

# YOUTH tracker

Issue 3, Spring 2010

Reporting on challenges and solutions for young people in the UK, during recession and recovery

Welcome to the third edition of **Youth Tracker**, the quarterly newsletter looking at how Britain's young people are faring in the recession, and what we can do to support them.

A lot has happened since we published the last edition: Britain is now formally out of recession and a general election campaign is in full swing. Nevertheless, around 900,000 young people remain out of employment, education or training, with a serious risk of being 'left behind' by society.

In this issue we hear from a number of organisations on what they are doing to build the skills and experiences necessary for young people to meet the challenges of citizenship, including an interview with the Chief Executive of new charity City Year London. We also feature a debate on proposals for 'national community service' and Stephen Williams MP presents the Liberal Democrats' plans to support young people.

We finish with a round-up of policies, research and statistics in this area that have been released since December 2009.

As always we welcome your views and feedback, and our contact details are on page 12.



Carey Oppenheim, Co-director, **ippr**



Shaks Ghosh, Chief Executive, Private Equity Foundation



**privateequity** foundation  
Empowering young people to reach their full potential

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The Private Equity Foundation (PEF) was set up to empower young people to reach their full potential. It does this by investing both money and expertise from the private equity community, to help excellent charities achieve a step-change in their impact. [www.privateequityfoundation.org](http://www.privateequityfoundation.org)



# Building skills, aspirations

Five leading practitioners talk about how they and their organisations are helping young people – especially those not in education, employment or training – to meet the challenges they face in the current economic climate

## Ready or not, you're on your own

Joyce Moseley, Catch22

The state demonstrates a confused and arbitrary approach to the transition to adulthood. Rules about entitlement to benefits such as income support, housing benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance may variously change at ages 16, 18, 22 or 25. You can join the army at 16 but not vote, nor can you marry without the consent of your parents. At 17 you can leave home whenever you choose but you will have to wait until you're 18 to own a house. And just as the state awards adult privileges in chunks, it also takes away young people's support at arbitrary ages.

Our new report, 'Ready or Not', looks at how the variety of ages used by the authorities to meter out support, benefits and sanctions can be detrimental to those young people who need the most support in making the

transition to adulthood. Unfortunately, those who are most likely to struggle to make the transition to adulthood – the poorest, those leaving care and those from chaotic backgrounds – are having their help from the state cut off just when they need it the most.

Structuring services around artificial cut-off points based on age is unhelpful. It can leave vulnerable young people having to deal with unsuitable and uncoordinated adult services that do not cater for their specific needs or the life stage they are at.

Catch22 is calling on the Government to formally recognise young adulthood, from 16 to 25, as a specific life stage and ensure services are better coordinated, better suited and more

relevant to young people struggling to make the transition to adulthood. We are also calling for a clear framework of accountability for these young

people, which would extend from central to local government, overseen by a Cabinet committee. We want to see a move away from silo funding focused solely on targets such as NEETs, homelessness and drug treatment. Critical to all of this is pooled budgets across departments and local authorities.

The next Government will have an enormous opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of these young people. What remains to be seen is whether or not they will take it.

[www.catch-22.org.uk](http://www.catch-22.org.uk)

## Citizenship education and the economy

Robert Geddis, Citizenship Foundation

The recession has dominated headlines over the past couple of years. Nevertheless, a recent survey of 4,000 young people found that the majority claimed to be not knowledgeable (34 per cent) or only somewhat knowledgeable (35 per cent) about the economy.

Economic education is meant to be addressed in the citizenship education curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4. However, it is often taught by non-experts who find the key concepts of political, legal and economic literacy intimidating, which means that the delivery of citizenship (and economic education by extension) can be patchy. Recognising that there was a demand for economic education resources and training, the Citizenship Foundation began developing a programme of work to help citizenship education teachers address economic issues effectively and imaginatively.

Our approach does not focus on teaching personal finance skills – something which is generally taught through Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE). Instead, we focus on the knowledge and insight necessary to understand the impact of economic developments on society.

The Citizenship Foundation helps students to understand concepts such as 'financial crisis', 'recession', 'public deficit' and the impact of decision making within these issues on society. In partnership with Aviva, the

# and opportunities



*“As youth unemployment soars v has witnessed increasing demand for volunteering opportunities”*

*Children getting involved in an exercise as part of developing economic awareness with Citizenship Foundation*

Foundation runs ‘Paying for It’ to provide free resources on economic awareness for teachers, including an employee volunteering scheme, lesson plans, the ‘Chance to be Chancellor’ educational competition and teacher training. Our future plans for encouraging economic awareness among young people include developing a model for youth participation in local economic development.

*“We hope to contribute to a model of citizenship education that develops moral values and critical skills”*

In developing economic awareness we hope to contribute to a model of citizenship education that develops moral values and critical skills in order to prepare citizens for the task of identifying and building the kind of good society they wish to live in.

[www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk](http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk)

## v Talent Year

**Tracey Herald, v, the National Young Volunteers Service**

There is a growing recognition of the vital role that volunteering can play in supporting young people to build confidence, self-esteem and transferable skills. It helps them participate in society and feel valued as citizens. As the National Young Volunteers Service, v provides hundreds of thousands of volunteering opportunities to 16–25 years olds in England. As youth unemployment soars, v has witnessed increasing demand for volunteering opportunities.

In response to this influx we recently launched v Talent Year. Four key design principles underpin this programme. First, it’s a 44 week, full-time placement. Second, it engages a diverse group of young people (at least 40 per cent of the places are given to young people not in employment, education or training). Third, all volunteers undertake a personal development plan

and complete a minimum level 2 qualification. Finally, after completing the v Talent Year programme volunteers can apply for a Personal Development Grant to assist their onward progression.

The programme is being run by 33 local authorities and has recently been expanded to over 30 further education colleges and charities around England, all of which recognise the scheme as an exceptionally effective pathway back into work and study.

v Talent Year’s transformative impact on its young volunteers is best illustrated in the participants’ own words. One told us:

‘My life before v Talent Year was very different to what it is now. I had been out of rehab 10 months and I knew I wanted to work with kids but I didn’t know how to go about doing it. I was getting bored and depressed being at home all the time and was starting to feel my life was pointless. I was even considering going back to drugs. Then I found out about v Talent, got on the course and started feeling more positive about myself and life.

‘Since being on v Talent, I have built [my] confidence, am more assertive, made new friends, got a lot more understanding about my future, and what I want to do. I love this course and it’s the only thing I have ever stuck with.’

[www.vinspired.com](http://www.vinspired.com)

## Inspiring Communities

### Gordon Shallard-Brown, Tribal Consulting

Tribal is a consultancy focused on improving the delivery of public services. We recently worked with Communities and Local Government (CLG) on designing the 'Inspiring Communities' programme. The programme has established 15 neighbourhood partnerships to deliver activities aimed at raising young people's aspirations, and, in the long term, improving educational achievement.

'Inspiring Communities' focuses on 11–14 year olds, and was driven by the findings of a government project called 'Aspirations and Attainment in Deprived Communities'. Issues identified include:

- Young people's aspirations significantly influence educational outcomes and prospects
- Neighbourhoods where young people have low aspirations tend to have high deprivation, low population mobility and a sense of decline
- There is a gap in provision around ages 11–14 – crucial ages at which realistic aspirations begin to develop.

Tribal's role was to map the resources available in each ward-sized partnership area. We conducted neighbourhood walkabouts and engaged in discussions with community leaders about local priorities. Equally important was the accurate recording of the financial resources available to neighbourhood partnerships.

Recurring themes of our research were how insularity and isolation closely correlate with low levels of ambition, and how widening young people's frames of reference could be an innovative way of building their self-belief. We believe that there are a number of things that can be

*"Widening young people's frames of reference could be an innovative way of building their self-belief"*

done to broaden life experiences, such as providing fresh experiences beyond a young person's home community,

teaching new skills and embracing community twinning. These, together with parental involvement, are important drivers of higher aspirations, and are central to the 'Inspiring Communities' programme.

The tone of current debates about levels of inequality, numbers of NEETs and public spending cuts can make it seem inevitable that the recession will leave a legacy of unemployed, demoralised young people. Tribal's extensive community engagement experience has shown that such outcomes are far from inevitable.

[www.tribalgroupp.com](http://www.tribalgroupp.com)

## VOX Centres

### Ewan Metcalfe, A4e

A4e has developed a number of ideas to address the 14–19 NEET agenda over the last three years. One of these takes

the shape of a 'VOX centre' network, where young people can gain generic and sector-specific qualifications. These are physical facilities offering hands-on

*"74 per cent of VOX attendees gained a qualification"*

training in a range of industry sectors including construction, hair and beauty, retail, catering and sport and leisure.

VOX is designed to respond to the following key challenges:

- **Referrals** – supporting schools with their more challenging students to avoid them being expelled, plus taking those who have already left mainstream education and are involved with Pupil Referral Units or are not in education, employment or training.
- **Reintegration** – enabling pupils to build on their positive experience and gradually work their way back to being in class for five days per week or on partial timetable while still attending VOX.
- **Qualifications** – for students that are struggling with the mainstream curriculum and could potentially leave school with little or nothing, VOX can deliver achievable, appropriate, recognised accreditation.
- **Progression** – Positive destinations and successful transition for all, into college, employment, volunteering, apprenticeships and continued learning.

A4e has developed a business model that allows freedom to develop VOX according to an area's specific needs

and to reflect the economic outlook of the town or city. A snapshot of early results shows VOX to be effective. 64 per cent of attendees

move on to further education, training or employment and 74 per cent of attendees gained a qualification.

[www.mya4e.com](http://www.mya4e.com)

# 'City Year London'

Sophie Livingstone is Chief Executive of new charity City Year London. Here she talks to ippr's Jonathan Clifton about how the charity will work and its potential for helping young people to develop skills and participate in communities

**Jonathan Clifton:**  
What is City Year London?

**Sophie Livingstone:**  
City Year London gives teams of volunteers aged 18 to 25 the opportunity to spend a year mentoring in schools.

From September 2010, City Year London will have over 50 young people trained and ready to volunteer in six primary schools in Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Islington. It is part of the international charity 'City Year', which was founded in 1988 in the United States. The volunteers wear distinctive red jackets

*"The schools in the US in which City Year has a presence have had dramatically improved results"*



and become an integral part of the school community, based on the principle that young people can change the world.

**JC:** What benefits have been seen in the US programme? Are you confident the same can work in the UK?

**SL:** The schools in the US in which City Year has a presence have had dramatically improved results. Attendance levels rise, behaviour improves and ultimately academic achievement increases. While we obviously need to adapt the programme to the UK, we have received very positive feedback from schools keen to work with us. Schools would also like to benefit from the presence of young role models from diverse backgrounds who can support and supplement the work of teachers and teaching assistants in the classroom and across the extended day.

**JC:** What skills and experience can young people gain, and will this help them find jobs and training?

**SL:** Young people will receive a month's training before beginning work in schools and will also receive training

throughout the year, for example in leadership, team work, project management and communications skills. Our aim is that the training programme will be accredited to ensure that young people's achievements are recognised at the end of their 'city year'.

**JC:** How do you select your young volunteers, and are they paid?

**SL:** City Year provides its volunteers with up to £100 per week in expenses and subsistence and a Timberland uniform alongside ongoing training and development. Our recruitment process is rigorous in order to ensure that we get the right mix of people for the programme who are committed to the full 10 months. We recruit all year round, using a process that includes completing a full application form, writing two short essays and at least two interviews. Interested applicants can download an application form from our website [see details below].

**JC:** What sort of young people do you target to join City Year? Are they generally those who wouldn't otherwise be in work or training, or is this targeted to better-off people as a sort of 'gap year'?

**SL:** One of City Year's strengths is the diversity of young people it brings together. We are looking for young people with a range of backgrounds

and educational experiences from graduates and gap year students, to those not in work or training who might have had a more difficult experience of education.

We require a minimum of English at Level 2 standard [A–C GCSE], but the more important qualities are compassion, an ability to empathise with children and young people, a growth mindset, someone up for a challenge and ready to learn. We are looking at how we can support young people who do not have Level 2 English to achieve the requisite standard in advance of the start of the programme – ideally in collaboration with partner organisations.

**JC:** Do your young volunteers have to commit to a whole year, or are they allowed to look for paid work while on their City Year project?

**SL:** While young people serving with City Year are volunteers, it is a full-time, 10 month commitment. Young people are expected to serve from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. Some participants take on additional part time work during evenings and weekends to supplement the subsistence they receive during their ‘city year’.

**JC:** Do you think voluntary work can hold the answer to the problems facing NEETs today?

A City Year volunteer helps a school pupil with his reading



**SL:** The issues faced by NEET young people are often complex, but volunteering and service can play a role in giving young people an opportunity to develop skills and build up a bank of experience that will stand them in good stead when applying for jobs. A full-time intensive period of service such as City Year can provide young people with an opportunity to develop the skills and qualities needed for working life, such as team work, communication skills and flexibility. In the US, the City Year experience is highly valued by employers and universities – for example the national cable company Comcast guarantees a job interview to

any applicants who are City Year alumni.

**JC:** Some politicians have called for young people to do voluntary work as part of their school courses. Should volunteering be integrated with schooling, or separate from it?

**SL:** The idea of weaving community action and service into every stage of people’s lives is an attractive one – and schools are an obvious place to begin. However, I would argue that the idea of community action and service needs to be integrated into schools at a much younger age than is being proposed [about age 14 in most proposals].

There are teaching and learning strategies – such as ‘Service Learning’ – that integrate community service into the curriculum to ‘enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities’. City Year London will be trialling aspects of service learning as we develop our work with schools. City Year’s vision is that one day the question most commonly asked of a young person will be: ‘where are you going to do your service year?’

**More information about City Year London can be found at [www.cityyear.org.uk](http://www.cityyear.org.uk)**

# Bring back national service?

In favour



## A 21st century national service for all

James Crabtree, Managing Editor,  
Prospect Magazine

While all the main political parties are backing some form of civic service, there is a danger that their proposals are not ambitious enough. What Britain needs is a system of service which is national, universal, and compulsory. In the short term, the idea of youth service can partly be designed to fight the recession: putting young people to work and so warding off looming youth unemployment. But the real point is to build ourselves up after the recession – for much longer term gains.

My vision is a system in which every teenager would be paid a modest wage to spend at least six months mentoring children, helping the sick and elderly, or working on environmental or international development projects. It would be expensive – but no more so than sinking billions into Trident submarines. Obviously it isn't going to happen overnight. But the ambition must be there: how do we get every young person doing this, in mixed groups, in their community and beyond?

*Both Labour and the Conservatives are backing some form of national community service in their general election campaigns. The aim? To get young people participating in their communities, developing skills and fostering a sense of citizenship. Gordon Brown has called for 50 hours of compulsory community service, woven into the curriculum. David Cameron believes 16 year olds should do two months of voluntary service over the summer holidays, including a residential component.*

*Could a national service programme really help Britain's young people in the way its proponents claim? **Youth Tracker** asked two leading commentators to debate the issue.*

National, mandatory civic service would help all young people gain confidence, and the type of soft skills valued by employers. Just as important would be the chance to mix with others from different backgrounds. It can also have practical benefits: social network theory shows that knowing people outside your community makes it easier to find a job. And research by sociologist Miles Hewstone shows that 'intergroup contact' can increase tolerance and promote social cohesion.

Civic service could provide just such a nudge. All young people would gain some knowledge of the institutions that make their country tick, having rubbed up against different races and classes. In the Facebook era, in which young people can keep in contact with peers more easily than ever before, it wouldn't just be the experience which stayed with you for life: friends from your service year would stay with you too. Most importantly, the children of the poorest

family in Tottenham would have worked alongside the offspring of royalty, graduating in the same ceremony, to become citizens together. Civic service would be a central part of the new era of responsibility, matching the remoralisation of our economy with a push to reunite our society.

The idea is popular with the public – as the **poll overleaf** shows. But it won't be easy. Attempts in the US to get John Kerry to sign up to such a mandatory scheme didn't last a minute longer than the first story accusing him of bringing back the draft. So it needs to be done gradually: national mandatory service in the long run, but intermediary steps to get there – to work with our shrunken wallets, and our other political priorities. But it can be done. It took a decade to join up our health system and build the NHS; and another decade to invest enough to have a Sure Start centre in every area. These are achievements to be proud of. National service could be too.

## DEBATE: BRING BACK NATIONAL SERVICE?



Sceptical

### An unproven idea

Andrew Mycock, Senior Lecturer in Politics at Huddersfield University

People calling for the introduction of a national civic service programme are united in their belief that it will foster belonging and community. They think it will help prepare young people to meet the responsibilities of citizenship, tackling everything from poor discipline, to increasing participation in society and acquiring experience for the jobs market.

Proponents invest considerable faith in the efficacy of civic service programmes, assuming that democratic participation is an organic by-product of community-based activities. Evidence from other countries would suggest otherwise. In **Germany**, questions concerning the quality of experiences persist, while the impact of **American** programmes are compromised by the uneven spread of opportunities for many young people.

Many of the current proposals, regardless of length or structure, overlook considerable limitations relating to the cost and administration of large-scale programmes. They also fail to outline how civic service will mesh with existing volunteering programmes, whether or not they will restrict opportunities for other age groups, or if the third sector has the capacity to provide quality experiences for all. They also overlook issues of eligibility, and what would happen if young people

avoided service and how they would be penalised.

Some supporters have argued civic service can also address the social and economic impact of youth unemployment. However, to directly associate employability with civic service is misguided and undermines its central purpose. Though civic service could have benefits in developing 'soft' and 'hard' skills that enhance employability, its primary aim should be to build positive relationships with young people that encourage participation in local and national democracy. Employability is a pressing issue but should be directly addressed through education and training programmes.

Those concerned about cutting youth unemployment, particularly of disadvantaged groups, should look to **Denmark** for examples of targeted but holistic approaches. Long-term, sustained support and training for young people has proven effective for reducing youth unemployment in contrast to the short-term focus on getting people back to work quickly, as adopted by the UK.

Crucially, proponents conflate volunteering and citizenship – the civil and the civic. Volunteering is explicitly non-paid, non-compulsory and does not necessarily engage with or promote democratic citizenship. Many of those who volunteer do so for altruistic reasons but are also aware of the potential career benefits. Civic service might have much to offer but it is unproven – a smaller programme in the three-week period after pupils finish their GCSEs would be more appropriate and viable. It should be explicitly political, working on projects that encourage active and democratic citizenship, and not viewed as a cut-price youth training scheme.

### What do the public think?

With so many people talking about community service as a way to help re-engage many young people, **Youth Tracker** commissioned a poll of over a thousand people across the UK to see if the public support the idea and, if so, what they see as the potential benefits.

#### How strongly do you agree with the proposal

Age	17-24	25-34
Strongly agree	11.9%	20.1%
Tend to agree	37.7%	36.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	15.2%	18.3%
Tend to disagree	19.9%	18.3%
Strongly disagree	11.3%	3.7%
Don't know	4.0%	3.7%

*Poll of 1025 individuals conducted by Cognisant Resea*

At first glance it is easy to see why politicians are promoting some form of national community service – 66 per cent of people supported the idea.

People see the main benefits as building community spirit and helping young people to develop skills. Very few (9 per cent) see it as an opportunity to improve the way schools and hospitals are run by providing a ready pool of workers to staff them.

But the most revealing part of our poll showed that people's views on national civic service varied considerably according to their age. As the table above shows, the idea may be popular with the public at large but it is least popular among 17–24 year olds – the group that would be affected by these proposals. Generally speaking, support for the idea increases with age.

There was also a big split in why people support community service. For 17–24 year olds, the main benefit was





seen to be gaining skills for the labour market (50 per cent in that age group thought this was the main benefit). For older people it was developing a sense of community and social participation that was most important (50 per cent of over 55s saw this as the main benefit).

Overall the public are positive about

# How to create jobs

## Stephen Williams MP explains the Liberal Democrats' plans for a '90-day promise'

Young people have borne the brunt of the recession. Forty per cent of the total number of unemployed are aged 16 to 24. We are heading towards 1 million not in education, employment or training (NEET). This marks the stagnation of social mobility after 13 years of Labour government.

The Government has not been proactive enough in supporting young people during the recession. Young people have experienced the largest percentage point increase in unemployment compared with other age groups. People from across the socio-economic spectrum have been affected: record numbers of talented youngsters were unable to get a university place last August and 20 per cent of young people who are without work have a degree.

This is the worst graduate job market for a generation, particularly given that this is the first group to have graduated under the new top-up fees regime, so averaging £9,000 of student debt. The outlook for young people leaving school, college and university has been bleak. They have had their confidence knocked by the fact that they are unable to put the skills and knowledge they have developed to good use.

We need emergency measures to help the young unemployed. The Liberal Democrats would invest almost £900 million in increasing the number of FE places, giving students financial support to return to college and creating a paid

internship scheme. We advocate a 90-day promise: no young person should be unemployed for more than 90 days before they are able to get training, education, an internship or a place on a work programme. We would bridge the gap by offering paid, funded internships. Unemployed people are being funded anyway through Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA); it would be much better to pay them £55 a week to take up an internship. In the present context, paid internships would be much more productive and meaningful for young people than JSA at what should be the start of their working careers.

There should also be more funding for apprenticeships. Funding should be drawn from the Train to Gain budget and targeted at adults who need to improve their skills by returning to college or completing apprenticeships, especially for the off-the-job training costs of those who are taking up apprenticeships in small and medium-sized enterprises. In particular, we need more engineers and construction apprentices in order to build a low carbon economy.

Young people need practical measures to help them to move into employment or education. In the long run, it is through education and skills that we can drive social mobility and build a sustainable and prosperous future.

*Stephen Williams is MP for Bristol West and Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Innovation, Universities & Skills*

### for a compulsory national civic service?

35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
23.7%	22.6%	33.9%	43.9%
43.8%	39.2%	41.2%	33.5%
15.4%	16.7%	11.3%	10.4%
9.5%	10.2%	5.6%	6.9%
6.5%	9.7%	7.9%	3.5%
1.2%	1.6%	0.0%	1.7%

research in February 2010

the potential for some form of community service for young people but there is more work to be done to convince young people themselves. There is a danger in the run-up to the election that politicians will use the idea of community service simply to appeal to older voters – touting it as a scheme to help discipline 'unruly young people' and foster a sense of community spirit.

To be effective such a scheme must tap into the needs and desires of younger people themselves, who must show their buy-in. Our poll suggests it is the potential of such schemes to help develop skills for the labour market that really appeals to young people. Any proposals should therefore make sure that the voluntary work young people undertake helps them develop experience and skills that will be useful for finding work in the future.

# Policies, news and numbers

*Youth Tracker* summarises new policies, news and research around young people not in education, employment or training, and presents a round-up of the latest published statistics

## POLICIES

### Learning from the Netherlands

The cross-party Children, Schools and Families Committee published a report urging the Government to reform the benefits system for young people along the lines of the Dutch system, where benefits such as Jobseeker's Allowance are only given on the condition that recipients participate in education, employment or training. The Committee also raised concern that the term 'NEET' is stigmatising and includes too wide a range of young people – many of whom have very different needs.

[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmchilsh/316/316i.pdf](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmchilsh/316/316i.pdf)

### Young Person's Guarantee

The Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) was launched on 25 January 2010 by the DWP. Available to all 18–24 year olds who have spent six months on Jobseeker's Allowance, it guarantees them a job, training or work experience. After this, they will be given specially targeted assistance to move from welfare to work. Options available include new jobs created through the Future Jobs Fund, support to move into an existing job in a growth employment sector, work-focused training, a place on a Community Task Force, help with self employment, or internships (for both graduates and non-graduates). The Chancellor announced in the

Budget extension of the YPG until 2012.

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/campaigns/futurejobsfund/youngpersons.asp>

### Update on Future Jobs Fund

The Future Jobs Fund, announced in the 2009 Budget, is a challenge fund: providers can apply for funds to help create jobs but not all will be successful. It aims to create 170,000 additional jobs, primarily aimed at 18–24s who have been out of work for nearly a year.

At the time of going to press, the DWP had received 487 applications, of which 295 were successful. It has agreed to fund around 103,000 jobs – over 60 per cent of the total number of jobs the fund is expected to create.

Successful organisations include some large employers such as the National Skills Academy for Sport and the National Trust, as well as smaller employers such as the Big Issue and Community Transport. The application process is ongoing.

[www.dwp.gov.uk/futurejobsfund/](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/futurejobsfund/)

### Investing in Potential

The Government strategy to increase the proportion of 16–24 year olds in education, employment or training has been published in the Investing in Potential strategy. This paper brings together the key commitments for young people from other recent government publications and makes announcements such as the ambition

for three quarters of people to complete higher education or advanced apprenticeships by age 30.

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/8537-DCSF-Investing%20in%20Potential-WEB.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/8537-DCSF-Investing%20in%20Potential-WEB.pdf)

### Youth Offer

The Prime Minister launched the Youth Offer on 23 March 2010. It builds on the Government's Aiming High strategy and makes a number of guarantees, including: volunteering and community action opportunities for all young people; quality youth centres offering advice, careers guidance and activities; better access to sport education. Five pilot schemes to trial Labour's plans for all young people to take part in 50 hours of community activities were also announced.

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn\\_id=2010\\_0074](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2010_0074)

### Conservatives propose 'National Citizen Service'

One of the first pledges made by David Cameron in the Conservatives' general election campaign was for a 'National Citizen Service' (NCS). This will be a two month summer programme for 16-year olds, involving both residential and at-home components. It will be delivered by independent charities, social enterprises and businesses.

[www.conservatives.com/News/News\\_stories/2010/04/~-/media/Files/Downloadable%20Files/NCSpolycypper.ashx](http://www.conservatives.com/News/News_stories/2010/04/~-/media/Files/Downloadable%20Files/NCSpolycypper.ashx)

## RESEARCH AND NEWS

### Not the end of the story: supporting teenage mothers back into education

*Barnardo's, March 2010*

This report found that 70 per cent of young mothers are not in education, employment or training, compared with about 10 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds generally. It argues there are too many barriers to young mums going back into education; arrangements present in the workplace for pregnant women aren't available to girls at school.

The report asserts that pregnancy should not mean the end of education or abandonment of ambitions for the future for very young mothers. With the right support, including suitable childcare and flexible courses, young mothers can improve their opportunities and the life chances of their babies through education.

[www.barnardos.org.uk/12210\\_pru\\_teen\\_report.pdf](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/12210_pru_teen_report.pdf)

### The recession and its impacts on young people in rural England

*Commission for Rural Communities, November 2009*

This report draws particular attention to the difficulties faced by young people in rural areas to access employment, apprenticeships and other support. Though there are fewer unemployed and economically inactive young people in rural areas, they often face greater barriers to access support, training and jobs. Furthermore, approved bids to the Future Jobs Fund are overwhelmingly from cities and large urban areas.

[www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/youngpeople3.pdf](http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/youngpeople3.pdf)

### 'Almost half of young black people unemployed'

ippr used Labour Force Survey data to see how the recession is affecting different young people. We compared figures between the first quarter of 2008 (when the recession started) and the third quarter of 2009 and found that:

- **Black young people were worst hit by recession.** Almost half (48%) of black or black British people aged 16–24 are now unemployed. Unemployment among this group is up by 13% since the recession began and is well over twice the 20% rate of unemployment among white young people. The findings suggest the Government's pledge last year to 'shield' ethnic minorities by targeting support at disadvantaged groups has not proven effective.
- **School leavers are faring worse than graduates – despite a recent spike in graduate unemployment.** Among 16 to 24 year olds, unemployment is highest for those with no qualifications at 43% – an 11% increase since March 2008. There has, however, been a recent spike in unemployed graduates in the last few months, reflecting the 'class of 2009' graduates – 17% of graduates are unemployed, a 10% increase since March 2008.
- **Overall, young men fare worse than young women.** 22% of male graduates are unemployed, compared to just 13% of females. And young men with GCSEs or equivalent qualifications are worse hit than young women with the same qualifications (27% and 21% unemployed respectively).
- **The biggest increases in youth unemployment are in areas dependent on manufacturing and construction industries, and London.** Wales, North East and North West England have seen the biggest increases in youth unemployment, followed by the West Midlands and Northern Ireland. Youth unemployment is highest in the North East and London (both 27%).

[www.ippr.org/pressreleases/?id=3846](http://www.ippr.org/pressreleases/?id=3846)

### NEET Statistics Quarterly Brief (Q4 2009 – England only)

*Department for Children, Schools and Families, February 2010*

The latest data on levels of young people not in employment, education and training was released at the end of February. The brief notes that while levels are currently quite high as a result of the recession, they are still considerably lower than in the 1980s. Over the past year there was a seasonal pattern reflecting the academic year with a lower rate in autumn and winter, rising in spring and summer.

9.3% of 16–18 year olds were classified as NEET in the last quarter of 2009, 1.2% lower than the same point in the previous year (but the figure was not statistically significant). The NEET rate remains much higher in the North of England than in the South and Midlands. The number classified as 'not in education or training' continues to fall but the overall number of NEETs is not affected because of increasing numbers out of work.

Young men who are NEET are much less likely to have an identified barrier to participation (9%) than young women are (42%).

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d000913/NEETQBQ42009final.pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d000913/NEETQBQ42009final.pdf)

## Reducing the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training: what works and why

*Ofsted, March 2010*

This survey identified good and bad practice around NEETs in 12 local authorities. Positives included: good collaboration across agencies; careful monitoring of pupils at risk in the transition from primary to secondary school; targeting of resources at specific neighbourhoods; Connexions services coordinating the work of different agencies, and the use of specialist personal advisers.

Weaknesses included: insufficient involvement by employers in strategies and too few curriculum activities to enable young people to develop a good understanding of the world of work and the skills needed for specific occupations. There was also a lack of post-16 vocational learning and job opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research)

## The Prince's Trust YouGov Youth Index 2010

*Prince's Trust, January 2010*

This Prince's Trust survey reveals that one in 10 young people who are or have

been unemployed claim joblessness has driven them to drugs or alcohol.

Professor David Blanchflower writes in the foreword: 'with graduates flooding the jobs market, those with fewer qualifications have been pushed down the pecking order – leaving those with no skills or qualifications even further from the jobs... these people are not lost – they are undiscovered. There is a wealth of dormant talent out there...'

[www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/Youth\\_Index\\_2010.pdf](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/Youth_Index_2010.pdf)

## Government 'to miss NEET target'

*BBC, 26 February 2010*

This BBC report tells how the Government is set to miss its target for reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training. England's target for 2010 is 7.6 per cent – as an average for the year. Recent figures suggested 9.3 per cent were NEET at the end of 2009. As NEET levels are higher in the summer than the winter, the UCU lecturers union argues the target will be missed.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/8539244.stm>

## NEET strategy is not fit for purpose

*Children and Young People Now, 9 March 2010*

A survey of 16–24 year olds found Jobcentre advisers put pressure on young people to apply for any vacancy regardless of its suitability. This article says the focus of the current NEET strategy on employment, education and training is too narrow. Informal learning and volunteering is often the life-changing stepping stone to escape being NEET over the long term. A dead-end job to keep the statistics down is not.

Here, good youth work has a crucial role.

[www.cypnow.co.uk/news/988831/Neet-strategy-not-fit-purpose/](http://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/988831/Neet-strategy-not-fit-purpose/)

## Colleges 2020

*Institute for Public Policy Research, March 2010*

In this collection of essays, leading specialists set out what they view as the major challenges and opportunities facing further education colleges over the next 10 years and how these challenges might affect teaching methods, building design, the way colleges cope with a diverse student body, the way they work with local partners and how they balance meeting the needs of business while also delivering social value. Colleges will continue to be essential in the fight to reduce youth unemployment and the numbers with low skills.

[www.ippr.org/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=734](http://www.ippr.org/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=734)

### Youth Tracker: Acknowledgements | Contact us

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