

**Westminster Employment Forum and Westminster Education Forum Keynote Seminar
Tackling youth unemployment and raising the education-training leaving age following the
Participation Strategy**

Timing: Morning, Tuesday, 28th February 2012

*Venue: Princess Alexandra Hall, Royal Over-Seas League, Over-Seas House, Park Place, St James's Street,
London SW1A 1LR*



Agenda subject to change

- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Ian Mearns MP, Member, Education Select Committee
- 9.05 - 9.35 **Building Engagement, Building Futures - latest plans for the raising of the Education/Training participation age**
Jennifer Coupland, Deputy Director, Participation & Flexible Resource Division, Department for Education
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.35 - 10.05 **Key findings from the Education Committee inquiry: 16-19 participation in education and training**
Neil Carmichael MP, Member, Education Select Committee
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.05 - 10.55 **The practical challenges of moving to an education and training leaving age of 18**
Perspectives on the challenges of successfully moving towards a participation age (in education or training) of 18 by 2015 as outlined in the recently released 'Building Engagement, Building Futures' strategy. How will the raised participation age impact upon school 6th forms, 6th form colleges and FE colleges? What possible changes and flexibilities could schools and colleges introduce to meet the needs of a wider range of pupils? Will the range of courses and qualifications currently available for 16-18 year olds adequately meet the needs of all pupils at age 16 following the raising of the participation age? How can Government encourage more businesses, large and SMEs, to deliver apprenticeship opportunities for 16-18 year olds? What other barriers exist to prevent apprenticeships being an attractive option for pupils at 16? How will local authorities fulfil their responsibility to ensure no-one under 18 is NEET in their area after 2015? How should schools, colleges and local authorities work with local businesses to implement work experience as part of 16-19 study as proposed in the Participation Strategy? Will full participation be achieved without the need for legal enforcement?
Cath Brookes, Deputy Principal, Burntwood School, London
Claire Donovan, Senior Manager for Policy and Practice, City and Guilds
Steve Smith, Deputy Director, Newham College of Further Education
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.55 - 11.00 **Chairman's closing remarks**
Ian Mearns MP, Member, Education Select Committee
- 11.00 - 11.20 Coffee
- 11.20 - 11.25 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Neil Carmichael MP, Member, Education Select Committee
- 11.25 - 11.35 **Youth unemployment in the UK - trends and characteristics**
Dr Paul Sissons, Researcher, Work Foundation
- 11.35 - 12.25 **Tackling youth unemployment - apprenticeships, work experience and the Youth Contract**
Responses to the Government's proposals, outlined in the Participation Strategy, to reduce the level of unemployment amongst young people aged 18-24. Will the Government's 'Youth Contract', providing subsidies to employers taking on 18-24 year olds, meet its twin aim of reducing youth unemployment and providing long-term employment for the young people covered by the scheme? How can Government continue to develop the positive 'brand' of apprenticeships as a post-18 education route? Should the regulation and quality assurance for apprenticeships include prescription of a minimum length of courses branded as an 'apprenticeship'? Is the Work Programme delivering the tailored support needed for particular disadvantaged groups such as care-leavers, teenage mothers and ex-offenders? What role could 'work pairing', as an alternative to standard apprenticeships, play in reducing youth unemployment and improving skills for those involved?
Jenny Ward, National Business Manager, Hays
Sandy Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, Working Rite
Mike Williams, Group Director for People and Development, Malmaison and Hotel du Vin
Matthew Freeman, Commercial Manager - Young People and Skills, Working Links
Questions and comments from the floor with **Dr Paul Sissons**, Researcher, The Work Foundation
- 12.25 - 12.55 **Building Engagement, Building Futures - the next steps for tackling youth unemployment**
Kirsty Pearce, Deputy Director, Pre-employment and Skills, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
Martin Betts, Communications Manager, Labour Market Interventions Strategy Division, Department for Work and Pensions
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chairman's and Westminster Employment Forum and Westminster Education Forum thanks and closing remarks**
Neil Carmichael MP, Member, Education Select Committee
Sean Cudmore, Senior Producer, Westminster Employment Forum and Westminster Education Forum