

Young People's Education and Skills Operational Sub-Group

“Building Engagement, Building Futures”

**The government's strategy to maximise the participation
of 16-24 year-olds in education, training and work**

Item No: 3

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Summary This paper summarises the government's strategy to maximise the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work and outlines the main implications for London.

Recommendations It is recommended that the Operation Sub-Group notes this report.

1 Background and Introduction

- 1.1 On 15th December 2011, the government published “Building Engagement, Building Futures”, a cross-government strategy for increasing the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work. The cross-departmental nature of the document seeks to indicate the government's intention to achieve greater coherence in policy across education, training, skills and employment. The strategy brings together the announcements made in recent months (i.e. It repackages *existing* policy and doesn't include any radically different policies or new funding). It was followed on 19th December by “Positive for Youth”, which sets out the government's vision of how society can work together better to support families and improve outcomes for young people.

2 Why does the Coalition emphasise raising participation?

- 2.1 The strategy “Building Engagement, Building Futures” highlights three main reasons why raising the participation age is crucial to its principles and priorities:
- education (and educational achievement) makes a lasting difference to individuals' lives;
 - a good education is critical to achieving greater social mobility; and
 - well educated school leavers and labour market entrants are essential to stimulating economic growth.

3 What is the government's strategy?

3.1 "Building Engagement, Building Futures" provides five strategic priorities within the government's overarching ambition for balanced and sustainable growth in the wider economy. These are:

- Priority 1* Raising educational attainment in schools and beyond to ensure young people have the skills they need to compete in the global economy
- Priority 2* Helping local partners to provide effective and coordinated services that support all young people, including the most vulnerable, putting us on track to achieve full participation for 16-17 year-olds by 2015
- Priority 3* Encouraging and incentivising employers to inspire and recruit young people by offering more high quality Apprenticeships and work experience places
- Priority 4* Ensuring that work pays and giving young people the personalised support they need to find it, through Universal Credits, the Work Programme and Get Britain Working measures
- Priority 5* Putting in place a new **Youth Contract** (see Annex 1) worth almost £1 billion over the next three years to help get young people learning or earning before long-term damage is done

3.2 The document is organised as follows:

- The challenges to achieving increased participation (levels of participation and the characteristics of young people who are not participating);
- the government's plans for early intervention (e.g. Risk of NEET Indicators) and for the reform of the education system to increase attainment at the age of 16;
- plans for achieving full participation of 16-17 year-olds in education and training "so that all young people have the opportunity to build the experience and qualifications they need for successful employment and adult life" (see paragraph 4 below);
- help to 18-24 year olds to engage in education and training;
- supporting 18-24 year olds into employment;
- supporting 18-24 year olds on inactive benefits and those in disadvantaged groups
 - "where appropriate, supporting young people on inactive benefits towards education, training and employment".

3.3 "Building Engagement, Building Futures" indicates that the vision for supporting families and young people will be articulated in a separate document. Accordingly "Positive for Youth" was published on 19th December 2011 and is the vehicle through which many specific new programmes or additional funding for existing initiatives were announced. A brief synopsis is provided at Annex 2.

4 How does this affect Raising the Participation Age to 18 by 2015?

4.1 Chapter 3 of "Building Engagement, Building Futures" sets out the government's plans for achieving full participation of 16-17 year olds in education and training and picks up many of the reforms it has introduced or announced in recent months, including:

- raising the Participation age to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015 (includes a commitment to consult on the associated regulations – a consultation on raising the age to 17 is currently under way);

- providing more Apprenticeships for young people through additional funding, higher quality and easier access;
- transforming vocational education (Wolf and the related consultations on Study programmes for 16-18 year olds and Work Experience);
- providing financial support through the 16-19 Bursary Fund;
- introducing support for 16-17 year olds within the Youth Contract;
- enabling local authorities to fulfil their statutory duties to support young people to participate, including disadvantaged young people, by implementing the proposals in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Green paper. The document cites five examples of how local authorities discharge their responsibilities effectively:
 - Working closely with schools, colleges and other youth services to track young people's participation, recording and analysing this data to target support.
 - Making sure that all 16 and 17 year olds have been offered a suitable place to continue in education or training through the September Guarantee.
 - Picking up and addressing any gaps in provision by working with local providers and flagging these to the YPLA.
 - Acting as a strategic lead, bringing together all of the agencies and organisations working with disengaged or vulnerable young people in the area.
 - Offering targeted and personalised support to young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming so.

5 The situation in London

5.1 The YPES publication "14-19 an Evidence Base" refers to the relatively high level of participation in London:

- London resident learner numbers were unchanged in FE and Sixth Form Colleges and increased in school sixth forms and Academies in 2009/10. Based on early figures for 2010/11, this trend looks set to continue. In overall terms the 16-18 cohort in London is expected to decline less rapidly than in other regions. DfE's National Pupil Projection (24 January 2012) confirms that "in 2014, the 11-15 population in London will start to recover (at least one year earlier than other regions). It is also uncertain whether the national methodology used is an accurate reflection of the effect of migration on London's population. It is therefore essential that London Councils, boroughs and learning institutions understand fully the funding and allocations methodologies that apply from 2013/14 onwards to ensure that London is properly resourced to deliver full participation.
- Without taking Apprenticeships into account (as full year data was not available), overall participation by London residents aged 16 and 17 increased from 90% to 96% between 2007 and 2009 (this compares with national figures of 83% in 2007 improving to 89% in 2009). 16 year old participation increased from 94% to 99% (the national increase was from 88% to 94%). 17 year old participation increased from 86% to 93% (the national figures were 78% and 85% respectively). This suggests that London is closer to achieving full participation than other regions and that boroughs may be able to devise highly targeted and personalised programmes to engage young people at risk of dropping out of learning and re-engage those who have already done so. The downside is that these people are likely to be among the most difficult to help and even the most intensive support may have address several barriers to labour market entry.

- Based on DfEs National Client Caseload Management Information System Risk Scan Tables 2010-11 (August 2010 – August 2011) the proportion of young people aged 16-18 who are NEET in London decreased from 6% to 4.7% (the national average decreased from 7.8% to 7.5% over the same period). However, the proportion of young people whose destination after leaving school was 'not known' increased from 4.2% to 7.4% (in year figures suggest that the number of 'not knowns' has further increased considerably and this is now a major concern). There were 7,655 young people aged 16-18 who were NEET in August 2011.
- 5.2 Between December 2010 and December 2011 NOMIS (official labour market statistics) shows that the number of young people aged 18-24 on the claimant count in London increased from 47,630 to 56,215, of whom the number claiming over six months increased from 6,215 to 14,920. This age group has attracted considerable attention in the media and among politicians from all parties. Significant resources are being applied to 18-24 worklessness and there is some risk that, in using 'NEET' as an all-embracing term covering the 16-24 age group, those young people aged 16-18 and seeking labour market entry (including through Apprenticeships) may be disadvantaged.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 OSG members are asked to note this report and take any action necessary in their boroughs or clusters.

"The aim of the Youth Contract is to get every unemployed young person earning or learning again before long term damage is done.

This is a £1 billion package and what's different about it, is it gets young people into proper, lasting jobs in the private sector.

But it's a contract, a two-way street: if you sign up for the job, there'll be no signing on for the dole. You have to stick with it."

Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg

Almost £1 billion will be spent over the next three years to provide unemployed young people with extra help as part of a new Youth Contract.

The Youth Contract will provide nearly half-a-million new opportunities for young people, including apprenticeships and work experience placements and a substantial increase in the support and help available to young people through the Work Programme, Jobcentre Plus and Sector-Based Work Academies.

The key measures include:

- Cash payments to encourage employers to recruit young people.
 - There will be 160,000 job subsidies available worth up to £2,275 each for businesses who take on an 18-24 year-old from the Work Programme.
 - This is enough to cover an employer's National Insurance contributions for a year and exceeds the recommendations by the CBI in their recent report¹ on youth employment.
- An extra 250,000 Work Experience places over the next three years, taking the total to at least 100,000 a year.
 - This will come with an offer of a Work Experience place for every 18 to 24 year-old who wants one, before they enter the Work Programme.
 - Figures show that the Work Experience scheme is proving effective, with half of under-25 year-olds coming off benefits within three months.
- At least 20,000 extra incentive payments worth £1,500 each for employers to take on young people as apprentices, taking the total number of payments available to 40,000 next year.
- Extra support through Jobcentre Plus in the form of weekly, rather than fortnightly, signing-on meetings, more time to talk to an adviser and a National Careers Service interview.
- A new £50m programme for 16 and 17 year olds persistently not in education, employment or training to get them learning, on an apprenticeship or in a job with training (this will focus on the 25,000 most disengaged young people).

The measures are focused on equipping young people with the skills and opportunities to gain long-term sustainable employment in the private sector.

¹ The CBI's report [Action for Jobs](#), 16 November 2011, called on the Government to introduce a "Young Britain Credit" worth £1,500 to firms taking on an unemployed person aged between 16 and 24

“Positive for Youth”, published on 19th December 2012 follows “Building Engagement, Building Futures”, by bringing together all of the government’s policies for the 13-19 age group and represents a single vision across the interests of at least nine departments². The paper also sets out a shared vision for how all parts of society can work together in partnership to support families and improve outcomes for young people, particularly those who are most disadvantaged or vulnerable.

Unlike “Building Engagement, Building Futures”, “Positive for Youth” is the vehicle through which many specific new programmes or additional funding for existing initiatives were announced. In outline, the government’s approach includes:

- supporting local authority commissioners to improve local services for young people by providing funding of £780,000 in 2011-13 to the Local Government Association. This will include a small number of ‘*youth innovation zones*’ to test new system-wide approaches to involving all local partners in supporting young people. The first four are Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Knowsley, and a consortium led by Devon;
- empowering young people by enabling them to inspect and report on local youth services and setting up a national scrutiny group for them to help ‘*youth proof*’ government policy as part of funding of £850,000 to the British Youth Council in 2011-2013;
- funding improved business brokerage with projects for young people through funding of £320,000 to April 2013 to a consortium led by Business in the Community;
- providing capital investment to complete 63 Myplace centres by March 2013, and developing a national approach to exploiting their potential to be hubs led by communities and businesses for transforming local services;
- expanding National Citizen Service to offer 30,000 places to young people in 2012, 60,000 in 2013, and 90,000 in 2014;
- encouraging volunteering for all age groups including young people, including through funding of £4 million over 2011-15 to *Y* (the national youth volunteering charity); over £40 million over 2011-13 through the Social Action Fund, Innovation in Giving Fund, Challenge Prizes, and Local Infrastructure Fund; and over £1 million over 2011-13 to YouthNet;
- funding 18 ‘*innovative*’ voluntary organisations with £31.4m over the two years 2011-13 to pioneer and evaluate innovative approaches to early help;
- promoting work to prevent and tackle youth homelessness including through strengthening the Homelessness Safety Net to include young people under the age of 21 who are vulnerable as a result of leaving care and 16 and 17 year olds who find themselves homeless;
- establishing an Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team to provide practical advice and support to up to 30 local areas with a gang or serious youth violence problem;
- clarifying its expectations on local authorities through revised statutory guidance to be published shortly for consultation on their duty to secure activities and services for young people;
- funding a strategic partner for the voluntary youth sector to ‘*give them a voice*’ in government policy, promote access to social finance, and support workforce development;
- helping services for young people to demonstrate their impact by funding the Centre for the Analysis of Youth Transitions to develop standards for evidence, and Catalyst to develop an outcomes framework;
- committing to a ‘one year on’ audit at the end of 2012 to take stock of progress in achieving the *Positive for Youth* vision; and
- publishing annually a positive set of national measures to demonstrate progress in improving outcomes for young people.

² Department for Education, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Health, Ministry of Justice, Department for Communities and Local Government, Ministry of Defence and Cabinet Office