

Westminster Employment Forum policy conference:

Tackling youth unemployment and implementing the Youth Guarantee in England

Timing: Morning, Thursday 22nd May 2025

Taking place online

Draft agenda subject to change



- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Lauren Edwards MP, Co-Chair, Skills Commission; and Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Skills, Careers and Employment
- 9.05 **The current employment landscape for young people in England**
Laura-Jane Rawlings, CEO, Youth Employment UK
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.25 **Designing and implementing the Youth Guarantee**
learning from trailblazer initiatives / equitable distribution of funding / metrics for monitoring impact / balancing the needs of local areas / boosting employer confidence and engagement / assessing the scale and ambition of the Youth Guarantee / supporting 21-24 year-olds not covered by the Youth Guarantee / lessons from localised approaches / impact of proposed apprenticeship reforms, including the introduction of the Growth and Skills Levy, reducing the minimum length of apprenticeships and removing English and maths requirements on participation and uptake
Verity Davidge, Director, Policy, MakeUK
Elizabeth Gerard, Deputy Director, National Learning and Work Institute
Emma Meredith, Director, Skills Policy and Global Engagement, Association of Colleges
Dan Williams, Director, Ginger Nut Media
Lived experience perspective
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.10 **Reducing inequalities in access to training and employment opportunities**
Lizzie Crowley, Senior Policy Adviser, Skills, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.30 **Chair's closing remarks**
Lauren Edwards MP, Co-Chair, Skills Commission; and Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Skills, Careers and Employment
- 10.35 Break
- 10.45 **Chair's opening remarks**
Mims Davies MP, Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Youth Employment; Shadow Secretary of State for Wales; and Shadow Minister for Women
- 10.50 **Supporting young people with mental and physical health concerns into employment and training**
Dr Asha Patel, Clinical Psychologist and CEO, Innovating Minds
- 11.00 **Reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training - preparation for the workplace and improving the quality of employment opportunities**
tackling insecure or low-paid jobs / addressing sector-specific skill gaps / creating sustainable employment options / tackling regional inequalities into the long-term / developing effective wrap-around services joined-up with health, education and employment services / preparation of employment in the reformed school curriculum / enhancing work experience opportunities / priorities for careers guidance and improving accessibility / steps to improve young people's confidence and enhancing interview preparation / welfare reform and benefit conditionality / preparing tailored interventions for complex circumstances / integrating mental health support / the role of job centres and work coaches / implementing early engagement to avoid prolonged inactivity
Christina Hicks, Director, Employability, Catch22
Deborah Streatfield, Founder, The Careers Office
Ben Knocks, Vice Principal, Weston College
Alex Hall-Chen, Principal Policy Advisor, Sustainability, Skills, and Employment, Institute of Directors
Senior representative, local authority
- 11.25 Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.45 **Rolling out the Youth Guarantee - early indications from trailblazer areas**
Adam Swersky, Director, Skills and Employment, East Midlands Combined County Authority
Lana Jay-Galyer, Head, Youth and Careers, East Midlands Combined County Authority
- 11.55 **Improving employer engagement, developing effective progression pathways and supporting young people after the age of 21**
exploring ways to involve businesses effectively / structuring suitable collaboration models / aligning job creation with local industry needs / support for those vulnerable to dropping out of employment and training / addressing regional disparities / best practice in developing effective local partnerships / commitments for progression / retention in employment opportunities / remaining in employment after qualifications and/or after the age of 21 / improving the quality of jobs
Elizabeth Barrett, Principal, Academy Transformation Trust Further Education College
Natasha Eason, Associate Director, National Training Academy, Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity
Senior representative, qualifications provider
- 12.10 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 **Implementing the Youth Guarantee - key policy priorities moving forward**
Katya Srivastava, Deputy Director, Youth Policy, Department for Work and Pensions
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Westminster Employment Forum closing remarks**
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Employment Forum