

Youth transitions

Helping every young person reach their full potential



Foreword

In 'Investing in Our Nation's Future' we set out a bold offer to reshape the future of public services around people and places. Reform has never been more necessary, particularly for young people.

Our young people have suffered most during the downturn, which accelerated worrying trends that existed well before the recession hit in 2008. Around 40 per cent of young people are either unemployed or underemployed.

In fact employment and skills services have long failed too many young people. There has been some excellent practice, but decades of centralisation and fragmentation have left the system broken, expensive and disconnected from the lives of young people.

Recent growth is encouraging, but it is unlikely to resolve the challenges for future generations without a radical rewiring of the way services prepare young people and work with employers.

This is critically important for our more vulnerable young people, who have been pushed furthest from opportunities and who have been least well supported by services. Staggeringly, since 2005 the number of young people unemployed for over two years has increased by 330 per cent to over 90,000.

Joining up local public services is the only way we can invest in future generations within the tough budget settlements. Evidence from Community Budgets, City Deals, the Troubled Families programme, the Raising of the Participation Age and countless local initiatives demonstrate that local delivery makes the difference.

Young people today are less likely to offend, drink or smoke underage and more likely to volunteer, care for others and engage in social issues; but they now vote less than in any other country in the European Union and are losing faith in the role of the centralised state in helping them achieve their goals.

In this report we are setting out the clear actions that must be taken to ensure all young people get the support they need to reach their full potential now, and in the future.

We want to replace the plethora of engagement schemes, Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme with a single multi-agency Youth Transitions Service delivered locally to give every 14 to 24 year old the advice, support and tools to engage and develop in school, college or work regardless of their employment status.

We believe existing further education and apprenticeship support funding should be devolved to local partnerships of councils, schools and colleges so that they can deliver coherent Transition to Work Strategies ensuring young people get skills for jobs that actually exist locally.

And we rapidly need to establish a subsidy scheme to guarantee the 220,000 long-term unemployed young people experience of a real job with a real wage, locally run by councils to build on their relationships with employers.

If the next government has the courage and is bold enough to deliver public services differently, by the end of the Parliament we can half youth unemployment and reduce long-term unemployment by a third.

But we can do more. We will help revitalise democracy by helping young people lead the local services that matter most to them. And we will build new relationships with employers, establishing demand led services that create more and better opportunities for young people.

We'll be working tirelessly across party lines to turn these ideas into reality for the benefit of our young people and communities. The repercussions of not getting this right are huge, for young people, for the economy, and for democracy.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Box'.

Councillor Peter Box
Chair LGA Environment, Economy,
Housing and Transport Board



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Simmonds'.

Councillor David Simmonds
Chair LGA Children and
Young People Board

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Executive summary

There has never been a greater need to reform public services supporting youth transitions. Decades of centralisation and tinkering have created a complex and inefficient maze of interventions that achieve too little for too many young people. There are huge challenges ahead; in this paper we set out the case for change based on what we know works locally.

Councils have a unique understanding of young people, the places in which they live, learn and work, and the mix of local public services available to support them. They are ambitious for their young people, and have a number of statutory duties to ensure all reach their full potential.

There is cause for celebration. Youth unemployment is beginning to fall from the recession peak and teenage disengagement is at an all-time low. Young people are taking more responsibility, becoming less likely to offend, and to drink or smoke underage, and teenage pregnancy continues to drop. Councils are proud of their role in helping young people achieve this.

Significant challenges remain. Youth unemployment has been rising for some time and will not be resolved by growth alone. Still 733,000 young people are unemployed, 220,000 have been looking for work for over a year and those unemployed for over two years has increased by 330 per cent since 2005.

Those in work are more likely to be less secure, underemployed and underpaid; 40 per cent of young people are unemployed or underemployed. Unless something changes, we project around a third of all young people will still be unemployed or underemployed by 2018.

Public services are under growing financial pressure. Should education, health and international development remain protected from cuts, other areas of public spending will reduce by an average of 17 per cent up to 2018/19. Government cannot afford to continue spending inefficiently on a fragmented range of 40 centralised services and schemes that duplicate, compete and conflict locally.

There is huge capability and capacity across the system. Locally, partners know what works, consistently pointing to the success of joined-up services focusing on the unique needs individuals and employers in local economies. But the system is a long way from achieving this.

In our view the next government must develop a coherent national strategy for supporting youth transitions that focuses on:

- **Helping the vulnerable by reducing complexity and intervening early** – Vulnerable young people are served least well by complexity but are most likely to encounter it. Successive administrations have built up a range of initiatives that trip over each other in trying to reach young people, incentivise partners to focus on the easiest to help, and create barriers that mainstream services must overcome to work together in helping them.

- **Matching skills and training to local economies** – Young people not pursuing the university route need a clearer track from education into the world of work. The post 16 learning landscape is increasingly fragmented and centralised, with little scope for institutions to collectively engage and meet the needs of local employers, and patchy advice for young people to navigate it. As a result, the skills gap is widening and teenage apprenticeships are falling.
- **Responding to young peoples' lengthening transition into work** – Services must adapt to a new youth jobs market which includes longer periods of uncertainty in underemployment, insecure employment, unemployment and inactivity. A half of all unemployed young people not in education receive no official help, those that do are poorly served by a benefits system designed to help adults into any job as soon as possible.

Government cannot achieve this alone. Evidence from City Deals, the Troubled Families programme, the Raising of the Participation Age and countless local initiatives demonstrate that local delivery makes the difference. Westminster must work with councils, allowing them and their partners to locally enable, coordinate and plan services so that they make sense to people and places around the country.

We want to refocus services around the long-term outcomes of our young people, to deliver this central and local government should work together to:

- Replace Jobcentre Plus, the Work Programme and the range of complex reengagement and advice initiatives with **a multiagency Youth Transitions Service coordinated and delivered locally to support every 14 to 24 year old to participate in education, training or work regardless of their employment status**
- Devolve existing spending on further education and apprenticeship support through local **Transition to Work Strategies providing coherent vocational education options for young people matched to the needs of local economies**
- **Consolidate accountabilities and funding into locally convened 14 – 24 Partnerships** that would build on existing partnership arrangements and become responsible for delivering long-term outcomes through the Youth Transition Service and Transition to Work Strategies

Based on the evidence of what councils are already delivering, we would aim to half youth disengagement and reduce long-term unemployment by a third by the end of the next Parliament, delivering savings of up to £1.7 billion a year.

But we can achieve more. Decentralised models can revitalise future generations' faith in democracy, giving young people the platform and power to shape and scrutinise the local services that matter most to them. And we can build a new relationship with employers, giving them the power to shape demand-led training and in return create more and better opportunities for young people.

But reform will take time, and there are large numbers of more vulnerable young people that need help now. In particular, we recommend government and councils should take immediate steps to:

- Establish a locally coordinated **job subsidy programme for the 220,000 young people long-term unemployed**
- **Ensure every young person has high quality impartial careers advice and guidance** at school by giving partnerships of schools, colleges and councils funding to plan and commission an independent offer
- Enable councils to fulfil their duties to support participation by **making councils lead commissioners of services for vulnerable young people disengaged or at risk of becoming so**, and establishing clear lines of local accountability to ensure that the range of provision locally serves young people well
- **Realign the vast majority of public spending on apprenticeships to young people who are not already in work**, and expanding the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers to be devolved to councils or Local Enterprise Partnerships
- **Remove vulnerable young people entering the adult benefits system for the first time from the ‘work first’ principle** that underpins Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme

Now, as always, we will continue to emphasise the strengths of locally joined-up, targeted services – we stand by this and the evidence that they work.

Youth participation in work and learning, trends and challenges

Youth participation in work and learning, trends and challenges

Every individual is different, and every place is different. Beneath global, European and national economic and social trends, the economic downturn has had a differential impact on people and the places in which they live. Similarly, growth will look and feel very different across the country.

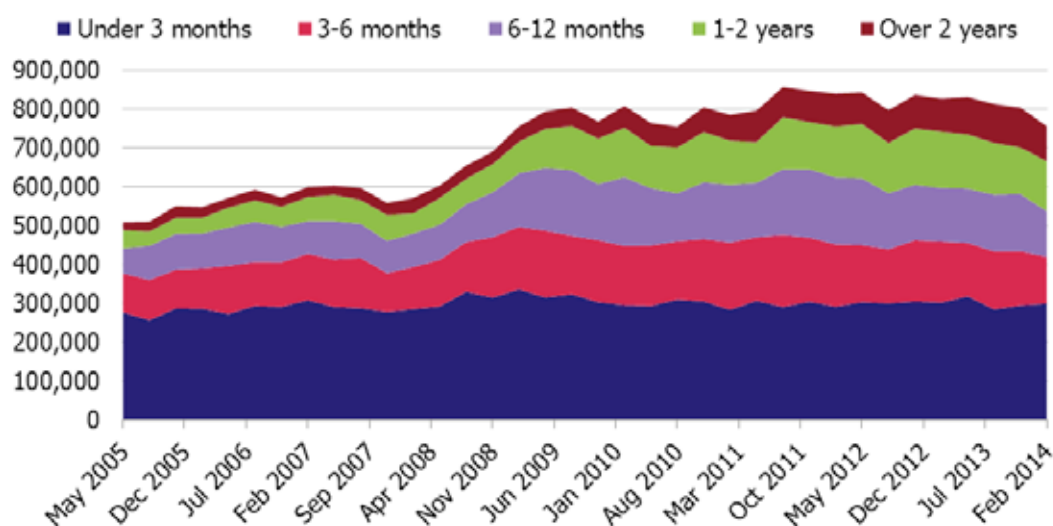
Some young people are able to prosper during recession, some may struggle but are well placed to benefit from growth as it emerges, but some are squeezed out of opportunities and will struggle to ever fully recover. We are most concerned about this last group.

Our young people face a number of challenges:

Youth employment is falling from its peak in 2012 but overall the recession has had a greater impact on young people than adults. Still 15 per cent of the economically active 18 to 24 year olds are unemployed, compared to 5 per cent for those aged 25 to 49. The number of young people unemployed now stands at around 733,000, and 1.09 million are not in work, education or training¹.

The recession has pushed some young people so far from the jobs market they may never fully recover. The number of young people unemployed less than three months has stayed relatively constant since 2005. However youth unemployment has largely been driven by young people remaining unemployed for longer, 220,000 have been unemployed for over a year increasing by 225 per cent since 2005, and 90,000 young people have been looking for work for over two years, a 330 per cent increase since 2005 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Youth unemployment by duration, England and Wales



Source: Inclusion analysis for the LGA, 2014

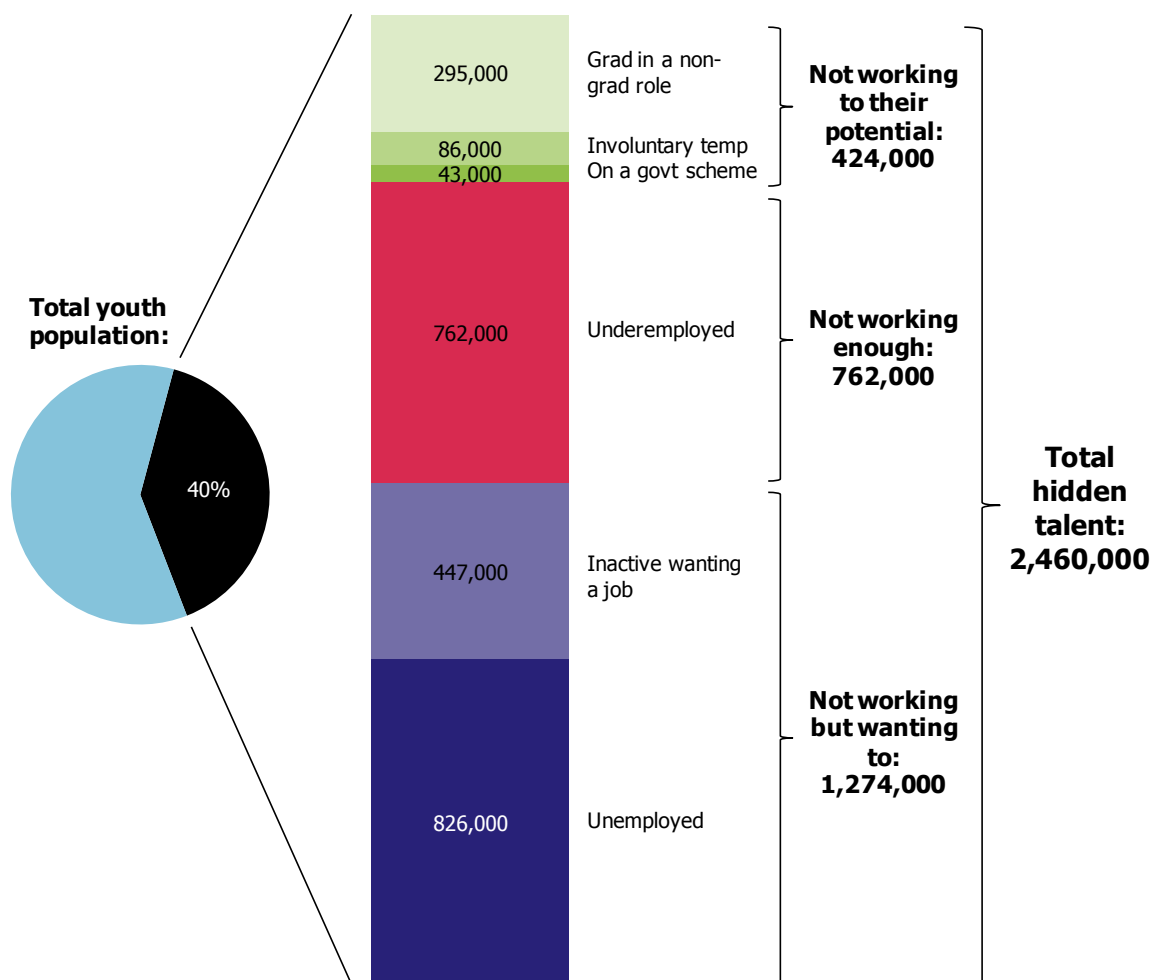
Almost half of all unemployed young people that are not students are not receiving official help into work. There are 237,300 young people that are unemployed and not participating in education who do not claim Jobseekers Allowance, and so receive no official government support back into work. This has increased by nearly 20 per cent since 2012².

¹ Office of National Statistics, October 2014

² Office of National Statistics, October 2014, Inclusion analysis

But being in work is not enough, more young people are becoming underemployed wanting an additional 2 billion hours a year in total. Around 762,000 young people are in work but wanting more hours and a further 424,000 are counted as being in work but are not working to their potential. Around 2.5 million young people are unemployed or underemployed, which we call the total hidden talent, approximately 40 per cent of the youth population (Figure 2).

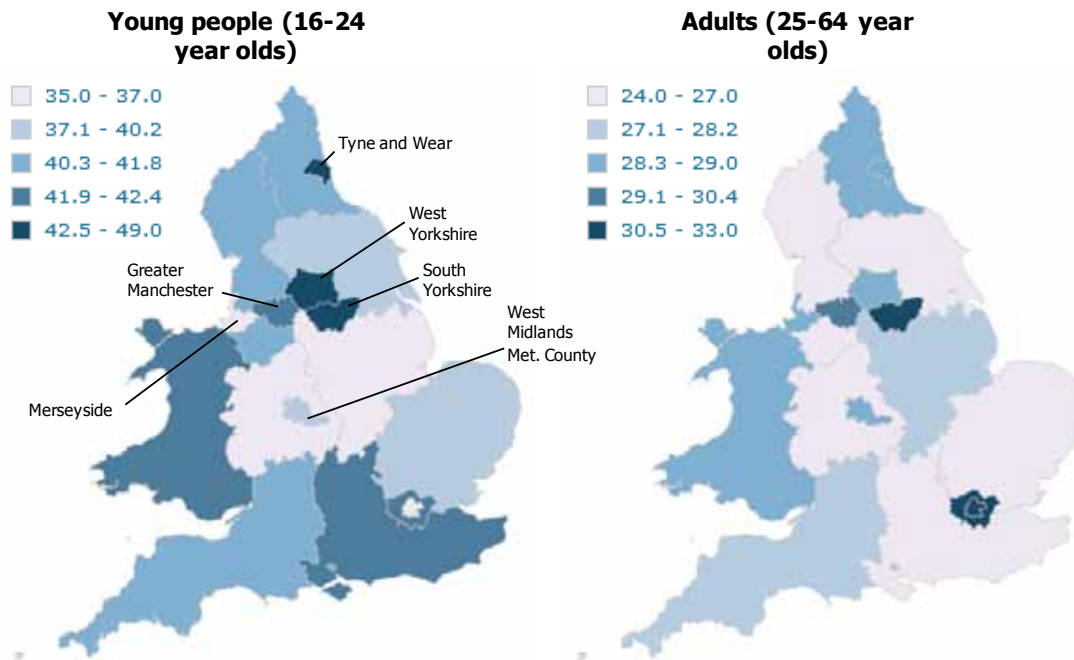
Figure 2: Summary of the total hidden talent, young people (16-24 year olds), England and Wales, Oct 2012–Sep 2013



Source: Totalling Hidden Talent, Inclusion/LGA, 2014

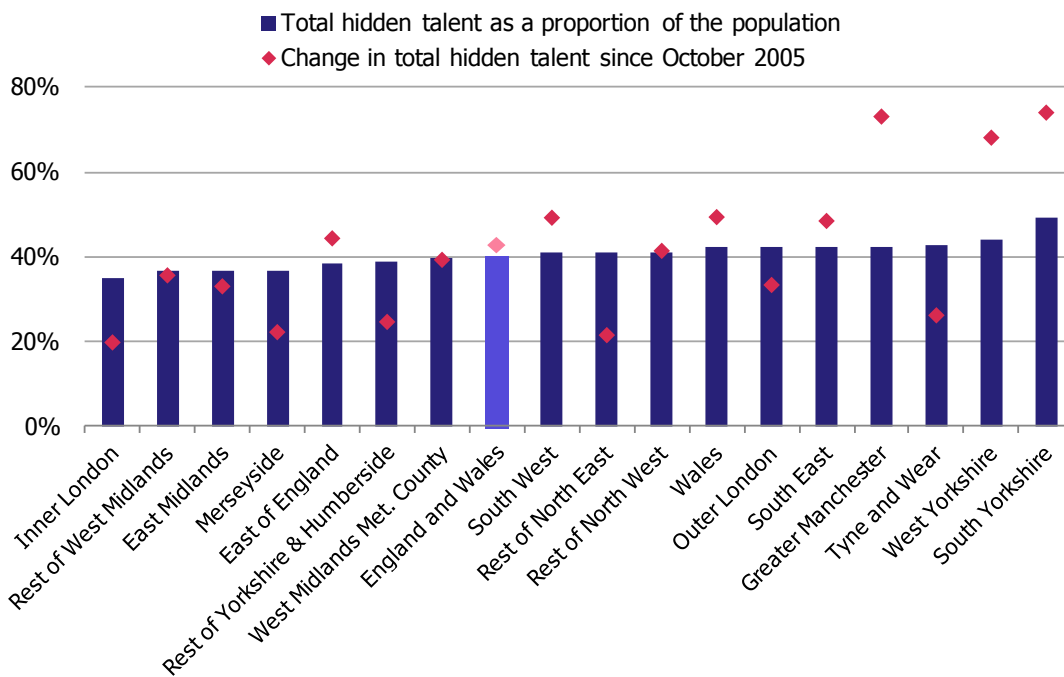
There is complex and significant variation across local economies (Figure 3). In particular, local areas with the highest youth unemployment and underemployment have also seen the greatest increase since 2005. South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Greater Manchester have amongst the highest youth total hidden talent and have seen the greatest increase since 2005. The North East has above average numbers of unemployed and underemployed young people but has seen a relatively small increase since 2005 (Figure 4).

Figure 3: Total hidden talent as a proportion of the population (percentage), young people compared to adults, England and Wales, Oct 2012 – Sep 2013



Source: Totalling Hidden Talent, Inclusion/LGA, 2014

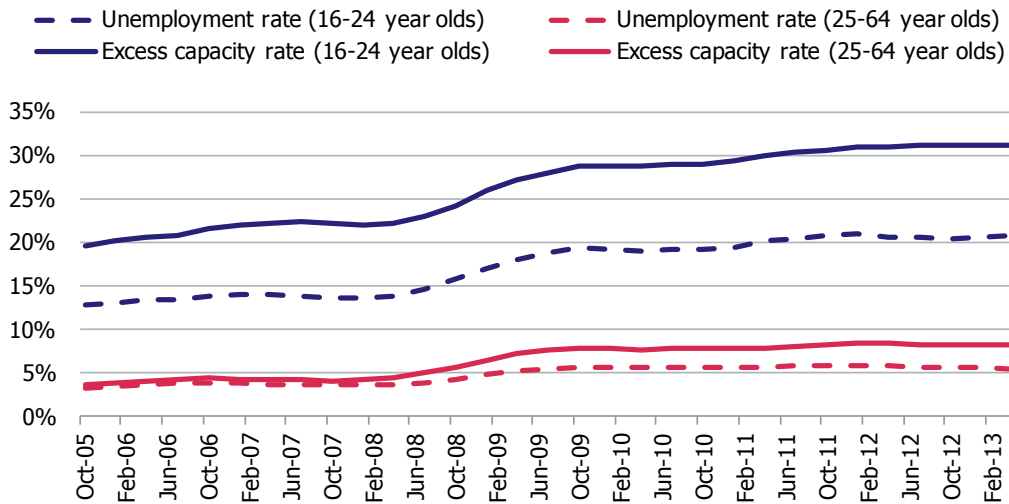
Figure 4: Total hidden talent rates and change in total hidden talent since 2005, young people (16-24 year olds), England and Wales, Oct 2012–Sep 2013



Source: Totalling Hidden Talent, Inclusion/LGA, 2014

Youth unemployment is a structural issue that will not be resolved by growth alone, it was rising before the recession, increasing from 11.8 per cent in 2003 to 14.6 per cent in 2007. Around 20 per cent of young people's total capacity to work was going unused in 2005³. This grew between 2005 and 2008 and rose sharply during recession; almost a third of young people's capacity is now going unused (Figure 5). In contrast, the excess capacity of 24 to 64 year olds only became decoupled from the unemployment rate during the recession.

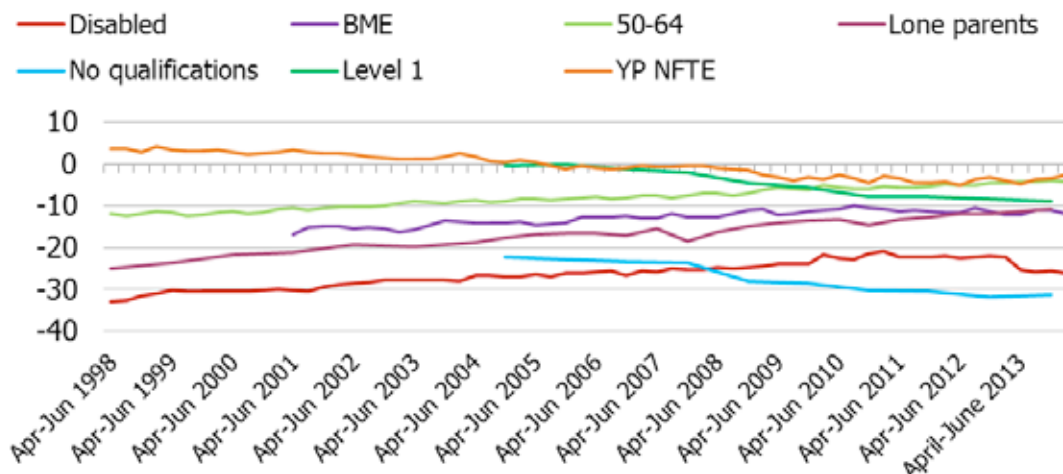
Figure 5: Unemployment and excess capacity rates, young people compared to adults, England and Wales



Source: Totalling Hidden Talent, Inclusion/LGA, 2014

Young people with low or no qualifications are particularly poorly placed to benefit from growth. Compared with the national average, employment rates for young people with low or no qualifications and young people not in full time education have been declining steadily since 2005. Over the same period, the employment rates of other disadvantaged groups, such as lone parents and the disabled, have increased (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Employment rate gaps, disadvantaged groups



Source: Realising talent, Inclusion/LGA, 2014

³ The excess capacity rate is the number of additional hours unemployed and underemployed people want to work, minus the excess hours that 'over-employed' people want to reduce their working time by, as a proportion of all the capacity available in the workforce.

Unless something changes, around a third (2.1 million) of young people will be unemployed or underemployed by 2018. It is likely that the numbers of total youth hidden talent will continue falling but by the end of 2018 around 800,000 more young people will be unemployed and underemployed before the recession in 2007⁴. It is likely that the proportion will be significantly higher in those places where the recession has the most entrenched youth unemployment and underemployment.

The potential costs for young people and the exchequer are significant. An average unemployed young person will spend an extra 2 months a year out of work in their late twenties, earning around £3,000 less a year in their early thirties. Previous estimates have suggested youth unemployment will cost the exchequer £28 billion over the next decade – at least £689 million a year on benefits, £2.2 billion in lost tax, and £6.3 billion in lost economic output⁵.

Young people's disadvantage in the jobs market is long-term and has been further entrenched by recession, recent falls are welcome but unemployment is still far too high and underemployment poses significant challenges. Every individual and place is different, while some are well placed to benefit from growth as it emerges, many are not.

4 Totalling Hidden Talent, Inclusion / LGA, 2014

5 Youth unemployment: the crisis we cannot afford, ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment, 2012

Public services and principles for reform

Whose outcome is it anyway: rewiring funding and accountabilities

The market of nationally funded provision continues to shift, while there is some excellent practice the majority of that change brings further complexity and uncertainty. Currently, there are around 40 different national schemes, services and payments costing in the region of £15 billion each year, delivered by 10 national departments or agencies, across 14 different age boundaries⁶.

This generates real barriers. **Complexity across services clouds responsibilities to the extent that no one organisation or partnership can be held to account for improving the overall long-term outcomes for young people.** As a result there is little strategic planning, little sense of the balance between apprenticeships, further education, reengagement provision, academic studies and employment support across each area, and little scope for young people, employers or local and central government to understand and resolve duplication, gaps or underperformance.

Instead, tens of thousands of institutions are encouraged to focus on a range of national objectives that, without meaningful local brokerage, can reinforce barriers between services around young people. For instance schools are encouraged to prioritise academic learning; sixth forms, colleges, and work-based learner providers compete for learners; councils, the Youth Contract, European Social Fund, Youth Engagement Fund, National Citizen Service all compete to support participation; Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme focus on getting people off benefits as soon as possible.

Councils are best placed to take a strategic view across places, mapping provision to understand where there is duplication and gaps, and to build relationships between institutions to ensure that they collectively serve young people and employers across an area⁷. Ofsted agree, and have warned that nationally managed strategies have too often been poorly aligned with local delivery, recommending that clear lines of local accountability be established through councils or Local Enterprise Partnerships⁸.

In our view, there has never been a greater financial case for public services to work together to strategically plan, use and target investment in places. Should education, health and international development remain protected, all other departments will need to make an average 17 per cent of further spending reductions up to 2018/19 in order to deliver government's spending ambitions⁹.

Local government is already adapting to 43 per cent budget reductions on youth spending, falling from approximately £916 million in 2009/10 to £522 million by 2014/15¹⁰. By 2018/19 just £469 million will be left for council services supporting youth transition. The National Audit Office has warned that cuts to councils put government's objectives to reengage young people at real risk¹¹.

⁶ See Annex 1

⁷ Councils supporting youth transitions, LGA, 2014

⁸ Securing a better future for all at 16 and beyond, annual lecture for further education and skills 2014, Ofsted, 2014

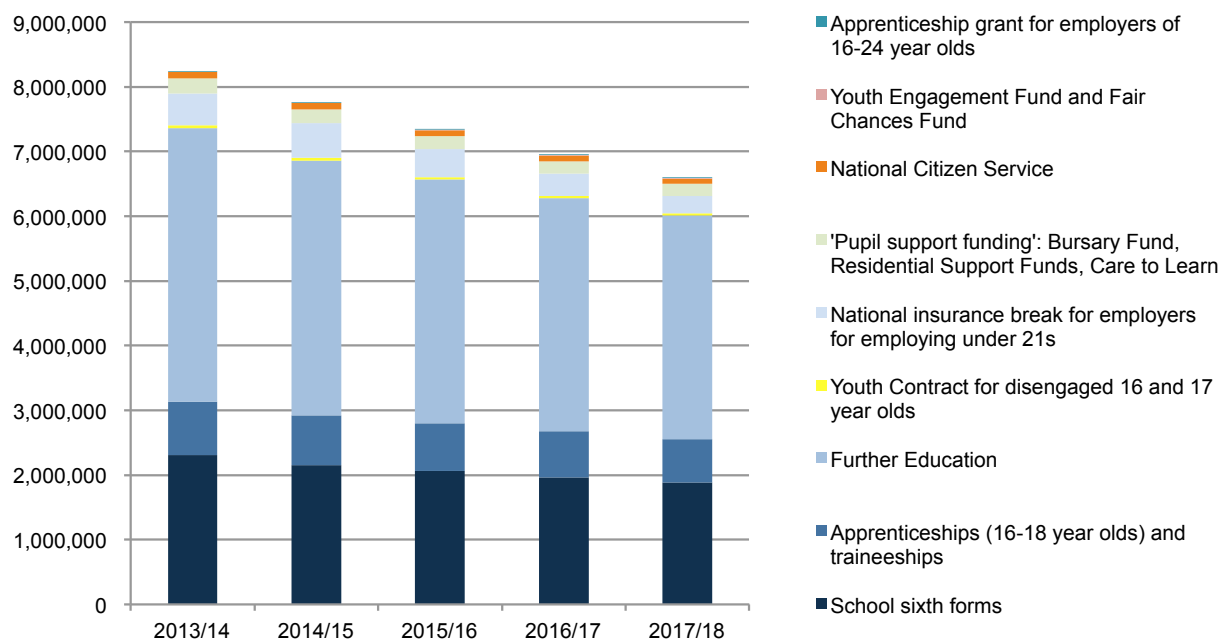
⁹ The Institute of Fiscal Studies Green Budget, Institute of Fiscal Studies, 2014

¹⁰ LGA analysis of Section 251, which will not include all council spending supporting youth participation

¹¹ 16 to 18 year old participation in education and training, National Audit Office, 2014

Most partners will be under similar pressures. If budget reductions were to be applied across post-16 spending, national spending is likely to fall from the region of £8.2 billion a year to £6.6 billion a year by 2018/19 (Figure 7). The average area, or AnyPlace¹², would need to save £46 million between 2013/14 and 2018/19, leaving just £185 million a year.

Figure 7: Forecasted spending reductions applied across post-16 learning and engagement activity (not including council spending)



Source: LGA analysis

The centralised public service model is poorly placed to adapt to further reductions while improving outcomes for young people. Blanket national budget reductions prevent partners from working together strategically to find savings and protect all young people. Instead they risk 'salami slicing' individual national budgets in a way that can intensify competition and reinforce the barriers between services, entrenching duplication and gaps that serve vulnerable young people least well.

This is happening to some extent already. For example government's protection of pre 16 budgets has concentrated 12 per cent reductions in post-16 learning and subsequently led to further 17.5 per cent funding reduction for all 18 year olds. These reductions, combined with pressure on schools to focus on academic achievement, have the greatest impact on pupils that struggle in academic learning and reinforce the gap between pre and post 16 institutions and academic and vocational learning.

¹² Anyplace defined as: Population size, 1.5 million; Number of Households, 581,6000

There are efficiencies to be found within nationally contracted programmes as well as across them. For instance:

- Youth Contract duplicates council support to reengage young people and is channelled through a regional level of prime providers that costs a management fee of between 20 and 25 per cent and 30 and 50 per cent before subcontracting to providers working with young people¹³.
- National Citizen Service (NCS) duplicates council youth services support and costs over £1,200 per participant for a six week programme, over £50 per hour of volunteering, and is due to expand at a cost of £100 million a year; a scheme in Germany funds a whole year of work-based volunteering at a similar cost per head¹⁴.
- The National Insurance Break for employers taking on under 21s will cost up to £500 million, despite similar schemes being prone to large deadweight costs for subsidising employment that would have occurred anyway

In our view, accountability and spending supporting youth transitions should be brought together nationally, and around a strategic local plan delivering a set of agreed long-term outcomes for every young person in each area, in line with the vision set out by Total Place and the Community Budget¹⁵. The next government and councils should work together to:

- Undertake an independent value for money review of the totality of public spending on support for youth transitions at the national level and within a number of different local area reviews
- Provide a coherent national strategy for funding services supporting youth transitions and move towards providing stable long-term funding settlements to local partnerships, giving them the flexibility to join-up services around young people and employers
- Reduce complexity and consolidate accountability for delivering long-term outcomes to young people in single local partnerships and a single national Department

¹³ The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training evaluation, Institute for Employment Studies, 2014

¹⁴ Services for young people, Education Select Committee, 2011

¹⁵ Whole Place Community Budgets: A Review of the Potential for Aggregation, Ernst and Young, 2013

Services with complex needs: personalised support for the vulnerable

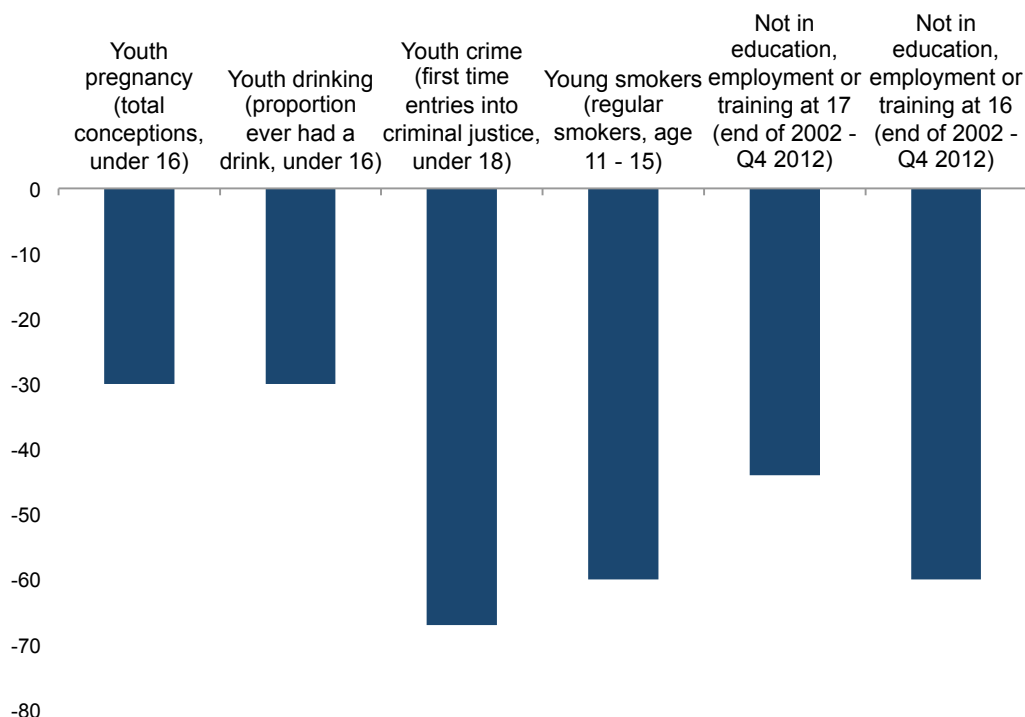
There is some way to go in helping the vulnerable transition into work, which are served least well by complexity but are most likely to deal with it. The complexity is particularly problematic around 16 to 19 year olds, for who councils have the duty to support as part of the Raising of the Participation Age, but very little influence over levers necessary for achieving it.

Councils know how to best reduce youth disengagement. The most successful models build consistent relationships with young people through personal advisers, becoming a trusted source of advice and working with key partners, such as in housing, health, transport, families and employers, to overcome barriers to participation.

There have been some real successes. Between 2002 and 2012 teenage disengagement, youth crime, underage drinking, smoking and pregnancy have all fallen significantly (Figure 8). Each success is built on principles of early intervention through decentralised, joined-up local services. For instance council-led multi-agency Youth Offending Teams have reduced the number of young people entering the criminal system by 67 per cent since 2002.

This model is supported by evidence from within programmes. While the national Youth Contract for disengaged 16 and 17 year olds has helped just 35 per cent of young people into work or learning, locally joined-up pilots in Leeds have helped 70 per cent and 74 per cent in Bradford, and over 60 per cent in Newcastle and Gateshead. The independent evaluation emphasised ‘the need for a coordinated local response to identify, support and meet the needs of young people’¹⁶.

Figure 8: Positive youth trends, percentage change (2002-2012)



¹⁶ The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training evaluation, Institute for Employment Studies, 2014

For many vulnerable young people, however, services are insufficiently able to deliver sustainable positive outcomes. **Despite councils having the statutory duties to support the participation of young people, they have no influence over a vast range of national schemes and services critical for delivering it** (Figure 9). Currently, young people turning 16 enter a complex and insufficiently targeted array of national services and programmes facilitated by a default approach of establishing new centralised schemes.

Commissioning services in this way, through different supply chains and in isolation from local services, reduces the overall effectiveness and efficiency. Young people that most need a consistent and personalised offer of support are at risk of bouncing between a market of short-term programmes that struggle to resolve underlying barriers to participation and create gaps.

Government has recognised the limitations of disjointed services but struggled to overcome Westminster silos. The 16 to 24 Review was set up with the aim to simplify ‘a maze of different programmes’ but has instead increased complexity, creating three more nationally funded schemes working with a similar group of young people: the Youth Engagement Fund, Fair Chances Fund, and Jobcentre Plus pilot working with disengaged 16 and 17 year olds (see Annex).

Councils have the task of tracking young people through this maze, identifying those at risk of dropping out, and supporting them if they do, but are reliant on the good will of partners to cooperate. The majority of partners do want to work cooperatively in local areas but must overcome significant national funding or performance disincentives to do so.

Many more partners are free to ignore local government and its statutory duties. For instance the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service has refused to share data forcing councils into redirecting resources into calling, texting and knocking on doors to identify whether young people are at university or are disengaged and need help. Despite challenges councils have successfully reduced the proportion of young people ‘unknown’ from 8.3 per cent to 7.1 per cent over the last two years.

It is becoming increasingly important that investment prevents disengagement rather than delaying it. While teenage disengagement has dropped to all-time lows the proportions of 19 to 24 year olds disengaging remains stubbornly high. A large proportion of engagement spending is currently delivered through mainstream services, for example the pupil premium by schools, and the bursary fund by colleges. While this support provides vital help to many young people, supporting participation in this way and in isolation of other services risks too many young people being kept in learning that may not be right for them, rather than addressing underlying barriers to participation.

Increasingly, engagement provision should: be able to offer an alternative to mainstream learning as well as enabling participation within it, such as through small voluntary sector providers; give institutions the power to flex the mainstream curriculum and learning around vulnerable individuals, and combine and co-fund with wider services, such as Troubled Families, housing and health services.

In our view government should set a coherent national participation strategy delivered locally by councils and partners that can build on their success in bringing together services around vulnerable young people as early as possible – such as they have done in reducing youth offending, teenage pregnancy and teenage disengagement.

In particular, local and central government should work together to:

- Realign funding with statutory duties by making councils the lead commissioners of all youth engagement programmes locally, including any successor to the Youth Contract, Youth Engagement Fund, Bursary Fund and Traineeships
- Place a duty on all partners to cooperate with councils in fulfilling a collective duty to reduce youth disengagement, incentivising the co-funding of reengagement provision from councils, schools, colleges and other providers like Jobcentre Plus, and smoothing the transition of vulnerable groups into the jobs market
- Make the Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) the single main repository for understanding youth participation, and segment young people's participation status to take account of what is known by councils, for example when a young person is known to have left an area though their new destination is unknown

Figure 9: Council statutory duties compared with levers over contributing government funded provision

Local authority duty	Government funded provision	Local authority levers
<p>Support the Raising of the Participation Age and secure suitable education and training provision for all young people</p>	<p>Sixth Forms – schools, colleges and others funded by and accountable to the EFA, DfE and Ofsted</p>	<p>None</p>
	<p>Further Education – colleges and training providers funded by and accountable to the EFA, DfE and Ofsted</p>	<p>Limited (gap-filling)</p>
	<p>Apprenticeships – providers funded by and accountable to NAS, DBIS and DfE</p>	<p>None</p>
	<p>National Careers Service – funded by and accountable to SFA and DBIS</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Reduce youth disengagement among 16-19 year olds, including tracking young people</p>	<p>Youth Contract for 16 and 17 year olds – providers funded by the national Youth Contract funded by the EFA</p>	<p>None</p>
	<p>16 to 19 Bursary Fund – colleges accountable to EFA and DfE</p>	<p>None</p>
	<p>Traineeships – approved providers funded by and accountable to the EFA and DfE</p>	<p>None</p>
	<p>European Social Fund – influenced by LEPs, funded by and accountable to DWP and the European Commission</p>	<p>Limited (through LEP)</p>
	<p>ESF Youth Employment Initiative – influenced by LEPs, funded by and accountable to DWP and the European Commission</p>	<p>Limited (through LEP)</p>
	<p>Innovation Fund (rounds 1 and 2) – successful providers funded by and accountable to DWP</p>	<p>None</p>
	<p>National Citizen Service – providers funded by and accountable to NCS Trust and Cabinet Office</p>	<p>None</p>
	<p>Big Lottery Fund Talent Match – providers funded by the Big Lottery Fund programme</p>	<p>None</p>
	<p>Jobcentre Plus pilot working with 16 and 17 year olds – funded by and accountable to DWP</p>	<p>Limited</p>
<p>Jobcentre Plus support to young people claiming Jobseekers Allowance – funded by and accountable to DWP</p>	<p>None</p>	

Destination unknown: building skills for jobs that exist locally

Policy-makers continue to emphasise the importance of employer engagement in helping young people prepare for the world of work but without articulating how the system can best practically achieve this. It is no simple task. **There are 2.23 million local business units across England, with 99 per cent employing less than 100 people, and all wanting a simple and supportive route into the education and employment system.**

Councils have strong relationships with their local employers and an understanding of local economies, built up through their efforts to grow places in partnerships such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, and through day to day relationships through the planning system, infrastructure development, procurement and the tax system. Councils around the country use these relationships to meet employer skills needs and create opportunities for young people, but in isolation of the centralised skills system rather than within it¹⁷.

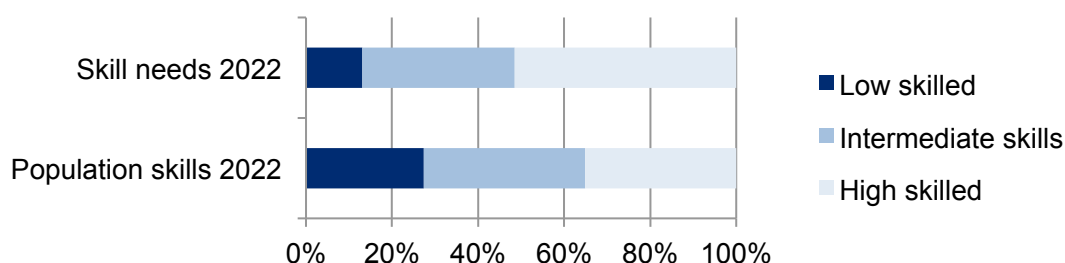
Successive administrations have sought to manage the public service relationships with employers through multiple Departments in Whitehall. This has not worked for the majority of employers, creating a supply-driven model encouraging thousands of institutions to separately seek out employers to source opportunities for young people primarily to meet national criteria, rather than the needs of employers.

With the greatest will, it is impossible for any single agency to coordinate this activity in a way that delivers the simplicity and stability that is necessary to build reciprocal relationships with employers. The repercussions are significant, leading to:

Skills mismatches between qualifications and job opportunities. In 2011/12 94,000 people qualified for hair and beauty qualifications for just 18,000 jobs and too many young people churn between low level programmes rather than progressing and developing their skills¹⁸. Colleges want the best for young people, but are encouraged by the national lagged learner funding model to offer any course, competing with other providers to attract learners, rather than to work collectively to create a mix of courses meeting the needs of local employers.

The skills system faces an enormous challenge. Should trends continue, there will be 9.2 million low skill workers chasing 3.7 million low skill jobs by 2022, while employers struggle to find people with the high skills that they will need (Figure 10). The skills mismatch risks holding back projected growth by up to 25 per cent up by 2022, the equivalent of £374 billion in the economy¹⁹.

Figure 10: Projected skills needs and population skills levels 2022



Source: Realising Talent, Inclusion/LGA, 2014

17 Councils supporting youth transitions, LGA, 2014

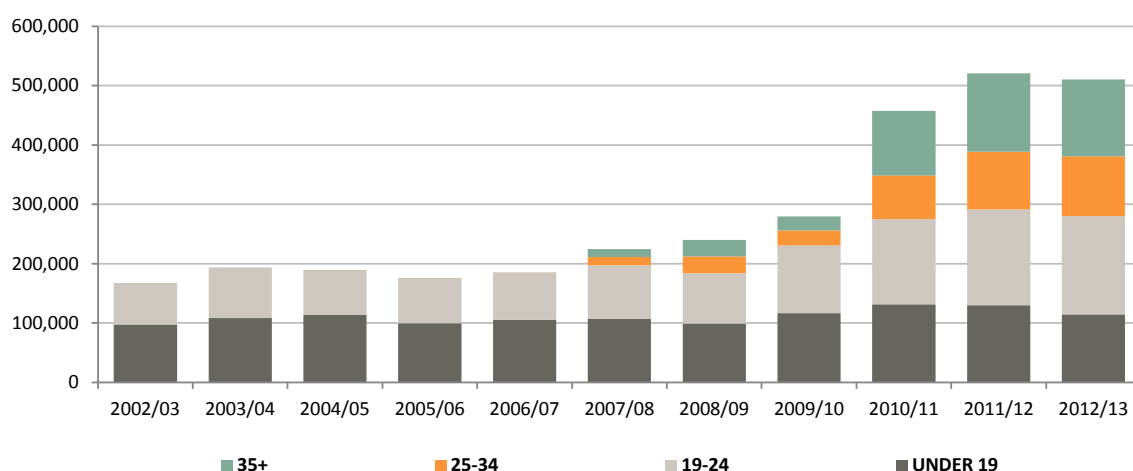
18 Learning and Skills, the report of her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills, Ofsted, 2012

19 Realising Talent, Inclusion/LGA, 2014

Fewer opportunities for young people. Apprentices are increasingly likely to be in work already, older, and in sectors associated with low skills and low pay²⁰. The number of under-19 apprenticeship starts continues to fall and there are now more people over 35 starting apprenticeships than teenagers. This is despite a large and growing demand from young people. In 2012/13 just 110,000 teenagers started an apprenticeship from 880,000 applications via the Apprenticeships Vacancies website, while 230,000 over 25s started an apprenticeship while just 65,000 applying via the same website.

The challenge in engaging employers has an impact wider than apprenticeships. Early assessments of study programmes and traineeships by Ofsted and the National Audit Office have both warned about the availability and quality of work experience placements; only 5,400 teenagers have started traineeships so far and just 43 per cent of providers saying they would deliver traineeships have actually recorded starts with many struggling to build relationships with employers²¹.

Figure 11: Apprenticeship starts by age



Source: IPPR/LGA analysis of FE Data Library

Fewest opportunities for the most vulnerable. Young people disengaged or long-term unemployed benefit most from paid work as an experience or as a guaranteed objective to aim towards, but this group of young people can represent a greater risk for employers. The Youth Contract wage subsidies aimed to give 160,000 long-term unemployed young people a subsidised job, but struggled to engage employers creating just 20,000 places before being scrapped in 2014²². Furthermore as many as 80 per cent of opportunities subsidised by the scheme would have been created anyway²³.

20 The LGA is working with the Institute of Public Policy Research to look at the future of apprenticeships, to launch later in 2014

21 16 to 18 year old participation in education and training, National Audit Office, 2014

22 Youth Contract Official Statistics, DWP, 2014

23 Early evaluation of the Youth Contract wage incentive scheme, TNS BMRB / DWP, 2013

In order to achieve better outcomes and efficiencies it is becoming essential that the relationship between public services and employers is radically rewired around the local economies that the majority operate within. Local partnerships should be empowered to broker local employer demand within the skills and employment system, and in return create the experience and learning opportunities that all young people need.

In our view, the next government and councils should work together to:

- Ensure that all employers have the platform to coherently and easily shape skills funding by completing the transfer of further education funding to local partnerships in line with the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act
- Focus the majority of apprenticeship spending towards young people not already in work, devolving the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers programme enabling councils to work with local employers to create opportunities for young people
- Reshape the relationship with all employers with the aim of addressing the long-term challenges for young people in the labour market, including productivity, in-work progression, job security and pay

Hope with honesty: impartial advice and guidance for all

Young people need both inspiration and honesty before committing to a learning choice. Without honesty and high quality information we risk setting young people up for disappointment, which can cost individuals and society dearly.

The world of learning and work has grown more complex, and having the right advice to navigate them grown more important. Young people can access vast amounts of opinion and information online, but the need to match aspirations to the realities of work, to local learning options, and to each individual's circumstances should be the focus for public support. There are already 10 times more people aiming to work in culture, media and sports than there will be jobs in 2020²⁴.

Councils continue to help schools with their duty to provide impartial advice, by supporting them to commission provision, providing high quality local labour market intelligence, developing local improvement tools, or by providing a traded service. While there is some excellent practice, **councils are reporting significant variations in the quantity and quality between institutions.** Only 2 per cent of councils agreed that schools were providing young people with sufficient careers advice to make effective decisions on their post-16 education²⁵, echoing the findings of Ofsted²⁶, and the Education Select Committee²⁷.

In our view, this is because schools have been given insufficient clarity of what pupils should expect to receive, little support to implement the duty and upskill school staff to commission or provide advice services, and insufficient priority or certainty of careers advice in the Ofsted inspection framework.

Furthermore **many schools are in the difficult position of having to provide impartial advice to their pupils in a competitive market while holding a financial interest in the decisions they take.** With pupils worth at least £4,000 to providers, schools with sixth forms are incentivised to encourage learners not to move into other institutions or apprenticeships²⁸. This pressure is likely to increase as budgets and the youth cohort size continues to fall.

The implication for individuals will vary. While disengaged young people generally have access to council and other support and academic achievers have the schools attention, many young people who are uncertain on whether to pursue an academic or vocational post 16 route are not getting the impartial advice they need. Policy Exchange have estimated 31 per cent of young people who do A-Levels drop out of their studies, and that many would have been more suited to vocational learning options. The drop out costs government in region of £300 million a year²⁹. A more recent study in London found a quarter of all Year 12 Level 3 starters dropped out of their sixth form before turning 18 years old³⁰.

The fracturing of the responsibility to provide advice and support between schools, colleges, councils, Jobcentre Plus and the National Careers Service (NCS) has reinforced confusion and challenges. There are few spaces where young people can drop in at any time to receive impartial advice. The NCS offers remote online and telephone support to young people, but

24 Nothing in common, the careers aspirations of young Britons mapped against projected labour market demand, Education and Employers, 2013

25 Supply Chain for Skills and Employment Survey, Local Government Association, 2014

26 Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from September 2012, Ofsted, 2013

27 Careers guidance for young people, Education Select Committee, 2013

28 16 to 18 year old participation in education and training, National Audit Office, 2014

29 Technical matters, building high quality technical and vocational route through the education system, Policy Exchange, 2013

30 What is happening with 17+ participation, attainment and progression in London? Institute of Education, University of London, 2014

in its first year the NCS had just 27,500 contacts from 16 to 18 year olds via phone, web chat, email or SMS, equivalent to just 1.4 per cent of the age group assuming each contact was from a different young person.

Looking forward, careers advice to young people will need to adapt to the modern employment market where a job for life is increasingly rare. Young people are now likely to have nine different careers over their lifetime. As well as guiding young people to make positive short term choices, careers advice and support will need to help build resilience, working with individuals to equip them with the tools to adapt their skills and experiences to new job opportunities and to positively handle change.

There is a great need to define and refine the role of careers advice in supporting young people throughout their journey through education and into adulthood. Government should set the tone of this nationally, but empower partners locally to create a local offer that meets the needs of different groups of young people across their town, city or county.

In our view government and councils should work together to:

- Clarify what careers information, advice and guidance pupils should expect to receive while at school and college, for instance in terms of minimum hours of face to face careers advice per pupil each year, and ensure schools are funded to deliver it
- Set out clearly how Ofsted will take into account careers advice provision into the school and college inspection framework, for instance by only awarding good and excellent judgements if institutions have good or excellent careers provision in place
- Return school accountability and improvement to local authorities, requiring all schools, colleges, the NCS and local authorities cooperate in improving careers advice provision across an area

Protracted transitions to work: adapting to a new youth jobs market

Young people starting their career today are far more likely to encounter a longer, more uncertain and hazardous transition to work, including periods cycling between unemployment, insecure or short term employment and inactivity before getting a foothold in the jobs market.

Young people are now nearly twice more likely than adults to cycle between periods of unemployment and low pay. Young people in work are more likely to be underemployed and almost 60 per cent earn below the living wage³¹. When looking at both unemployment and underemployment, a third of the youth population's total capacity in the jobs market is going unused³² with large variations across places that have been exacerbated by the recession³³.

Employment services have not yet caught up. There are around 240,000 young people who do not claim Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and so receive no government employment support, around 50 per cent of unemployed young people that are not in education. This has increased by 20 per cent since 2012.

Young people that do seek help instantly fall into a benefit system designed for adults that have lost their jobs rather than to help them start careers, and are pushed into any job as soon as possible. While this can suit some young people, for many it serves to stretch the transition towards sustained employment and increase the risk of disengagement. Over half of young people using Jobcentre Plus did not find it useful, and less than 1 in 10 found it very useful³⁴.

Vulnerable young people are least well supported by this approach, because:

- Jobcentre Plus advisers are encouraged to move as many people off benefit as quickly as possible and have limited leverage over key supportive services, such as mental health, offender history, housing, addiction or family support
- Work Programme providers face a similar challenge in working with different services and payment structures pool 18 to 24 year old JSA claimants into one national payment group, risking providers lose focus on those that are harder to help³⁵ and on places with more entrenched long-term unemployment³⁶. This can lead to larger investment in people and areas that need it least; in parts of Sussex one in three young people find work through the Work Programme, in Devon it is one in ten.
- Young people that spend two years on the Work Programme without finding a job face the 'toughest Jobcentre regime' including mandatory work activity and sanctions. So far, 8.4 per cent of young people claiming JSA have been sanctioned while the rate for over 25s is just 3.5 per cent³⁷. In total 41 per cent of all sanctions are for 18 to 24 year olds.

31 Work in progress: low pay and progression in London and the UK, Inclusion, 2013

32 The excess capacity rate is the number of additional hours unemployed and underemployed people want to work, minus the excess hours that 'over-employed' people want to reduce their working time by, as a proportion of all the capacity available in the workforce.

33 Totalling Hidden Talent: youth unemployment and underemployment in England and Wales, Inclusion / LGA, 2014

34 Investigating the views of unemployed young people, TNS BMRB / LGA, 2013

35 The Work Programme, National Audit Office, 2014

36 Alright for some? Fixing the Work Programme, locally, Institute for Public Policy Research, 2014

37 Welfare sanctions and conditionality in the UK, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014

There is significant variation between places. The local authority with the highest number of young claimants has almost five times as many as the lowest. The proportions of young people that claim benefits vary from 35.8 per cent in Hartlepool down to 5.5 per cent in Kingston upon Thames, nevertheless areas with lower proportions of young people who are JSA claimants may have large numbers of more vulnerable young people claiming Employment Support Allowance or Income Support as lone parents³⁸.

Young people pushed furthest from opportunities need experience of paid work as soon as possible. The Youth Contract is being scrapped following its failure to help enough young people, just 20,000³⁹ starts falling well short of its aim to help 160,000 young people over three years, and approximately 80 per cent of those starts paying subsidy for jobs that would have existed anyway⁴⁰.

Labour markets have been shifting for decades in a way that disadvantages young people, extending their transition to work and the period of instability and insecurity this brings, but with very different ramifications for young people around the country. We recommend government rapidly respond to this challenge, setting out a coherent national and working with councils to:

- Establish a jobs subsidy programme for the 220,000 young people very long-term unemployed devolved to councils working with local employers
- Ensure vulnerable young people successfully transition into the adult benefits system and removing them from the 'work first' principle that underpins the Jobcentre Plus and Work Programme
- Explore the development of a Youth Transition Allowance to replace Jobseekers Allowance for young people under 24 years old, financially supporting participation in learning and during job search
- Develop and pilot an approach for supporting work retention and in-work progression

38 Hidden talents: national programmes for young people, Inclusion / LGA, 2013

39 Youth Contract Official Statistics, Department for Work and Pensions, 2014

40 Early evaluation of the Youth Contract wage incentive scheme, TNS BMRB / DWP, 2013

Political apathy and falling trust: entrust and empower young people

Young people vote less in the UK than in any other country in the European Union. Just 38 per cent of young people under 25 have voted in any election in the last three years, 18 per cent less than the EU average⁴¹. Only 39 per cent think voting is a civic duty compared with 80 per cent of over 65s, this gap did not exist in 1964, and has quadrupled since 1992⁴².

The repercussions of this trend continuing are huge, for future generations of young people, and for the future of modern democracy. **But young people are far from disinterested in issues that affect them and their community,** today's young people are far more likely to:

- Volunteer, 35 per cent more young people are volunteering now than in 2010/11⁴³
- Care for others, 20 per cent more 5 to 17 year olds were providing unpaid care in 2011 than in 2001⁴⁴
- Engage in social issues, 66 per cent of teachers think 16 and 17 year olds were more engaged in social issues than their generation was⁴⁵

Increasing political apathy is not driven by disinterest in community but an indication that **young people are losing faith in the role of the state to help them achieve their goals.** This is underpinned by a complex interaction of economic, social and technological factors, but is not helpful that four fifths of teenagers feel they are unfairly represented in the media, and that apathy reinforces the risk that governments prioritise the interests of older generations that elect them⁴⁶.

The voice and influence of young people must be incorporated into the delivery of services that matter to them, with the aim of improving the responsiveness, accountability and quality of public services, but to also begin rebuilding their faith in public services and the wider political system. And skills and employment matter to young people more than anything, over 475,000 voted to ensure the Youth Parliament focused on: a curriculum to preparing young people for life, combating youth unemployment, and better work experience and careers advice.

The engagement must be structured and real. **Young people need to see and feel their influence over services, involved in developing, scrutinising and leading local services,** rather than drafted into remote focus groups or national surveys. The framework is in place, every single council already has a youth council or young mayor scrutinising and influencing local council services, but many services that matter, such as Jobcentre Plus and the Youth Contract, remain remote and unresponsive to young people.

41 European youth: participation in democratic life, European Commission, 2013

42 British Election Studies Information System

43 Community Life Survey, Cabinet Office, 2014

44 Unpaid care by 5 to 17 year olds in England and Wales, ONS, 2013

45 Introducing Generation Citizen, Demos, 2014

46 Introducing Generation Citizen, Demos, 2014

Central and local government elected leaders and officials should work together to:

- Give young people a scrutiny and leadership role over the entirety of services to them regardless of their provider, including nationally contracted provision, careers advice, Jobcentre Plus
- Develop young people's local public service role as part of a wider learning programme preparing and supporting young people to participate in democratic processes
- Build a long-term strategy to give all future generations the tools, knowledge and hope that the state can and will respond to their concerns and aspirations.

Recommendations and next steps

Recommendations

Long-term public service reform is becoming unavoidable because youth unemployment will not be resolved by growth alone, because government will need to dramatically improve efficiencies across the system, and because the youth labour market is rapidly changing.

By and large, we know what works. A vast range of initiatives, institutions and policy-makers have continuously pointed to the success of joined-up services meeting the long-term individual needs of people and places. The challenge is organising public services to deliver it.

Based on what works locally we recommend that **the next government set out a clear and coherent strategy for supporting the successful transition of all young people**, delivered through decentralised models bringing together accountability and services around young people and employers in places.

Councils are perfectly placed to enable this, and local and central government should work together to:

Replace Jobcentre Plus and the range of complex reengagement and advice initiatives with a Youth Transitions Service creating one locally coordinated and delivered offer supporting every 14 to 24 year old to participate education, employment or training, through:

- Multiagency teams in service hubs offering independent and impartial careers advice, information and job search support to all young people at school, in post 16 education, and up to 24 regardless of their employment status
- Personal Advisers for vulnerable young people, providing consistent outreach support throughout their journey, delivering a personal participation plan and managing referral onto supporting schemes
- Locally commissioned engagement, basic skills and employability provision, and marshalling the market of other available services (such as provided by the voluntary and third sector) across local areas
- Aligning and co-funding wider service support for key services, particularly schools, health, justice, housing and family support programmes
- A nationally administered Youth Transition Allowance replacing Jobseekers Allowance and available to 18 to 24 year olds looking for work or in learning

Decentralise existing spending on further education and apprenticeship support through Transition to Work Strategies providing coherent vocational education options for young people matched to the needs of local economies, by:

- Planning and funding a coherent mix of 16 to 24 Further Education course and qualification options across institutions serving the needs of young people across the area and the brokered leadership of local employers
- Establishing Apprenticeship, Training and Experience Hubs increasing the number and quality of apprenticeship, traineeship, work experience, and advice opportunities for 16 to 24 year olds
- Focusing on progression and attainment by locally determining a mix of basic skills and employment programmes to help all young people gain Level 2 qualifications before reaching 24, and supporting in-work retention and progression
- Creating a single process for pupils to apply for their post-16 learning options across local areas, and for services to track the participation of young people

Consolidate accountabilities and funding into locally convened 14 – 24 Partnerships responsible for delivering an agreed set of long-term outcomes through the Youth Transition Service and Transition to Work Strategies in their area, which would:

- Be convened by partnerships of local authorities with government and include schools, colleges, training providers, universities, voluntary and community sector partners and other services
- Where possible, build on existing sub-regional partnership arrangements, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, Combined Authorities, 14 to 19 Partnerships, or Employment and Skills Partnerships
- Strategically plan, commission, fund and deliver a planned mix of services in pursuit of achieving long-term outcomes for young people and the local economy
- Broker renewed relationships with all local employers, particularly SMEs, giving them the platform to genuinely influence demand-led provision, and create more opportunities for young people in return
- Give young people the responsibility and support to lead, develop and scrutinise provision and become active participating citizens, holding the Partnerships to account locally
- Focus on improving efficiencies across places, for instance better use of estates and capital spending or effective data sharing and collective ownership
- Work with a single national Department with overall strategic lead nationally, which would stagger the decentralisation to different partnerships over time in line with differing capacity and readiness

Reform will take time, and there are large numbers of young people that need help now.

In particular we recommend government take immediate action with councils in order to:

- Establish **a job subsidy programme for the 220,000 young people long-term unemployed**, delivered by councils working with local employers
- **Ensure every young person has high quality impartial careers advice and guidance at school** by giving partnerships of schools, colleges and councils funding to plan and commission independent an offer
- Enable councils to fulfil their duties to support participation by **making councils lead commissioners of services for vulnerable young people disengaged** or at risk of becoming so, and establishing clear lines of local accountability to ensure that the range of services best supports people
- **Realign the vast majority of public spending on apprenticeships to young people who are not already in work**, expanding the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers and devolving it to councils or Local Enterprise Partnerships
- **Remove vulnerable young people entering the adult benefits system for the first time from the ‘work first’ principle** that underpins Jobcentre Plus and the Work Programme

Next steps

In this report we assess the future challenges for young people and public services and make recommendations built on the learning from what works locally.

We have introduced one option for creating a stronger school to work transition, and there will be others. Whatever the model, it is essential government positively work with councils to ensure all institutions coherently focus on a set of long-term ambitions for young people and local economies.

The risks of not getting this right are significant, for young people, for the economy, for the taxpayer, and for democracy.

Local government is committed to working with all partners to improve the outcomes for young people, and we look forward to discussing options for the future locally and nationally.

To advance this debate we will be publishing more detailed findings of our investigations over the coming months, including into:

- Careers information, advice and guidance for young people, working with the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion
- Apprenticeships for young people, working with the Institute of Public Policy Research
- And support for long-term unemployed young people, working with the National Institute for Economic and Social Research

Annex 1 – Services supporting youth transitions, by age

Service	Age	Support type	Department / Agency
Pre 16 schools (maintained)	14-16	Learning/ skills	Education/EFA
Pre-16 schools (non-maintained)	14-16	Learning/ skills	Education/EFA
Sixth Form Colleges (maintained)	16-18	Learning/ skills	Education/EFA
Sixth Form Colleges (non-maintained)	16-18	Learning/ skills	Education/EFA
Independent Sixth Forms	16-18	Learning/skills	Education/EFA
Pupil Premium	14-16	Participation	Education
Early Intervention Grant	14-19	Participation	Education
Further Education (16+)	16-18	Learning/skills	Education/EFA
Further Education (19+)	19-24	Learning/skills	Business/SFA
University Technical Colleges	14-18	Learning/skills	Education/EFA
School careers advice	14-18	Advice	Education
College careers advice	16-24	Advice	Education, Business
National Careers Service	16-24	Advice	Business
Apprenticeships	16-24	Training/placement	Business/SFA/NAS
Apprenticeship Grant for Employers	16-24	Training/placement	Business/SFA/NAS
Traineeships	16-24	Training/placement	Education/EFA/SFA
Council youth participation services	14-18	Participation	Education
Bursary Fund	16-19	Learning grant/loan	Education/EFA
Youth Contract – reengagement	16-17	Participation	Education/EFA
National Citizen Service	16-17	Volunteering	Cabinet Office/NCS Trust
Youth Engagement Fund	14-19	Participation	Cabinet Office
European Social Fund (ESF)	14-24	Employment	Work and Pensions/ SFA
Innovation Fund	14-18	Participation	Work and Pensions
Big Lottery Fund Talent Match	14-19	Participation	Other
Jobcentre Plus engagement pilot	16/17	Participation	Work and Pensions
ESF Youth Employment Initiative	16-24	Employment support	Work and Pensions
New Enterprise Allowance	18-24	Employment support	Work and Pensions
Fair Chances Fund	18-21	Participation	Cabinet Office/ Justice
Care to Learn	16-19	Learning grant/loan	Education/EFA
Residential Bursary Fund	16-18	Learning grant/loan	Education, Business

Residential Support Scheme	16-18	Learning grant/loan	Education, Business
Dance and Drama Awards	16-24	Learning grant/loan	Education
Jobcentre Plus	18-24	Employment support	Work and Pensions
Work Programme	18-24	Employment support	Work and Pensions
Youth Contract – wage subsidy	18-24	Placement	Work and Pensions
Help to Work	20-24	Employment support	Work and Pensions
Sector Based Work Academies	18-24	Employment support	Work and Pensions
Work Experience	18-24	Placement	Work and Pensions
Work Choice	18-24	Employment support	Work and Pensions
Troubled Families	14-24	Participation	Communities
Families with Multiple Problems	14-24	Employment	Work and Pensions
Youth Offending Teams	14-17	Participation	Justice/YJB
Discretionary Learner Support	16-18	Learning grant/loan	Education
Discretionary Learner Support 19+	19-24	Learning grant/loan	Business/SFA
Maintenance and tuition fee loans	18-24	Learning grant/loan	Business
Tuition Fee Grant	18-24	Learning grant/loan	Business
Adult Dependent's Grant	18-24	Learning grant/loan	Business
Childcare Grant	18-24	Learning grant/loan	Business
Parent's Learning Allowance	18-24	Learning grant/loan	Business
Disabled Students' Allowance	18-24	Learning grant/loan	Business
Career Development Loans	18-24	Learning grant/loan	Business
Jobseekers Allowance	18-24	Benefit income	Work and Pensions
Income Support	17-24	Benefit income	Work and Pensions
Employment Support Allowance	16-24	Benefit income	Work and Pensions
Disability Living Allowance	14-24	Benefit income	Work and Pensions
Carers Allowance	16-24	Learning grant/loan	Work and Pensions
National Insurance Break	16-21	Subsidy	HMRC



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