

Youth Unemployment

A Policy Briefing

Produced by the Young Foundation for the Catalyst Consortium

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Introduction

The coalition Government has recently announced a number of measures designed to address rising youth unemployment and increase social mobility. These measures, detailed in papers including *Supporting Youth Employment*¹ and *Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers*² and the *Wolf Review of Vocational Education*³ will have a wide-reaching impact on young people and the youth sector.

Proposals announced include a £60 million package of measures to increase participation on the Work Programme for young people by both increasing numbers of places for young people on the Programme and providing funding for delivery bodies to help the most disadvantaged young people on to the Programme. Separately announced measures have been a bursary scheme for 16-19 year olds to replace Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), new government funding for increased numbers of Apprenticeships and a review of vocational education.

Context

Statistics concerning youth unemployment can be misleading and complex. In a recent meeting⁴ to which Chris Grayling invited young people to express their concerns about the Work Programme, the Employment Minister cited youth unemployment figures to be around 600,000. This number is much lower than the 895,000 16-24 year olds described as unemployed in Parliament's report on youth unemployment on 16 June 2011⁵. This reduction in numbers may be because the minister excluded young people in full time education looking for employment and available to work, which he says he 'would not classify as unemployed'⁶. Excluding such young people from unemployment figures makes the total figure of unemployed 16-24 year olds 618,000⁷ (table 14) between February to April 2011 - closer to but still more than Grayling's estimation. However, if one includes the 714,000 16-24 year olds that were recorded as economically inactive but outside of full time education in this same quarter⁸ (table 14) such as young parents and carers, those volunteering and gap year students as well as those facing barriers to employment, education or training who are not registered job seekers, the figure reaches 1,332,000. This number is much closer to, and in fact in excess of traditional estimates.

Despite the misleading nature of youth unemployment statistics, the rise of youth unemployment since the beginning of the recession is difficult to ignore. Statistics show that during the last quarter of 2010, youth unemployment hit a peak of 965,000 16-24 year olds, or 1 in 5, in unemployment - the highest figure since records began in 1992. Of the 895,000 unemployed 16-24 year olds during February – April 2011 (following a 70,000 drop), 209,000 were unemployed for 12 months or more. Of this 895,000 people, 159,000 young people aged 16-18 in England were not in employment, education or training (NEET).⁹ Research by FutureYou¹⁰, a web initiative which leads a cyber mentoring project for NEETs, shows that 8 in 10 or 78 per cent of NEETs aged between 16 and 24 feel that their life is not worth

¹ <http://www.number10.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/support-youth-employment.pdf>

² <http://download.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social-mobility/opening-doors-breaking-barriers.pdf>

³ https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/The_per_cent20Wolf_per_cent20Report.pdf

⁴ <http://www.ncvys.org.uk/appg.html>

⁵ <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05871>

⁶ <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/debate/?id=2011-06-28a.932.0>

⁷ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/lmsuk0611.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/lmsuk0611.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d001004/osr10-2011.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.thefutureyou.org.uk/images/stories/downloads/WasteFinalReport.pdf>

living, and 25 per cent have contemplated suicide as a result of their life situation. They also found that nearly two tenths of survey respondents self harmed and a tenth developed an eating disorder.

The recession seems to have hit 16 to 17 year old jobseekers the hardest as unemployment amongst economically active 16-17 year olds had the highest rate of all age groups at 24.8 per cent between February and April in 2008. The unemployment rate for the 18-24 age group over this same period was 12.3 per cent, and it was 4.8 per cent for the 25-34 age group and 3.5 per cent for the 35-49 age group¹¹. Although numbers of 16 and 17 year olds remaining in learning is steadily increasing (the Government's provisional rate¹² for 16 year olds participating in full time education in 2010 is 88.3 per cent, up from 71.0 per cent in 2000), partly in response to a stagnant jobs market, we are simultaneously seeing a historically high unemployment rate¹³ for the same age group. This can be partly explained by the number of economically active 16 to 17 year olds falling over the past five years, as the unemployment rate is the number of unemployed people as a proportion of those who are economically active; so if the number of economically active people goes down, the rate goes up. It has been shown that youth unemployment hits hardest in urban areas with post-industrial economies such as Teesside, Hull and Liverpool. The 63 largest GB cities and towns contain 59 per cent of the youth population, yet are home to 64 per cent of young people who are claiming benefits.¹⁴

The phenomenon of underemployment is also rising radically, with 1 million¹⁵ working part-time "out of necessity rather than convenience" according to a report published by the Institute for Public Policy Research in 2010. Young people suffer most acutely from underemployment, as during a recession there is unprecedented pressure on a shrinking pool of graduate jobs. Research by the Institute for Employment Studies and BBC's Newsbeat¹⁶ also suggests that under 30s have been hardest hit by the recession as they have seen their real wages fall by £890 per year since the credit crunch began in 2008, which is the fastest fall across all age groups. Those aged between 16 – 21 have fared even worse during the recession – their real pay has decreased by £21 a week, and they are working 2 hours less than in 2008.

Whilst rising youth unemployment has traditionally impacted most seriously on school leavers, the recent economic downturn has seen increasing numbers of graduates amongst those claiming out of work benefits. During the recession, unemployment for graduates increased faster than the UK as a whole and by the end of 2010 the rate of unemployment for new graduates (including mature students) was 2.3 times higher than at the start of the recession in 2008 (18.5 per cent compared to 7.9 per cent)¹⁷. However, young graduates are still more likely to be employed than non-graduates. In the third quarter of 2010, the unemployment rate for non-graduates aged 21 - 24 was 14.6 per cent against 11.6 per cent for graduates –in the same age range.

A recent report by the Princes' Trust, *Broke not Broken*¹⁸ attributes much of the problem of youth unemployment to a high rate of child poverty. The report discusses the 'ambitions crisis' among economically deprived young people, leading thousands to lose faith in their aspirations. It states that there is a 'people like me don't succeed' mentality blocking paths to social mobility in many

¹¹ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/xsdataset.asp?vlnk=1389&More=Y>

¹² <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001011/index.shtml>

¹³ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=1162>

¹⁴ http://www.centreforcities.org/assets/files/09-06-23_per_cent20Youth_per_cent20unemployment.pdf

¹⁵ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1277725/A-record-million-Britons-forced-work-time.html>

¹⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/13604920>

¹⁷ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=1162>

¹⁸ http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/PovertyReport_170511.pdf

communities. An online survey found that 22 per cent of young people from deprived homes believed that 'few' or 'none' of their goals and aspirations was achievable.

The Government's strategy for tackling youth unemployment is closely related to attempts to increase social mobility, which recent research from the London School of Economist suggests¹⁹ has remained a problem for politicians for over 50 years. A report recently published by The Young Foundation - *The Way to Work*²⁰ highlighted rates of despondency amongst young people, with only half of those surveyed (54 per cent) agreeing they had a better chance to succeed in life than their parents.

Growing worries over rising youth unemployment sit alongside on-going concerns amongst employer groups relating to young people's perceived lack of readiness to enter the workplace. In its annual report CBI stated that one in six job vacancies in England are attributable to skills shortages²¹ and that two out of three firms are expected to be troubled by skills shortages in the next 6 months²². In its report *Fulfilling Potential*²³ the CBI stated that whilst employers do not expect schools to make young people job-ready, they do expect schools to provide young people with 'the skills, capability and attitude necessary to succeed in the modern workplace'. In particular, the report states that employers want young people who have:

- A strong base of literacy, numeracy and IT skills.
- The broad set of employability skills necessary for all jobs: team-working, problem-solving, communication, business and customer awareness, self-management.
- A strong grounding in science and maths, with the most capable encouraged to study these subjects further.
- Access to a range of learning options – academic, vocational and applied (sector-specific diplomas) with appropriate information, advice and guidance.
- Qualifications that are recognised, understood and valued by business.

Recognising this consistent concern, in 2010 the Department for Education commissioned economist Professor Alison Wolf to undertake a report into how vocational education for 14-to 19-year-olds can be improved to promote successful progression into the labour market and into higher level education and training routes²⁴.

The wide-ranging impact of the coalition Government's budget cuts on young people has been reported extensively.^{25,26} The *Programme for Government* announced cuts of £6 billion to non-front-line services within the financial year 2010/11. It also vowed to end all existing welfare to work programmes and create a single Work Programme to help all unemployed people get back into work with accelerated referrals for all JSA claimants under 25. In accordance with its unified Work Programme, the Government cut the Future Jobs Fund (FJF), Labour's response to rising unemployment levels. The FJF supported the creation of 100,000 jobs for 18-24 year olds who had been out of work for over a year, at a cost of £1 billion. A full evaluation of the FJF has not yet been released, but much of the evidence given to the Department of Work and Pensions select committee's inquiry into youth unemployment and

¹⁹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12225252>

²⁰ http://www.youngfoundation.org/files/images/The_Way_to_Work.pdf

²¹ <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/bf5a77b2-952b-11e0-a648-00144feab49a.html#axzz1RF7VpIu6>

²² <http://www.cbi.org.uk/ndbs/press.nsf/0363c1f07c6ca12a8025671c00381cc7/c3fce21400269b3580257393003eea76?OpenDocument>

²³ http://educationandskills.cbi.org.uk/uploaded/fulfilling_potential.pdf

²⁴ <http://www.education.gov.uk/16to19/qualificationsandlearning/a0074953/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report>

²⁵ http://www.ncvys.org.uk/UserFiles/Comprehensive_per_cent20Cuts.pdf

²⁶ http://www.ncvys.org.uk/UserFiles/Comprehensive_Cuts_Part_2.pdf

the Future Jobs Fund²⁷ suggests that young people have benefited greatly²⁸. Also cut were pilot schemes that provided intensive support and incentives for young people to take part in learning and work-related activities such as the Entry to Learning and Activity Agreements. Education Maintenance Allowance was abolished alongside cuts to the Area Based Grant, affecting Connexions, the Youth Opportunities Fund and the Youth Capital Fund.

The government has labelled the high levels of youth unemployment a 'scandal' and its response is a three-pronged structure working across departments focused on welfare to work, social mobility and education and skills reform.

Measures taken by the Government to support Youth Employment

May 2010 - The Coalition: our *Programme for Government*

The *Programme for Government*, the first document published by Government in May 2010, built on the manifesto promises of both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats to address already high levels of youth unemployment. It pledged that:

- All existing work programmes would be ended and streamlined into a single work programme to help all unemployed people get back to work, later to be called The Work Programme.
- All JSA claimants under 25 would be referred to the programme after 6 months of unemployment rather than the previous 12 months.
- Contracts with welfare to work service providers would be realigned to reflect more closely the results they achieve in getting people back into work.
- Funding mechanisms used by government to finance welfare to work programmes would be reformed to reflect the fact that initial investment delivers later savings through benefit expenditure.
- Work Clubs providing places for the unemployed to gather to exchange skills, find opportunities, make contacts and provide mutual support, would be established.
- Greater support will be given to universities and further education colleges and schools to create apprenticeships, work pairings and internships for students.
- Child poverty would be eradicated by 2020.

The Work Programme

The Work Programme claims to provide 'personalised support to an expected 2.4 million claimants over the next 5 years helping individuals find and sustain employment'²⁹ and is the product of the plan for government's proposal to streamline all existing welfare-to-work schemes into one universal programme. Support will be provided by contracted organisations, on the basis of outcomes: supporting the long-term unemployed into work, or Apprenticeships, work experience and internship schemes. So far 40 organisations have received status as prime contractors and 508 charities have been sub-contracted.

²⁷ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmworpen/472/47202.htm>

²⁸ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmworpen/memo/youth/youth.pdf>

²⁹ <http://services.parliament.uk/hansard/Commons/bydate/20110610/writtenanswers/part008.html>

Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance

- The *Programme for Government* announced the establishment of an all-age careers service to be in place from April 2012.
- The Education Bill states the requirement for community, voluntary or foundation secondary schools to secure independent careers guidance for pupils in years 9 -11, presented in an impartial manner giving information on options available for 16-18 education or training including apprenticeships.
- The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) announced proposals to extend adult (19+) Apprenticeships and reaffirmed Labour's commitment to fully fund provision for young people studying their first level two and three qualifications.

October 2010 - Bursary Scheme for 16 – 19 year olds

As announced in the October 2010 Spending Review³⁰ by 2014-2015 there will be a 12 per cent overall savings in real terms in the DfE's non-schools budget to be achieved by 'focusing the support currently provided by Education Maintenance Allowance (EMAs) on the most disadvantaged children³²' (page 42) by raising the participation age to 18 and 'ending centrally directed programmes for children, young people and families'. Further detail is given in *Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers*³³.

To help the most vulnerable 16-19 year olds continue in education the Government has introduced a £180 million bursary scheme. The scheme replaces the previous government's EMA which cost £560 million a year. The scheme is divided into two parts³⁴:

- 1) Around 12,000 young people will receive £1,200 per year. This money will go to the most disadvantaged including those in care, care leavers, teenage parents, young people with severe disabilities, young people whose parents have died, young people living away from home and those on income support. This will cost around £15 million a year.
- 2) The rest of the fund (£165 million p.a.) will be given to providers as a discretionary fund to allocate as they see fit for those with financial barriers to participation in further education. Providers will have the freedom to decide whether they allocate the money on a weekly/monthly or yearly basis and whether to link it to behaviour or attendance.

April 2011 - *Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers*

The Government's paper on social mobility sets out a vision for a society founded on fairness, where the circumstances of one's birth do not determine one's future. The Deputy Prime Minister describes his aspiration as breaking with on-going cycles of disadvantage and addressing the 'opportunity deficit' at the same time as the financial deficit.

The report includes proposals for:³⁵

- Provision of more flexible, personalised help to find work through which young people who have been unemployed for nine months (and even earlier for some groups) will get help and support. This will be provided through the Work Programme.

³⁰ http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sr2010_completereport.pdf

³¹ <http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a0076112/180-million-new-bursary-scheme-to-help-the-most-vulnerable-16-19-year-olds>

³² http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sr2010_completereport.pdf

³³ <http://download.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social-mobility/opening-doors-breaking-barriers.pdf>

³⁴ <http://ncvyspolicy.wordpress.com/2011/03/29/bursary-scheme-for-16-19-year-olds/>

³⁵ These are discussed in more detail in [NCVYS's briefing on the Child Poverty and Social Mobility Strategies](#)

- A period of work experience lasting between 2 and 8 weeks targeted at harder-to-help young unemployed people.
- A cross-government participation strategy to be published later in 2011, which will describe the government's plans to increase participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work.
- Encouraging universities to recognise potential in candidates from less economically privileged backgrounds.
- A National Scholarship Programme providing financial assistance to students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds. £50 million will be provided in 2012-13, rising to £100 million the year after.
- A maintenance grant of £3,250 for students whose family income is less than £25,000 per year.
- Increased funding for disadvantaged learners post-16 rising by nearly a third to £770 million in 2011/12.
- Raising the participation age in education or training to 17 in 2013 and 18 by 2015.

May 2011 – *Supporting Youth Employment*

In *Supporting Youth Employment*, published in May 2011,³⁶ the Prime Minister David Cameron set out five steps the Government is taking to reduce youth unemployment:

- Raising attainment and ensuring young people have the skills they need to compete in a global economy, including through quality vocational education and training;
- Helping young people at risk of falling through the net, by supporting local partners such as the Prince's Trust and Tomorrow's People to provide effective, co-ordinated services, including:
 - More early access Work Programme places to vulnerable 18-year-olds who are likely to be struggling to make the transition from education to work;
 - Increasing the capacity of Jobcentre Plus, in partnership with local authorities and careers services, to support the 5,000 most disadvantaged 16–17-year-olds claiming Jobseeker's Allowance each year;
- Encouraging employers in both the public and private sectors to help inspire young people and to offer more work experience, internships and Apprenticeship opportunities – including:
 - Providing additional funding for 80,000 work experience places for young people, ensuring that up to 100,000 places will be available over the next two years;
 - Providing funding for an additional 50,000 19+ Apprenticeships across the next four years. Up to 40,000 of these places will support young unemployed people;
- Promoting personal responsibility by ensuring work pays and that those on out-of-work benefits who can work prepare and search for work effectively, including:
 - Giving any young person out of work for longer than nine months tailored (note the difference to the previously pledged six months) flexible support such as interview preparation or job search assistance to help them find work;

Creating the wider conditions for balanced, sustainable growth.

- The Innovation Fund³⁷ is a new Fund to support social investment projects and is paid on an outcome-funded basis. £10 million will be invested in the Innovation Fund over each of the next three years. The Innovation Fund will focus on the most disadvantaged young people rather than those who spend a short time NEET whilst in transition to other activities. It is designed to 'support disadvantaged 14-17 year olds to participate and succeed in education or training in order to achieve better employment outcomes' and to 'provide interventions and support which help to deliver improved employment outcomes for young people aged 18 and over'. Bidders need to secure Social Investment Partnerships, and investors or intermediaries will be paid by the Government based on outcomes.

³⁶ *Supporting Youth Employment*, HM Government (May 2011) <http://www.number10.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/support-youth-employment.pdf>

³⁷ <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/inn-fund-prospectus.pdf>

May 2011 - The Wolf Review of Vocational Education: Government Response

In May 2011, the Government's response to the *Wolf Review of Vocational Education*³⁸ was released. The Government stated that it would accept all of Professor Wolf's recommendations. On accepting these, the Government stated that in order to implement these recommendations it would:

- Have Ofqual publish a list of recommended qualifications by May 2011 which all awarding bodies will need to meet from July 2011.
- Seek to remove the statutory duty to provide every young person at Key Stage 4 (14 – 16 year olds) with work-related learning (starting 2012/13)
- Consult on the future of National Occupational Standards, including the best way of using them to inform vocational qualifications.
- Remove the statutory requirement for work-related learning at Key Stage 4, and prioritising longer internships for older students, reflecting the fact that almost no young people move into full-time employment at 16.
- Review the 16-19 funding formula. Government says that the review will consider 'how we can move from a formula based on funding qualifications to one based on funding learners'.
- Extend government funding for level 2 courses in English and Maths to those 19-24 year olds who have yet to achieve this in both (previously this funding has only been available for the young person's first full level 2 or 3 qualification up to 24).
- Remove bureaucracy to make Apprenticeships easier for employers to offer.
- Create new indicators in the performance tables relating to the lowest attaining pupils between Key Stages 1 and 2, and Key Stages 2 and 4 in English and Maths, making sure that schools and colleges are held accountable for helping all of their pupils to prepare for success post-16 and beyond.
- Support the creation of University Technical Colleges (UTCs), which offer full-time technically-orientated courses, with clear progression routes into higher education or further learning. In the March 2011 Budget, Government committed to establishing at least 24 UTCs by 2014.
- Encourage students to study a vocationally-orientated course in a college between the ages of 14 and 16. Government will inform schools and colleges about their duty to encourage pre-14 year old learners before the end of the summer term. Government will also work with colleges in the autumn term to better understand the existing barriers to enrolling 14 year old learners.
- Look at how smaller businesses can be encouraged to offer apprenticeship places by evaluating the work of Group Training Associations, the Apprenticeship Training Agencies and National Skills Academies and creating an action plan from this.
- Commission a continuing professional development support programme for Mathematics.
- Consider whether there are other qualifications that provide significant progress towards future GCSE success for those students who fail to achieve English and Maths GCSEs by age 16. Recognise experienced Qualified Teacher, Learning and Skills (QTLS) holders, and allow schools to appoint these individuals as teachers.

³⁸ http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/w/wolf_per_cent20review_per_cent20of_per_cent20vocational_per_cent20education_per_cent20_per_cent20_per_cent20government_per_cent20response.pdf

Implications for the Voluntary Youth Sector

Are the work experience schemes introduced in *Supporting Youth Employment* going to help young people find sustainable long-term employment?

Youth charity Rathbone states that the young people it works with are finding it hard to get anything other than short-term agency work³⁹. It says that government plans to reduce youth unemployment are not enough to encourage businesses to offer people permanent full-time jobs.

Do Professor Wolf's proposals offer enough support for disabled children and children with special educational needs?

The policy officer for the National Children's Bureau Keith Clements believes The *Wolf Review of Vocational Education* to have failed to address the educational needs of young disabled people and people with particular access or learning requirements, as the report 'completely missed the issue' of how well education providers include these learners. He also mentions that the language concerning children with special educational needs and disabled children is inadequate, as they are included in the section of both the Government response to the Wolf Review and the Wolf Review itself under the heading of 'lower attaining pupils'.

Is the Work Programme excluding the voluntary and community youth sector?

A minimum £2 million p.a. turnover for contracts on the Work Programme has meant an overwhelming majority of charities are unable to bid to be contractors on the Work Programme. Conservative peer and chief executive of welfare-to-work charity Tomorrow's People Baroness Stedman-Scott has criticised ministers for saying the Work Programme would give charities a large role in reducing unemployment and be a boost for the 'Big Society' as 39 out of 40 contracts have gone to companies⁴⁰. Around 500 charities have received contracts as subcontractors, but they are concerned about the economic viability of the conditions they have been given.

Jonny Boux, head of Community Links Employment support has expressed his concern over the economic viability of charities subcontracted on the Work Programme. He says that 'there is not enough money in the pot overall and so, after top slicing, very little money will be available to pay to subcontractors for the specialist services they deliver.⁴¹' He adds that this is 'simply because the Treasury have limited the amount of money available to the DWP to fund the new programme.'

Will the payment-by-results model used by the Work Programme and the Innovation Fund help the most vulnerable?

Although 508 charities are involved in delivering the Government's new Work Programme, the new social investment approaches advocated by Government may lead to providers focusing on those who are nearer to education and training to boost their results. This could lead to a lack of or reduction in provision for the most vulnerable. This begs the question of whether enough is being done to help the

³⁹ http://www.cypnow.co.uk/go/youth_work/article/1072522/youth-employment-plans-attack/

⁴⁰ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/jun/22/tory-peer-attacks-welfare-to-work-programme?INTCMP=SRCH>

most vulnerable young people, and if the Innovation Fund is the response to this gap in provision, then is the amount of this investment enough?

In their submission to the Department of Work and Pensions Select Committee's inquiry into the Work Programme, The Princes' Trust expressed their concern about the Work Programme removing incentives to work with the most disadvantaged groups, thus 'further deepening their culture of worklessness'.

Do youth sector charities have the financial confidence and capacity to take on new forms of contract and finance?

A recent report by The Young Foundation on youth sector charities readiness for social investment found that many of the 11,000 organisations surveyed were interested in a share of the £40 – 50 million of social investment directed towards the youth sector this year. However, the survey also found that only 1 in 10 youth sector charities considered themselves to be ready for social finance.

Is the £60 million investment in reducing youth employment enough?

Labour's Shadow Employment Minister Stephen Timms claimed that the £60 million was equivalent to DWP's spending on "postage and telephone each year" and said the response was not only "inadequate" but an "overdue" one as well⁴². With £30 million going to the Innovation Fund over the next three years only £30 million will be going towards increasing work experience places and job support for young people.

Is there a gap in provision while the Work Programme gets underway?

Concerns have also been raised about the gap in provision in the period between the last day an individual could start work on the Future Jobs Fund (31 March 2011) and the start of recruiting for the Work Programme. There is a transition fund available but this may exclude smaller charities as it requires the charity's annual income to be at least £50,000.⁴³

The General Secretary of The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) Brian Lightman has noted the gap in the provision of careers guidance and has warned that 'The Government must accelerate the implementation of the All Age Careers Service to fill the vacuum that has been created in many areas by the abolition of Connexions services.⁴⁴ This gap in provision is also feared for EMA, despite the transitional arrangements agreed.

Is the repeating of English and Mathematics GCSEs past 16 going to dishearten students?

Journalist and education specialist Mike Baker has suggested in the Guardian⁴⁵ that the strongest message from the Wolf Review is the failure of successive governments on the topic of vocational education. He suggests that replacing old diplomas with new ones will once again devalue the diplomas students have previously taken and making students repeat English and Maths past 16 is putting too much faith on academic qualifications.

Is there enough being done to raise the profile of apprenticeships and vocational learning?

⁴² http://fullfact.org/factchecks/youth_unemployment_jobs_fund_ed_balls-2750

⁴³ <http://www.community-links.org/linksuk/?p=2348>

⁴⁴ <http://www.ascl.org.uk/MainWebSite/Newa517b159.aspx?Map=34D26EEA79096102746C74AA4C9D329F&ListItemID=750&ListGroupID=0>

⁴⁵ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2011/mar/15/wolf-review-vocational-education>

Despite the introduction of higher numbers of apprenticeships and a restructuring of vocational education, can the profile of vocational education be raised significantly in order to increase participation and remove the hierarchy between it and an academic education? Chris Keates, general secretary of NASUWT, the largest teachers' union said 'The Review's recommendations will not deliver equity for all post-14 learners or secure parity of esteem between academic and vocational learning. It will contribute to educational segregation'.⁴⁶

Will existing schools and colleges be adequately provided for as UTCs are developed?

The University and College Union fears disproportionately large amounts of funding for new UTCs meaning that existing schools and colleges will suffer a shortage of funding. This could mean channelling students of predominantly working-class backgrounds into cheaper vocational subjects. UCU said 'We fear the UTCs experiment could lead to selection by the back door and a system where students, typically from working-class backgrounds, are channelled into vocational subjects in relatively under-resourced colleges, while their wealthier contemporaries are encouraged to pursue academic or high-tech courses only available in UTCs.'

The Catalyst consortium

This briefing was produced by the Young Foundation as part of the work of the Catalyst consortium. Catalyst is co-ordinated by the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services with the National Youth Agency, the Social Enterprise Coalition and the Young Foundation. It is working with the Department for Education (DfE) as the strategic partner for young people, as part of the Department's wider transition programme for the sector. Catalyst was formed to deliver three key objectives; strengthening the youth sector market, equipping the sector to work in partnership with Government and coordinating a skills development strategy for the youth sector's workforce.

For more information about Catalyst, please visit <http://www.ncvys.org.uk/catalyst.html>

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http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/Whatsnew/NASUWTNews/PressReleases/NASUWTCommentsOnTheWolfReviewOfVocationalEducation/NASUWT_007576