance-handbook-digital.pdf [accessed 17 August 2021]

APPENDIX 9: EXAMPLES OF QUALIFICATIONS BY LEVEL

Table 9: Qualifications by level in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Level	Example of qualifications
Level 1	First certificate GCSE at grades 3–1 or grades D–G Level 1 award, certificate, diploma, ESOL, essential skills, functional skills or national vocational qualification (NVQ) Music grades 1, 2 and 3
Level 2	CSE grade 1 GCSE grades 9–4 or A*–C Intermediate apprenticeship Level 2 award, certificate, diploma, ESOL, essential skills, functional skills, national certificate, national diploma or NVQ Music grades 4 and 5 O level grades A, B or C
Level 3	A level T Level Access to higher education diploma Advanced apprenticeship AS level International Baccalaureate diploma Level 3 award, certificate, diploma, ESOL, national certificate, national diploma or NVQ Music grades 6, 7 and 8

Level	Example of qualifications
Level 4	Certificate of higher education (CertHE) Higher apprenticeship Higher national certificate (HNC) Level 4 award, certificate, diploma or NVQ
Level 5	Diploma of higher education (DipHE) Foundation degree Higher national diploma (HND) Level 5 award, certificate, diploma or NVQ
Level 6	Degree apprenticeship Degree with or without honours e.g. BA hons or BSc hons Graduate certificate or diploma Level 6 award, certificate, diploma or NVQ
Level 7	Master's degree e.g. MA or MSc Integrated master's degree e.g. MEng Level 7 award, certificate, diploma or NVQ Postgraduate certificate, certificate in education (PGCE) or diploma
Level 8	Doctorate Level 8 award, certificate or diploma

Source: Department for Education, 'What qualification levels mean': https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels [accessed 18 October 2021]

APPENDIX 10: APPRENTICESHIP STARTS BY AGE AND LEVEL

Table 10: Apprenticeship starts by age and level between 2014/15 and 2019/20

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Under 19							
Intermediate Apprenticeship	Starts	85,600	86,930	78,500	62,630	54,550	39,080
	% of total	17.1%	17.1%	15.9%	16.7%	13.9%	12.1%
Advanced Apprenticeship	Starts	39,110	42,730	42,160	40,850	39,150	32,960
	% of total	7.8%	8.4%	8.5%	10.9%	10.0%	10.2%
Higher Apprenticeship	Starts	1,140	1,760	2,100	3,100	3,990	4,230
	% of total	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.8%	1.0%	1.3%
Total	Starts	125,850	131,420	122,750	106,570	97,700	76,270
	% of total	25.2%	25.8%	24.8%	28.4%	24.8%	23.6%
19–24							
Intermediate Apprenticeship	Starts	93,570	84,890	71,410	45,380	39,490	27,440
	% of total	18.7%	16.7%	14.4%	12.1%	10.0%	8.5%
Advanced Apprenticeship	Starts	62,390	63,140	63,190	54,320	56,150	44,970
	% of total	12.5%	12.4%	12.8%	14.5%	14.3%	13.9%
Higher Apprenticeship	Starts	4,220	5,830	7,590	14,000	20,370	22,880
	% of total	0.8%	1.1%	1.5%	3.7%	5.2%	7.1%
Total	Starts	160,180	153,860	142,190	113,710	116,000	95,290
	% of total	32.0%	30.2%	28.7%	30.3%	29.5%	29.5%

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
25+							
Intermediate Apprenticeship	Starts	119,110	119,510	110,740	53,380	49,550	32,700
	% of total	23.8%	23.5%	22.4%	14.2%	12.6%	10.1%
Advanced Apprenticeship	Starts	80,270	85,000	92,310	71,050	79,430	62,920
	% of total	16.1%	16.7%	18.7%	18.9%	20.2%	19.5%
Higher Apprenticeship	Starts	14,410	19,580	26,890	31,050	50,700	55,350
	% of total	2.9%	3.8%	5.4%	8.3%	12.9%	17.2%
Total	Starts	213,860	224,090	229,940	155,480	179,670	150,960
	% of total	42.8%	44.0%	46.5%	41.4%	45.7%	46.8%
Total							
Intermediate Apprenticeship	Starts	298,280	291,330	260,650	161,390	143,590	99,220
	% of total	59.7%	57.2%	52.7%	43.0%	36.5%	30.8%
Advanced Apprenticeship	Starts	181,760	190,870	197,660	166,220	174,730	140,840
	% of total	36.4%	37.5%	39.9%	44.2%	44.4%	43.7%
Higher Apprenticeship	Starts	19,770	27,160	36,570	48,150	75,060	82,460
	% of total	4.0%	5.3%	7.4%	12.8%	19.1%	25.6%
Total	Starts	499,890	509,360	494,880	375,760	393,380	322,530
	% of total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Department for Education, 'Apprenticeships and traineeships: academic year 2020/21': https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships *[accessed 29 October 2021]. Nb. data applies to England.*