

3.11 Current debates and reforms

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Traineeships

Following the publication of the government's Plan for Jobs which included a £111 million investment to triple the number of traineeships available, a procurement opportunity is planned so providers can access funding to deliver 19 to 24 adult education budget (AEB) funded traineeships.

They will be looking for providers with the capacity to start providing high-quality traineeships quickly through a ring-fenced contract for service. Opportunities to bid for additional 19 to 24 AEB traineeship funding will be handled through the Department for Education's e-sourcing portal.

The Plan for Jobs included a commitment to provide thousands of new traineeships to get young people aged 16 to 24 (up to 25 for those with an Education, Health and Care Plan) in England into work. As well as an investment of £111m for 2020 to 2021, there are various other policy developments aimed to strengthen traineeships and widen access to them for young people in 2020 and beyond. You can read more about them [here](#).

T Levels

[T Levels](#) were introduced in England in September 2020. These are 2 year courses following GCSE's that will be equivalent to 3 A Levels. T Levels have been developed with employers and businesses to meet the needs of industry and prepare young people for work. They will offer classroom learning as well as a 3 month industry placement. The government published [funding guidance](#) for T Levels in September 2020. This includes how T Levels are funded regarding the size of the technical qualifications for the second wave of T Levels being delivered from 2021 to 2022.

COVID-19

The impact of COVID-19 on young people's employment and education prospects has been a focus of public debate. In September 2020 the Office for National Statistics [found](#) the UK unemployment rate had risen to its highest level for two years.

According to the [Office for National Statistics](#), there were an estimated 765,000 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) in the UK who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in April to June 2020; this was a decrease of 28,000 compared with April to June 2019 and was down by 6,000 compared with January to March 2020.

The percentage of all young people in the UK who were NEET in April to June 2020 was estimated at 11.1%; the proportion was down by 0.3 percentage points compared with April to June 2019 and down by 0.1 percentage points compared with January to March 2020.

Of all young people in the UK who were NEET in April to June 2020, an estimated 39.0% were looking for, and available for, work and therefore classified as unemployed; the remainder were either not looking for work and/or not available for work and were classified as economically inactive.

Kickstart Scheme

The [Kickstart Scheme](#) provides funding to create new job placements for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long term unemployment as a response to the economic impacts of COVID-19. 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 months
- associated employer National Insurance contributions
- employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions

Employers can spread the start date of the job placements up until the end of December 2021.