

3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market

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LAST MODIFIED ON: 25/11/2020 - 10:07

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Youth employment measures

The [Department for Work and Pensions](#) (DWP) is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. DWP supports all those who are out-of-work, including young people, through the employment and social security network, Jobcentre Plus and through the online job search tool, [“Find a Job”](#). DWP also administers the Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA). Various forms of assistance are available to unemployed benefit claimants who may improve their chances of employment through training; some of these are aimed at young people. They are described below.

The [Work and Health Programme](#) is the UK Government’s welfare-to-work scheme since 2017, offering support to the long-term unemployed and some disabled benefit claimants. The Work and Health Programme is designed to allow service providers (who run the programme) the freedom to introduce and implement their own ideas and schemes to help unemployed participants find work. Providers may decide to place people in

work-related activities, such as work experience placements. The programme provides support to help people find and keep a job. It is available on a voluntary basis, to those with health conditions or disabilities, and to various groups of vulnerable people. It also provides support to those who have been unemployed for over two years, and it will be compulsory for this group.

Young people aged 18- to 24-years are referred to the programme when they have been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for nine months (those aged 25 and over are placed on the programme after 12 months).

As a response to the economic implications of COVID-19, the government announced a Plan for Jobs in July 2020, which includes a [Kickstart Scheme](#) specifically targeted at getting young people into employment. The Kickstart Scheme provides funding to employers to create job placements for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long term unemployment. Employers of all sizes can apply for funding which covers: 100% of the National Minimum Wage (or the National Living Wage depending on the age of the participant) for 25 hours per week for a total of 6 month associated employer National Insurance contribution employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions. Employers can spread the start date of the job placements up until the end of December 2021. A Kickstart Scheme application must be for a minimum of 30 job placements. If a single employer cannot provide this many job placements, they can find a Kickstart gateway, such as a local authority, charity or trade body for help applying.

New [funding](#) for the National Careers Service was also made available as part of the Plan for Jobs – The government will provide an additional £32 million funding over the next 2 years for the National Careers Service so that 269,000 more people in England can receive personalised advice on training and work.

The following sub-sections describe welfare and employment initiatives designed to support and assist young people.

Work experience scheme

The [Work Experience scheme](#), as described in a 2015 House of Commons [research briefing](#), is targeted at 18-24 year olds who have little or no experience of work. Young people can participate in the scheme after they have been claiming [Universal Credit](#) for three months but before they join the Government's main welfare-to-work scheme, the Work Programme (typically after claiming for nine months). Entry into the scheme is voluntary and individuals can choose to leave the placement before it is complete.

Under the scheme, individuals are matched with suitable work experience placements. These last between two and eight weeks, for between 25 and 30 hours a week. Some participants may have their placement extended by up to four weeks if an employer offers to hire them as an apprentice. Participants on the scheme do not receive a wage but continue to receive benefits and must continue to look for permanent work. Travel and childcare costs are also payable, if required.

Sector-based work academies

Sector-based work academies are aimed at claimants (of all ages) who are considered relatively well prepared for employment, with no basic skills needs. Claimants are offered sector-specific training and work experience placements for a period of up to six weeks, followed by a job interview with an employer. Whilst attending a sector-based work academy, people will continue to claim benefits. Any travel and childcare costs associated with taking up a place in an academy will be covered.

The training element of the academy is fully funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. The job interview may also lead to apprenticeship places, and the training element of the academy may be used as the

foundation of apprenticeship training.

Youth obligation

Since April 2017, '[Youth Obligation](#)' (YO) has been the main welfare programme for young people. It supports 18- to-21-year-olds to take part in work-based learning in order to develop the motivation, skills and experience they need to move into employment. Receiving [Universal Credit](#) depends on the young person taking part in a work placement or preparing to begin an apprenticeship or traineeship after six months.

Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee is a European Union approach to tackling youth unemployment which ensures that all young people under 25 – whether registered with employment services or not – get a good-quality, concrete offer within 4 months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. A quality offer is defined as a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or continued education and can be adapted to each individual need and situation.

The [2018 Youth Guarantee Country Report for the UK](#) contains the following statement about the UK position in relation to it:

“The UK has not established a Youth Guarantee scheme. Whilst the government supports the approach set out in the Council Recommendation, it believes that the existing provision in the UK – in particular the Youth Contract and additional support for 16-17-year-old NEETs - fulfils the basic requirements.”

In April 2019, a [Youth Charter](#) was announced - a collaborative initiative between youth charities and the Department for Culture, Media, and Society to coordinate government youth policy.

Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

The European Commission defines flexicurity as an integrated strategy for simultaneously enhancing flexibility and security in the labour market. It attempts to reconcile employers' need for a flexible workforce with workers' need for security. It is a key element of European Union [Employment Guidelines](#) and the [European Employment Strategy](#).

There is no formal implementation of flexicurity measures for young people in England or, indeed, in the UK.

An assessment of how far the UK's flexible and lightly regulated labour market amounts to a form of flexicurity is given in the UK country description in the [European Observatory on Working Life](#).

Reconciliation of private and working life for young people

There are no youth-specific policy measures / initiatives to reconcile the private and working lives of young people. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, UK workplaces are increasingly flexible with a growth in self-employment, part-time working, zero-hours contracts and increasing female participation.

All public bodies and employers in Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) are bound by the [Equality Act 2010](#). The Act, which harmonises and extends previous equality legislation, seeks to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. Under the Act, the following are 'protected

characteristics', or the categories to which the law applies: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

Funding for schemes described above are generally provided by the [Department for Work and Pensions](#) (DWP).

The Work Programme, described above under '[Youth employment measures](#)', makes use of co-funding under the EU's European Social Fund. The Work Programme functions on a payment-by-results basis: providers of work placements and other services therefore receive a job outcome payment after a participant has spent a minimum length of time in employment. Further information is available from the Department for Work and Pensions [website](#).

A 2016 DWP [impact assessment of sector-based work academies](#) shows their funding comes from a number of sources:

- pre-employment training (PET) is covered by the Adult Skills Budget, administered by the Department for Education since summer 2016
- the Flexible Support Fund (FSF) enables the DWP's Jobcentre Plus network to procure and fund the PET through local providers
- employers cover the costs of the work experience placement and guaranteed job interview.

Quality assurance

The aim of the Work and Health Programme is to support participants into employment that lasts; the payment by results model is intended to reflect this aim. Work programme providers are responsible for ensuring that participants receive full information about the services available to them. Full details are available in the Department for Work and Pensions Work and Health Programme provider [guidance](#).