

Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on young people across the UK: An evidence synthesis

**A research report by Learning and Work Institute
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About this report

This report, analysis and findings were developed in collaboration with the Social Mobility Commission under the co-chairship of Sandra Wallace and Steven Cooper in 2021.

During October 2021 to March 2022 the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Commission and the UK Social Mobility Commission (SMC) commissioned this rapid evidence review from Learning and Work Institute. Learning and Work Institute is an independent policy, research and development organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion. We research what works, develop new ways of thinking and implement new approaches. Working with partners, we transform people's experiences of learning and employment. What we do benefits individuals, families, communities and the wider economy.

The Poverty and Inequality Commission is an advisory non-departmental public body in Scotland that provides independent advice and scrutiny to Scottish Ministers on poverty and inequality. It has a statutory responsibility in relation to child poverty in Scotland, including providing advice to Scottish Ministers on their Child Poverty Delivery Plans and scrutinising progress towards Scotland's statutory child poverty targets.

The Social Mobility Commission is an independent advisory non-departmental public body established under the Life Chances Act 2010 as modified by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the UK and to promote social mobility in England.

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Introduction

Although young people have relatively low physical health risks from Covid-19, they are at a high risk of educational, economic, social and mental health impacts from the effects of the pandemic and restrictions imposed in response to it. This is particularly the case for young people from lower socioeconomic groups or otherwise at risk of disadvantage, with evidence suggesting the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities. The impact of previous economic crises suggests that young people may also experience a substantial long term scarring impact from the pandemic.

Between October 2021 and March 2022 the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Commission and the UK Social Mobility Commission (SMC) commissioned this rapid evidence review on the impact of Covid-19 on young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, or at risk of poor social mobility.

Aims

The aim of this project is to synthesise evidence on the impact of Covid-19 on young people (aged 16-24) from low socioeconomic backgrounds, or at risk of poor social mobility, across the four nations of the UK in terms of employment, education and well-being. It will also consider evidence on how similar previous crises have impacted young people and the lessons that can be learnt from previous policy responses.

Findings aim to ultimately assist policymakers to implement policies that will enable young people most at risk of disadvantage to have access to opportunities and support to overcome the negative impact of the pandemic, to improve their future life chances and social mobility prospects.

A full list of research questions is included in Appendix A.

Definitions

For the purposes of this project, the definition of poverty, socioeconomic group and social mobility have been based on definitions used previously by SMC (see Appendix B). However, recognising the varied understanding of these concepts in the literature, the SMC definitions have been used as a basis only. Relevant evidence with wider definitions (or that provide none) have been included, provided they do not substantially contradict the SMC definitions.

Similarly, young people are defined as between the ages of 16 to 24 (inclusive) for the purposes of this project. However, evidence that partly falls outside of this age range has been included where relevant.

Methods

The project has involved four main research activities:

Evidence search. The evidence search has formed the bulk of the research activity. In the initial stages of the project, a detailed evidence review framework was developed which outlined the scope, limitations and methods of the review (see Appendix C).

Keyword searches across a range of databases were used to systematically identify evidence about young people that related to either research topic, and fit the population and criteria outlined in the research framework. The key focus of the search was to identify evidence about young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, or at risk of poor social mobility; however, evidence about wider groups of young people was included where relevant. Evidence identified in the search was screened to ensure it matched the criteria outlined in the research framework. A summary and the key characteristics of each piece of evidence was then recorded.

Although UK evidence has been the primary focus of the review, international evidence from comparable countries has been included where relevant.

Call for evidence. A call for evidence was issued through L&W's extensive employment and skills networks, including our supporter network (over 750 individuals), Better Work Network (approximately 500 individuals) and the Youth Employment Group (approximately 300 organisations). Individuals who received the call for evidence represent a wide range of sector organisations, including training providers, employment support providers, FE and HE institutions, third sector organisations and local and national government. The call for evidence outlined the background and aims of the project, and asked recipients to submit evidence for either research topic. Submitted evidence was assessed against the review framework, with relevant evidence included in the review.

Quality assessment. Impact evaluations, process evaluations and in-depth qualitative research identified in the evidence search or call for evidence have been quality assessed. Impact evaluations have been assessed against two evidence frameworks: the Nesta Standards of Evidence¹ and the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale². Process evaluations and in-depth qualitative research have been assessed against the CASP tool.³ Throughout the report we have highlighted evidence of particularly high or low quality.⁴

Thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was conducted to draw out the main themes from the evidence. The main themes of the findings of each piece of evidence were identified and grouped into overall themes, plus a number of cross-cutting themes.

Evidence

The review identified a wide range of evidence relating to both research topics. This has included academic papers, grey literature, policy papers, secondary data analysis reports, existing evidence reviews and programme evaluations. In total, approximately 310 relevant

¹ Nesta. (2013). [Standards of evidence: an approach that balances the need for evidence with innovation.](#)

² What works centre for local economic growth. [The Maryland Scientific Methods Scale \(SMS\).](#)

³ Cochrane Training (2021). [Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions.](#)

⁴ High quality evidence has been defined as that scoring a 4 or 5 on the Nesta or Maryland scales, or a 6 or 7 on the CASP tool. Poor quality evidence has been defined as that scoring a 1 or 2 on any scale.

pieces of evidence were identified in relation to the current pandemic and approximately 140 relating to previous crises.

Themes

This report summarises the main findings of the evidence identified in the review, across five broad themes: impact on education; digital exclusion; impact on employment; impact on health and wellbeing; and young people's voice and experiences. Each chapter begins by examining the impact of the pandemic in that theme, followed (where relevant) by the impact of previous crises. The report begins by summarising the key findings from each area and discussing the main cross-cutting theme identified in the review: the pandemic's exacerbation of existing disparities.

Throughout the report the primary focus is on young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, or at risk of poor social mobility. However, much of the evidence that was identified in the review did not specifically consider this group of young people. Therefore, relevant findings have been included in the report that relate to wider groups of young people at risk of disadvantage, and young people generally. Where findings have been included for these groups, they are clearly delineated within each topic.

Summary of key findings

Key findings

- **The education and training of young people from lower socioeconomic groups has been disproportionately impacted by pandemic restrictions.** School pupils from poorer backgrounds were disproportionately impacted by school closures⁵ and have suffered greater learning losses than their more affluent peers. However, after the introduction of centre assessment grades (CAGs), more young people in receipt of FSM have progressed to university. Previous crises show that economic downturns can encourage more young people to stay in education after leaving school, although those from higher socioeconomic groups are more likely to benefit. Fewer young people from the most deprived areas have started apprenticeships; increased competition for fewer apprenticeship places risks exacerbating existing disparities in access to higher level and degree apprenticeships.
- **Young people from lower socioeconomic groups have been particularly disadvantaged during periods of school closure due to their increased likelihood of digital exclusion,** and are less likely to have sufficient access to the internet or digital equipment for online learning. Delays in providing digital devices during school closures have exacerbated existing educational disparities. Young people not in education have been excluded from this provision, which may have led to disparities in access to wider support. Certain groups of young people have been particularly at risk of digital exclusion during the pandemic, including those with disabilities and special educational needs (SEND), care experienced young people, young people who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and those whose parents or carers themselves have low levels of digital skills.
- **Young people from lower socioeconomic groups have been disproportionately likely to lose their jobs or be furloughed during the pandemic.** It is likely that this will have a long-term negative impact on social mobility. There has been an unequal impact on youth employment across different geographical areas, with the largest falls in areas most reliant on employment in accommodation and food services. The pandemic is likely to have a range of long-term impacts on young people's social mobility; for example, young people who have lost their jobs during the pandemic may have fewer resources to focus on reskilling or career progression. Policy responses to previous crises show that specific interventions can be effective in supporting youth employment, including subsidised employment, job-search assistance and vocational training.
- **Young people from lower socioeconomic groups have been disproportionately likely to experience negative impacts on their mental health and wellbeing during**

⁵ The term 'school closures' reflects the language used in the evidence reviewed. However, it should be noted that schools remained open for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children, and delivered remote learning for all other children.

the pandemic, and for these impacts to have persisted after restrictions have eased. Certain groups of young people are also more likely to have experienced a negative impact, including young women, LGBTQ+ young people, young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled young people and care experienced young people. There is evidence that levels of wellbeing have continued to decline during the pandemic, with later lockdowns having a greater impact than the initial lockdown.

- **Many young people feel that their concerns during the pandemic have not been listened to, and that their priorities have not been taken into account.** There is a general consensus amongst organisations that support young people that a tailored approach is essential in lessening the impact of the pandemic. Several studies suggest that those from lower socioeconomic groups are more pessimistic about their future employment prospects and are less likely to believe that they will be able to achieve their future goals. Evidence suggests that young people have generally high levels of motivation to make positive changes in their lives, and to be active participants in recovery from the pandemic, but do not at the moment feel empowered to make these changes.

Exacerbation of existing disparities

A key cross-cutting theme identified in the review has been the pandemic's exacerbation of existing disparities through its disproportionate impact on groups of young people at risk of disadvantage, who typically have poor social mobility prospects compared to their peers.⁶ This includes a wide range of groups in addition to young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, including those who are NEET, care experienced, have caring responsibilities, are from ethnic minority backgrounds, have SEND and/or disabilities and young women. As explored in detail throughout the report, there have been particular impacts for these groups in relation to labour market outcomes, education and mental health and wellbeing.⁷

Evidence from Scotland and across the UK shows that measures of low social mobility (child poverty, income inequality, access to stable housing, youth unemployment and gaps in school attainment) that were seen poor prior to the pandemic, have worsened.^{8,9} For example, a policy paper by the Education Policy Institute highlights that the pandemic will likely widen the attainment gap between poorer pupils and their more affluent peers, which already stands at 18 months by the age of 16.¹⁰

Evidence to the Education Select Committee highlighted concerns that there may not be adequate systems in place to tackle the "substantial" impact of the pandemic on young people

⁶ Social Mobility Commission (2021) [State of the Nation 2020-21: Social Mobility in Great Britain](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁷ Cara Leavey, Alexandra Eastaugh, Martina Kane (2020) [Generation COVID-19](https://www.health.org.uk) ([health.org.uk](https://www.health.org.uk)) Health Foundation

⁸ Social Mobility Commission (2021) [State of the Nation 2020-21: Social Mobility in Great Britain](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁹ Scottish Government (2020) [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): impact on equality \(research\) - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot) (www.gov.scot)

¹⁰ Education Policy Institute (2020) [EPI-Policy-paper-Impact-of-Covid-19 docx.pdf](#)

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at risk of disadvantage.¹¹ Analysis by the Resolution Foundation suggests that disparities faced by these groups of young people will result in lasting impacts, especially in terms of employment prospects and pay scarring over the longer term.¹²

¹¹ Children & Young People Now (2020) [Covid-19 impact on vulnerable children: key messages from education committee hearing | CYP Now](#)

¹² Resolution Foundation (2021) [An-intergenerational-audit-for-the-UK_2021.pdf \(resolutionfoundation.org\)](#)

Impact on education and training

Key findings

- A wide range of evidence shows that school pupils from poorer backgrounds were disproportionately impacted by school closures. For example, analysis of school assessment data shows that school pupils in receipt of FSM suffered greater learning losses than their more affluent peers. Analysis of Understanding Society (USOC) data shows that pupils from working class and intermediate backgrounds spent less time accessing schoolwork and engaging with remote learning per day during the first lockdown than children from professional backgrounds.
- Analysis of HE entry figures suggests that the use of CAGs has increased the number of young people in receipt of FSM who progress to university. No evidence has been found of a negative impact of this grading on particular socioeconomic groups.
- Since the beginning of the pandemic, fewer young people from the most deprived areas have started apprenticeships. Increased competition for fewer apprenticeship places risks exacerbating existing disparities in access to higher level and degree apprenticeships.
- Analysis of the impact of previous crises shows that economic downturns can encourage more young people to stay in education after leaving school. However, young people from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are still more likely to attend and benefit from university, due to the increased influence of parental educational background during periods of crisis.

Impact of the pandemic

School pupils

Impact on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects

Much of the evidence on the educational impact of the pandemic relates to school pupils. Although most school pupils are younger than 16 (and hence outside of the scope of this review), evidence that broadly considers the impact of the pandemic on pupils (regardless of age) is relevant for young people aged 16 to 18 who are still at school or in a similar educational environment (e.g. sixth form college). However, some evidence on younger pupils has also been included since, as highlighted by an evidence review conducted by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, the impact of the pandemic on the education of younger pupils is likely to have long-term effects on their educational progression and future labour market outcomes after they leave school.¹³

¹³ Institute for Fiscal Studies (2021) [BN-Inequalities-in-education-skills-and-incomes-in-the-UK-the-implications-of-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf](https://ifs.org.uk/bn-inequalities-in-education-skills-and-incomes-in-the-uk-the-implications-of-the-covid-19-pandemic.pdf) (ifs.org.uk)

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It is also worth noting contextually that, in England, there has been a relative shift in funding in recent years away from more deprived schools towards less deprived schools, defined in relation to the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The National Audit Office reports that, between 2017-18 and 2020-21, average per-pupil funding for the most deprived fifth of schools fell in real terms by 1.2% to £5,177; over the same period, average per-pupil funding for the least deprived fifth increased by 2.9% to £4,471. This trend occurred in every region of England except Outer London, with the impact especially marked in Inner London schools.¹⁴

An in-depth study conducted by the Education Policy Institute and Renaissance Learning analysed the impact of the pandemic on learning loss of school pupils in England through individualised learning assessments linked to the National Pupil Database. They found that halfway through the Autumn 2020 term, both primary and secondary school pupils in receipt of FSM had experienced greater learning loss than their peers who were not in receipt of FSM.¹⁵ As reported in SMC's 2021 State of the Nation report, the pandemic increased the pre-existing attainment gap between these groups by 0.5-1 months by the Autumn term.¹⁶ Analysis by Education Policy Institute and Renaissance Learning demonstrates that this impact persisted; secondary school pupils were not able to fully recover this lost learning by the end of the 2020/21 summer term, with pupils in receipt of FSM falling even further behind their peers.¹⁷

An evidence review conducted by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that the education of school pupils from poorer families was particularly disrupted during the first lockdown.¹⁸ For example, an analysis of over 5,500 interviews with parents in England found that primary and secondary school pupils from the poorest quintile were the least likely to participate in online classes, undertake other school work or do work with a private tutor.¹⁹ Parental socioeconomic background is also important. Analysis of the (UK-wide) USOC dataset showed that primary and secondary school pupils from working class and intermediate backgrounds spent less time accessing schoolwork and engaging with remote learning per day during the first lockdown than children from professional backgrounds. Pupils with a parent who worked from home were also found to have increased learning time.²⁰ A rapid evidence review for the British Academy found that parents from poorer backgrounds, who are defined as being at a social disadvantage,²¹ have also been more likely to experience difficulties in supporting their children's learning during the crisis, both in terms of material resources and self-perceived competence.²² Mixed methods

¹⁴ National Audit Office (2021). [School funding in England](#). DfE

¹⁵ Renaissance Learning & Education Policy Institute (2021). [Understanding progress in the 2020/21 academic year](#). DfE.

¹⁶ Social Mobility Commission (2021). [State of the nation 2021: social mobility and the pandemic](#).

¹⁷ Renaissance Learning & Education Policy Institute (2021). [Understanding progress in the 2020/21 academic year](#). DfE.

¹⁸ Institute for Fiscal Studies (2021) [BN-Inequalities-in-education-skills-and-incomes-in-the-UK-the-implications-of-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf \(ifs.org.uk\)](#)

¹⁹ Institute for Fiscal Studies (2021) [BN-Inequalities-in-education-skills-and-incomes-in-the-UK-the-implications-of-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf \(ifs.org.uk\)](#)

²⁰ Pensiero, N., Kelly, A. & Bokhove, C. (2021). [Learning inequalities during the Covid-19 pandemic: a longitudinal analysis using the UK Understanding Society 2020 and 2021 data](#).

²¹ The review did not define low income or social disadvantage

²² Adrian Zancajo (2020) [COVID-decade-The-impact-on-education-Rapid-review-Adrian-Zancajo-Glasgow.pdf \(thebritishacademy.ac.uk\)](#)

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research by the Resolution Foundation found that spending amongst many low income families had actually increased during school closures, due to the cost of learning materials and IT access, and the need to provide food for children who would otherwise receive free school meals.²³ A survey of 4,000 pupils linked to education records found that pupils from poorer backgrounds were disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of home learning, returning to school and exam cancellations.²⁴

Analysis of the Teacher Tapp teacher panel survey²⁵ by The Sutton Trust found that schools in the most deprived parts of England have generally had less access to online home learning platforms during the pandemic than private schools and state schools in more affluent areas; they have also been less likely to have provided remote learning equipment to pupils. Teachers in more deprived areas have also been more likely to express concerns about the quality of work by pupils.²⁶ Analysis conducted by the Centre for Social Mobility and Centre for Economic Performance found that once schools re-opened fully in September 2020,²⁷ low attendance levels were a particular issue for schools in areas with a higher proportion of pupils eligible for FSM.²⁸ Similarly, in-depth analysis by Social Finance and Cheshire West and Chester Council found that in West Cheshire persistent absences (excluding Covid-related absences) increased after the re-opening of schools, with a disproportionate rise for pupils in receipt of FSM. In particular, a third of pupils who were in receipt of FSM, had experienced contact with children's services and had special educational needs were persistently absent.²⁹ A report by Ofsted, based on evidence from inspections and discussions with school leaders, identified a range of reasons why some children and young people did not attend school regularly after Covid-19 restrictions were lifted, including high levels of non-Covid illness, isolation before family events, unnecessary self-isolation and disaffection. Whilst this report did not consider the demographics of those young people who are persistently absent, the issue of non-attendance may have broader implications for social mobility if it has an impact on levels of educational attainment. The report also makes a link between the importance of pastoral support being in place to support the well-being of students which is considered to be associated with good levels of attendance.³⁰

Impact on wider groups of young people at risk of disadvantage

Research by Durham University's School of Education³¹ demonstrates that the existing achievement gap between EAL pupils and their peers has widened during the pandemic. The study has identified several reasons for this, including reduced availability of English-language support during lockdown, a lack of access to small group lessons and one-to-one support that

²³ Brewer, M. & Patrick, R. (2021) [Pandemic pressures: why families on a low income are spending more during Covid-19 \(resolutionfoundation.org\)](https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/insights/publications/pandemic-pressures-why-families-on-a-low-income-are-spending-more-during-covid-19)

²⁴ Anders, J., Macmillan, L. et al. (2021) [Inequalities in young peoples' educational experiences and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic.](https://www.teachertapp.co.uk/insights/publications/inequalities-in-young-peoples-educational-experiences-and-wellbeing-during-the-covid-19-pandemic)

²⁵ [Teachertapp.co.uk](https://www.teachertapp.co.uk)

²⁶ The Sutton Trust (2020) [COVID-19 and Social Mobility Impact Brief #1: School Shutdown](https://www.suttontrust.com/research/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/covid-19-and-social-mobility-impact-brief-1-school-shutdown)

²⁷ The publication did not specify whether the analysis referred to the UK or England only.

²⁸ University of Exeter (2020) [Poorer pupils most likely to be away from school at the end of 2020, researchers tracking coronavirus learning loss have found articles](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/2020/12/poorer-pupils-most-likely-to-be-away-from-school-at-the-end-of-2020-researchers-tracking-coronavirus-learning-loss-have-found-articles)

²⁹ Social Finance (2021). [Disadvantaged pupils least likely to return to school after lockdown – new report.](https://www.socialfinance.co.uk/insights/publications/disadvantaged-pupils-least-likely-to-return-to-school-after-lockdown-new-report)

³⁰ Ofsted (2022) [Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/108142/Securing-good-attendance-and-tackling-persistent-absence-2022.pdf)

³¹ The research used survey, proficiency and attainment data for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) in a specific English local authority to analyse the impact of the pandemic on EAL pupils.

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would normally be provided at school, and less access amongst EAL pupils to the technology required for online learning.³²

A survey of 961 UK carers and young adult carers found that many pupils with caring responsibilities had less time to spend on their education during periods of school closure due to increased caring responsibilities whilst at home.³³

A survey of over 4,000 UK parents of disabled young people found that parents of disabled pupils expressed concerns about the amount of support that they could provide to their child during periods of home schooling. Survey respondents reported that they had not received sufficient support to help their child continue to make educational progress.³⁴

Impact on young people more generally

A report by the Education Policy Institute compared the education policy response of the four UK nations to the pandemic. There were periods of school closures across all four nations, where only children of key workers or pupils classified as vulnerable (such as those with SEND or an Education, Health and Care Plan) were able to physically attend school. However, each nation had different arrangements for school access. The report found that the organisation of provision on an individual school basis in England was more successful in enabling vulnerable pupils to attend than the hub or cluster school model used in the other three nations. This was due to substantially more schools remaining open in England (70% compared to 34% in Wales, 29% in Northern Ireland and 24% in Scotland), which increased accessibility for vulnerable pupils. On average, 6.7% of vulnerable pupils attended school in England, compared to 4.8% in Scotland, 4.0% in Wales and 1.5% in Northern Ireland. The report found that policies to support pupils during school closures were frequently hampered by poor decision-making, delays, and a lack of effective delivery systems. For example, all four nations put in place measures to provide digital equipment (such as laptops and routers) to poorer pupils or others at risk of disadvantage, such as care leavers, to enable them to access online home learning. The Welsh digital inclusion scheme was the most successful out of the four nations, as it utilised established local digital inclusion infrastructure to rapidly distribute repurposed equipment to pupils. In contrast, the other three nations lacked existing infrastructure and so were slower in providing equipment: in Wales equipment was distributed by the end of May, compared to the end of June for England and after completion of the school year in Scotland and Northern Ireland.³⁵

An evidence review on the impact of the pandemic on educational disparities highlights the importance of ensuring that sufficient resources are provided to enable pupils to catch-up and prevent a 'learning gap' between groups of young people.³⁶ This is supported by a report by the House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee, that found that effective targeting towards schools with a greater proportion of poorer students is needed as these pupils are the most

³² Feyisa Demie (2021) [The impact of school closures on pupils with English as an additional language](#). BERA

³³ Carers Trust (2020) [My future my feelings my family](#)

³⁴ Disable Children's Partnership (2020) [Left In Lockdown Parent carers' experiences of lockdown](#)

³⁵ Nuffield Foundation (2020) [Poor policy decisions by UK nations during schools crisis affected disadvantaged pupils the most - Nuffield Foundation](#)

³⁶ Merike Darmody, Emer Smyth and Helen Russell (2021) [Impacts of the COVID-19 Control Measures on Widening Educational Inequalities - Merike Darmody, Emer Smyth, Helen Russell, 2021 \(sagepub.com\)](#)

likely to have lost out on learning.³⁷ Similarly, a rapid evidence review for the British Academy found that, although the pandemic has accelerated progress in online teaching and learning, support needs to be put in place to ensure its implementation does not widen social disparities.³⁸

Careers education

As described in the apprenticeship section, polling of Year 13 pupils commissioned by the Sutton Trust found that the pandemic had had a disproportionate impact on the availability of career and education advice to working class young people, due to lower levels of internet access.³⁹ However, no further evidence was identified on the impact of the pandemic on careers education for specific groups of young people.

A poll of young people in England found that young people in general would welcome catch-up careers education.⁴⁰ An analysis of young person focus groups suggests that this could be effectively provided by local support networks outside of school.⁴¹ Although no evidence was found on the provision of catch-up careers education, analysis by Careers and Enterprise Company indicates that some schools themselves have prioritised careers education in the last academic year (2020/21); an evaluation of careers provision in English state schools found that careers education has become more prominent in the curriculum, with wider staff working on careers education in addition to Careers Leaders and Careers Advisers.⁴²

Higher education

Impact on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects

An analysis of university application and success rates for young people in the UK conducted by UCAS suggests that the use of centre assessment grades (CAGs) has resulted in increased numbers of young people from poorer backgrounds (those in receipt of free school meals (FSM) attending university. Continuing an existing trend of gradual improvement in entry rates, 2020 saw a record number of FSM young people move into higher education (HE);⁴³ although it should be noted that due to the unique circumstances of the pandemic comparisons with previous years may be unreliable.

UCAS believe it is a priority that lessons are learnt from this period to ensure that young people at risk of disadvantage are not excluded from accessing HE in the future.⁴⁴ CAGs awarded for GCSEs and A level have been evaluated by Ofqual, including the impact that the process had on young people from lower socio-economic groups. The evaluation found no evidence that

³⁷ House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee (2021) [House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee \(shorthandstories.com\)](https://www.shorthandstories.com)

³⁸ Adrian Zancajo (2020) [COVID-decade-The-impact-on-education-Rapid-review-Adrian-Zancajo-Glasgow.pdf \(thebritishacademy.ac.uk\)](https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk)

³⁹ The Sutton Trust (2020) COVID-19 and Social Mobility Impact Brief #3: Apprenticeships [sutton-trust.pdf \(wordpress.com\)](https://www.sutton-trust.org.uk)

⁴⁰ Speakers for Schools (2021) [SFS-Research-Report-2021-2.pdf \(speakersforschools.org\)](https://www.speakersforschools.org)

⁴¹ NatCen (2021) [Youth Evidence Review Phase 2 deep dive report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁴² The Careers & Enterprise Company (2021) [cec-trends-in-careers-education-2021.pdf \(careersandenterprise.co.uk\)](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk)

⁴³ UCAS (2020) What happened to the Covid cohort? [download \(ucas.com\)](https://www.ucas.com)

⁴⁴ UCAS (2020) What happened to the Covid cohort? [download \(ucas.com\)](https://www.ucas.com)

CAGs awarded in summer 2020 disadvantaged young people with protected characteristics or those from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds when compared to previous years.⁴⁵ This is important as previous studies have identified relationships between grading judgements and demographic characteristics.⁴⁶ In November 2021, Department for Education (DfE) announced that universities in England would be required to take action to support outcomes for children most at risk of disadvantage post-pandemic, for example through collaborating with local schools and colleges or providing tutoring.⁴⁷

Impact on wider groups of young people at risk of disadvantage

UCAS's analysis of HE data suggests that there has been continuing progress during the pandemic in reducing disparities in HE participation amongst wider groups of young people at risk of disadvantage. UCAS combine a range of factors, such as FSM, index of multiple deprivation, ethnicity and other disadvantage characteristics into a single multiple equality measure (MEM). They found that the MEM had continued to improve during the pandemic, in line with prior trends.⁴⁸

Impact on young people more generally

Analysis of ONS data⁴⁹ in the first wave of the pandemic found that almost a quarter (24%) of young people (aged 16 to 29) who were worried about the impact of the pandemic on their lives, cited school or university as a key concern. This was primarily due to being unable to attend a physical setting, uncertainty over exams and qualifications and impacts on the quality of education they were receiving.⁵⁰

Apprenticeships

Impact on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects

Analysis of apprenticeship data by the Sutton Trust found that the pandemic has reduced the number of young people starting an apprenticeship in England, with particularly low participation levels for young people from the fifth most deprived areas. In 2021, only 23,440 young people (aged under 25) from the most deprived areas started an apprenticeship, compared with 66,160 in 2015/16. Since young people from the most deprived areas are particularly less likely to access higher and degree level apprenticeships than their peers from more affluent areas, the Sutton Trust raises concerns that the reduction of apprenticeship places during the pandemic and increased competition for places will impact the ability of apprenticeships to be a lever for social mobility.⁵¹ In their research with employers, the Social Mobility Foundation (SMF) found that higher-level apprenticeships were offered by fewer employers in 2021; their survey of 2000 young people indicated that those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are now more likely

⁴⁵ Ofqual (2021) [An evaluation of centre assessment grades from summer 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofqual-announces-grades-for-summer-2020)

⁴⁶ Ofqual (2021) [Systematic divergence between teacher and test-based assessment: literature review \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/news/ofqual-announces-grades-for-summer-2020)

⁴⁷ DfE (2021) [New levelling up plans to improve student outcomes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-levelling-up-plans-to-improve-student-outcomes)

⁴⁸ UCAS (2020) What happened to the Covid cohort? [download \(ucas.com\)](https://www.ucas.com/news/what-happened-to-the-covid-cohort)

⁴⁹ Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

⁵⁰ Office for National Statistics (2020) [Coronavirus and the social impacts on young people in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandlife/articles/coronavirus-and-the-social-impacts-on-young-people-in-great-britain)

⁵¹ The Sutton Trust (2021) [Apprenticeship-Outreach.pdf \(suttontrust.com\)](https://www.suttontrust.com/research/apprenticeship-outreach)

to consider an apprenticeship than their less-privileged peers. These factors have led to SMF expressing concerns about the impact that apprenticeships are having on social mobility.⁵²

Based on polling of Year 13 pupils, the Sutton Trust reports a substantial impact of the pandemic on the availability of career and education advice to working class young people. The Trust highlights concerns that, due to a lack of face-to-face guidance, networking events and work experience opportunities, young people from poorer backgrounds have been less likely to access sufficient information, advice and guidance to make an informed decision about starting an apprenticeship.⁵³ This is particularly important as their survey of apprentices found that young apprentices from a working class background were more likely find the apprenticeship application process difficult to navigate, compared to those from middle class backgrounds.^{54,55}

Impact on young people more generally

Anecdotal evidence highlights the concern amongst some learning providers that the Kickstart youth employment support scheme (launched during the pandemic) could displace apprenticeships for some young people, as employers receive a greater subsidy in comparison to funding received for taking on apprentices.⁵⁶ Similarly, the Sutton Trust warns that any displacement could lead to a fall in the total number of apprenticeships available.⁵⁷ In written evidence to the Employment and Covid-19 parliamentary enquiry, L&W highlighted the need for the UK government to set out an overall strategy to make clear how such schemes are distinct, but also how they should join up as part of a Youth Guarantee.⁵⁸

Impact of previous crises

Impact on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects

Analysis of the impact of the 2008 recession on Canadian young people found that it had resulted in a higher proportion of young people choosing to stay in education, rather than enter the labour market.⁵⁹ However, this can have a negative impact on relative social mobility, with analysis of the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England showing that young people from higher socioeconomic groups were more likely to continue their education and find good jobs than their peers from lower socioeconomic groups.⁶⁰

Secondary analysis of the UK British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) and USOC datasets shows that, during periods of high unemployment, the influence of parents' educational background on their children's educational choices increases. The analysis found that immediately after the 2008 recession, young people whose parents had low levels of education

⁵² Social Mobility Foundation (2021) [Social-Mobility-Employer-Index-2021.pdf](#) (socialmobility.org.uk)

⁵³ The Sutton Trust (2020) COVID-19 and Social Mobility Impact Brief #3: Apprenticeships [sutton-trust.pdf](#) (wordpress.com)

⁵⁴ The Sutton Trust (2021) [Apprenticeship-Outreach.pdf](#) (suttontrust.com)

⁵⁵ The Sutton Trust surveyed apprentices in Autumn 2021.

⁵⁶ FE Week (2020) [Providers 'seriously concerned' that Kickstart will displace apprenticeships](#) (feweek.co.uk)

⁵⁷ The Sutton Trust (2020) [Access-to-the-Workplace-Impact-Brief.pdf](#) (suttontrust.com)

⁵⁸ [UK Parliament Committees](#) (2020)

⁵⁹ National Bureau of Economic Research (2006) The Career Effects of Graduating in a Recession. The Digest: No. 11, November 2006. Available at: <https://www.nber.org/digest/nov06/career-effects-graduating-recession>

⁶⁰ Duckworth and Schoon. (2020) [Beating the Odds: Exploring the Impact of Social Risk on Young People's School-to-Work Transitions during Recession in the UK](#) | National Institute Economic Review | Cambridge Core

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were 25 percentage points less likely to want to attend university than young people with highly educated parents.⁶¹

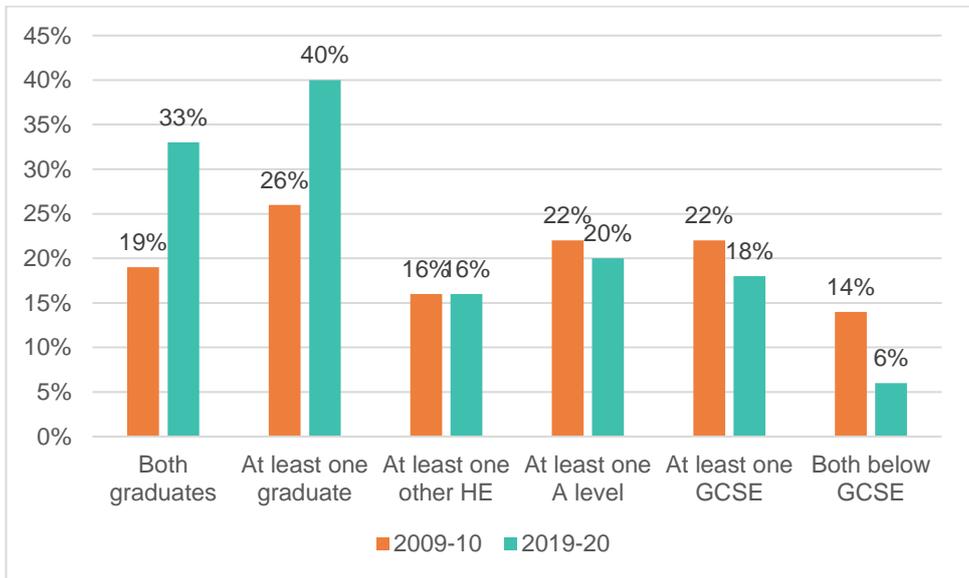
Impact on young people more generally

Analysis of Government spending conducted by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that periods of recession are generally followed by longer-term reductions in government expenditure on public services, such as education. For instance, following the 2008 recession, education spending in England fell by approximately 14% between 2010-11 and 2015-16;⁶² an evidence review found that these cuts in education funding had long-term impacts on young people’s future prospects.⁶³

In contrast, secondary analysis by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills found that there were no significant long-term impacts of the 1990s or 2008 recessions on work-related training, although there were some small impacts on intensity and level of off-the-job training.⁶⁴

L&W analysis of USOC data shows that level of qualifications of young people’s parents have substantially increased since the 2008 recession. As Figure 1 shows, the proportion of young people in dual households whose parents both have degrees increased by 74 percent between 2009-10 and 2019-20 (19% and 33% respectively). Similarly, the proportion of these young people who have at least one graduate parent has increased from 26% to 40%. Young people are also much less likely for both parents to have below GCSE level qualifications (14% and 6% respectively).

Figure 1: Parental qualification levels of young people in dual parent households between 2009-10 and 2019-20.



⁶¹ Understanding Society. Recession: the impact on young people and social mobility.

⁶² Belfield, C. Crawford, C. and Sibieta, L. (2018) Long-run comparisons of spending per pupil across different stages of education. August 2018. Institute for Fiscal Studies.

⁶³ Infed. The impact of austerity on schools and children’s education and well-being.

⁶⁴ UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2013) Training and Recession: The Impact of the 2008-2009 recession on training at work. Evidence Report 72. September 2013.

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Source: L&W analysis of USOC

Note: All respondents to USOC in 2009/10 and 2019/20 with children aged five to 16 were identified. Respondents were filtered to isolate those living in dual parent households. Highest qualification levels for both parents in dual parent households were then calculated for both years.

Digital exclusion

Key findings

- A range of evidence shows that young people from poorer backgrounds have been particularly disadvantaged during periods of school closure due to their increased likelihood of digital exclusion. Young people from the lowest socioeconomic groups are substantially less likely to have sufficient access to the internet or digital equipment for online learning compared to their wealthier peers.
- Delays in providing digital devices to poorer young people during school closures have exacerbated existing educational disparities. Young people not in education have been excluded from this provision, which may have led to disparities in access to wider support for health, education, welfare, wellbeing, advice and guidance.
- Certain groups of young people have been particularly at risk of digital exclusion during the pandemic, including those with disabilities and SEND, care experienced young people, young people with EAL needs and those whose parents or carers themselves have low levels of digital skills.
- Youth support services have found the move to online provision challenging, requiring further resources and leading to increased costs.

Digital exclusion is a dominant theme in the evidence relating to the impact of Covid-19. However, it did not emerge as a theme in evidence from previous crises; therefore, this chapter focuses exclusively on the current crisis.

Educational and practical impacts

Impact on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects

Polling of over 2,000 UK young people found that those from the lowest socioeconomic groups are six times less likely to have access to the internet, and ten times less likely to have access to a laptop, desktop or tablet compared to young people from the highest socioeconomic groups.⁶⁵ Multiple reports have identified that young people living in poverty have been particularly disadvantaged during periods of school closure due to a lack of access to the internet and equipment (such as laptops) that would enable them to engage in home learning.^{66,67,68} Furthermore, findings from the UK-wide Covid Reality Project show that parents and carers who are not living in absolute poverty, but whose income is low, have borne additional expense during the pandemic with money needing to be spent on broadband

⁶⁵ Learning and Work Institute (2021) [Disconnected? Exploring the digital skills gap - Learning and Work Institute](#)

⁶⁶ Sutton Trust (2020) [School-Shutdown-Covid-19.pdf \(suttontrust.com\)](#)

⁶⁷ Hannah Holmes and Dr Gemma Burgess (2020) [Coronavirus has intensified the UK's digital divide \(cam.ac.uk\)](#), University of Cambridge

⁶⁸ Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (2020) [The pandemic's impact on: Children and young people's education - The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland \(cypcs.org.uk\)](#)

contracts, data and devices so that young people in their household could stay engaged with home-schooling.⁶⁹

Fulfillment of government commitments to provide digital devices to poorer young people for accessing education during school closures have been criticised by youth support charities such as Youth Access for being too slow (see Education chapter for differences in rollout between UK nations).^{70,71} Based on an analysis of access to devices amongst school pupils, the Sutton Trust argue that this delay has contributed to widening educational disparities.⁷² A briefing paper by Youth Access identifies concerns that, since the rollout of digital equipment was only made available to those in education, poorer young people who are not in education have been disadvantaged in terms of their ability to access support for health, education, wellbeing, advice and guidance.⁷³ In addition, digital exclusion is also likely to have impacted access to welfare support for young people not in education. For example, research by the University of Cambridge indicates that young people who do not have access to digital devices have faced challenges in terms of accessing the online application process for Universal Credit, due to the closure of facilities such as libraries which they would have previously used.⁷⁴

Evidence shows that young people who attend state schools had less access to online provision than their peers in private schools; a survey by Youth Access found that only 5% of state schoolteachers report all of their pupils as having a device for home learning, compared with 54% of private school teachers.⁷⁵ Pupils living in more affluent households also frequently benefitted from additional online tutoring that is beyond the reach of poorer families; a survey of UK parents found that children of middle class parents (AB and C1 social grades) were more than twice as likely to have had a substantial sum (over £100) spent on their education during periods of school closure than children of working class parents (C2 and DE).⁷⁶

Interviews with financial support coaches identified that the closure of some high-street banks and building societies has resulted in more limited access to banking facilities for young people most at risk of disadvantage and their families as many do not bank online.⁷⁷ An evidence review into educational disparities during the pandemic concludes that the increased reliance on technology has widened social class disparities, with studies showing that those from higher

⁶⁹ Dr Ruth Patrick and Mike Brewer (2021) [Researching ethically at a time of global crisis: lessons and challenges - Covid Realities](#)

⁷⁰ The source does not make clear to which government within the UK it refers. All government within the UK made commitments to provide digital devices to young people from poor backgrounds.

⁷¹ Youth Access (2021) [generation-covid.pdf \(youthaccess.org.uk\)](#)

⁷² The Sutton Trust (2021) [Remote-Learning-The-Digital-Divide-Final.pdf \(suttontrust.com\)](#)

⁷³ Youth Access (2021) [generation-covid.pdf \(youthaccess.org.uk\)](#)

⁷⁴ University of Cambridge (2020) [Coronavirus has intensified the UK's digital divide \(cam.ac.uk\)](#)

⁷⁵ Youth Access (2021) [generation-covid.pdf \(youthaccess.org.uk\)](#)

⁷⁶ Sutton Trust (2020). [Covid-19 and social mobility: impact brief #1: school closures.](#)

⁷⁷ Hannah Holmes and Dr Gemma Burgess (2020) [Coronavirus has intensified the UK's digital divide \(cam.ac.uk\)](#), University of Cambridge

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earning households are more likely to use digital resources for work and education, whereas lower income families are more likely to use these resources for entertainment.⁷⁸

Impact on wider groups of young people at risk of disadvantage

Research on digital skills involving interviews with 4,000 UK adults conducted by Nominet found that young people who lack basic digital skills are also most likely to be facing multiple forms of disadvantage.^{79,80}

ONS statistics show that, across all age groups, disabled adults make up a large proportion of adult internet non-users.⁸¹ Based on an evidence review and qualitative research with disabled young people and their parents, charities KIDS and the Disabled Children's Partnership highlight that disabled young people have been placed at a disadvantage during the pandemic due to the increased use of digital platforms. They report that young people with sensory impairments, limited dexterity, social impairments, or technophobia are particularly at risk of experiencing digital disadvantage.⁸² Young people with disabilities and SEND are therefore perceived to be more likely to become further excluded by the increased use of the internet as a medium for meetings and support activities.^{83,84}

There is also some evidence on digital exclusion for other groups of young people. For example, a survey of care experienced young people in England and Wales found that they can face challenges in accessing and using technology effectively. For example, despite having access to a smartphone, these young people may lack access to Wi-Fi in their accommodation; they may also have to share a device with others that live in the same accommodation.⁸⁵ In addition, pupil, parent and teacher surveys carried out by Durham University's School of Education in an English local authority found that EAL pupils tend to have less access to technology for online learning, which has contributed to a widening of the attainment gap between them and their peers.⁸⁶ Finally, an evidence review found that young people who live in households where parents and carers have low digital skills themselves are at a disadvantage in terms of the levels of support that they received during periods of home-schooling.⁸⁷

Impact on young people more generally

Evidence also emphasises the importance of digital skills for digital inclusion during the pandemic. A survey of 126 young people and their families in Scotland highlighted that access

⁷⁸ Sébastien Goudeau, Camille Sanrey, Arnaud Stanczak, Antony Manstead and Céline Darnon (2021) [Why lockdown and distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to increase the social class achievement gap | Nature Human Behaviour](#)

⁷⁹ Youth Employment UK (2017) [Basic Digital Skills : UK Survey results - Youth Employment UK](#)

⁸⁰ Social Tech Trust (2017). [Engaging the UK's most digitally disadvantaged young people.](#)

⁸¹ ONS (2019) [Exploring the UK's digital divide - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

⁸² Dr Natasha Bradley (2021) [Download.ashx \(kids.org.uk\)](#)

⁸³ Tom Shakespeare et al (2021) [Disabled People in Britain and the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic\[v1\] | Preprints](#)

⁸⁴ National Youth Trends (2021) [Beatfrees-The-2nd-Dose-Report-National-Youth-Trends.pdf \(beatfreesyouthtrends.com\)](#)

⁸⁵ National Youth Advocacy Service (2021) [NYAS-Mental-Health-Report](#)

⁸⁶ Feyisa Demie (2021) [The impact of school closures on pupils with English as an additional language | BERA](#)

⁸⁷ Sébastien Goudeau, Camille Sanrey, Arnaud Stanczak, Antony Manstead and Céline Darnon (2021) [Why lockdown and distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to increase the social class achievement gap | Nature Human Behaviour](#)

to technology is not sufficient for digital inclusion; young people also need to know that they can afford sustained access to equipment and that they have the skills to use technology effectively.⁸⁸ The scope of the Kickstart programme was criticised in this respect by the House of Lords Youth Unemployment committee, which considered it a missed opportunity that the programme did not use the pandemic as a focus for developing digital skills in young people. This is especially important, as L&W research with over 2000 young people (aged 16-24) indicates that fewer than one in five (18%) young people are very confident they have the advanced digital skills that employers need.⁸⁹ The development and strengthening of digital skills at all ages and stages is widely considered a policy priority.⁹⁰

A potential negative impact of the move online was highlighted by a survey of 126 young people and their families in Scotland, which identified safeguarding concerns in relation to the increased amount of time that young people have spent online as a result of the pandemic, especially in relation to exposure to exploitation through scams, grooming or any other digital harm.⁹¹

Impact on support provision

Although not broken down by specific groups, evidence shows that the pandemic has had an impact on avenues of support for young people in relation to digital exclusion. In a report on their response to the pandemic, Young Camden Foundation highlight that the results of a practitioner survey show that access to digital resources has been a challenge for organisations that provide support to young people due to the need to move many of these activities online during periods of social restrictions. While it is acknowledged that this move to online provision opens up opportunities for service delivery, additional funding is required to be able to provide this effectively.⁹² A survey of youth work leaders in Scotland highlighted that some youth support organisations, such as local authority providers and voluntary agencies such as Girlguiding and the Scout Association, struggled to keep in contact with the young people that they usually support as a result of these challenges.⁹³ A survey of London Youth's members identified that some youth service providers needed more time to put effective online support in place, in terms of service re-design and staff training on remote delivery. This had led to increased staff costs⁹⁴.

There are some successful examples of where both digital equipment and internet data have been provided by schools and charities to enable those at a digital disadvantage to access technology during periods of lockdown.⁹⁵ An L&W review of employability programmes that had moved online showed that the provision of equipment and data can lead to successful

⁸⁸ Includem (2020) [Poverty-and-the-Impact-of-Coronavirus-on-Young-People-and-Families.pdf \(includem.org\)](#)

⁸⁹ Learning & Work Institute (2021) [Disconnected-Report.pdf \(learningandwork.org.uk\)](#)

⁹⁰ House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee (2021) [House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee \(shorthandstories.com\)](#)

⁹¹ Includem (2020) [Poverty-and-the-Impact-of-Coronavirus-on-Young-People-and-Families.pdf \(includem.org\)](#)

⁹² Young Camden Foundation (2020) [COVID-19-Impact-and-Response-Report-by-YCF.pdf \(youngcamdenfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

⁹³ YouthLink Scotland (2020) [survey-report-final.pdf \(youthlinkscotland.org\)](#)

⁹⁴ London Youth (2020) [Business Plan \(londonyouth.org\)](#)

⁹⁵ Tom Shakespeare et al (2021) [Disabled People in Britain and the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic\[v1\] | Preprints](#)

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engagement amongst young people from low income backgrounds and those most at risk of disadvantage, when this provision is accompanied by clear information about how to use the technology.⁹⁶ In Scotland some schools set up 'help desk' facilities to help young people and their families to develop their digital skills to support home learning.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Learning and Work Institute (2021) [The impact of moving employability training online - Learning and Work Institute](#)

⁹⁷Education Scotland (2021) [Equity Audit \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

Impact on employment

Key findings

- Young people with parents in the lowest income quintile have been more than twice as likely to experience job losses during the pandemic than those with parents in the middle or upper quintiles. Young people from lower income backgrounds have also been more likely to be furloughed. This disproportionate impact is predicted to have a negative long term impact on social mobility for young people from poorer backgrounds.
- Although not focused specifically on poorer young people or those at risk of poor social mobility, evidence shows that there has been an unequal impact on youth employment across different geographical areas. The largest falls in employment were for areas with the highest overall employment in accommodation and food services pre-pandemic. However, areas that are more reliant on employment in health and in public services have seen growth in youth employment.
- The pandemic is likely to have a range of long term impacts on young people's social mobility. For example, it may reduce opportunities for young people to move for work, or their perceived ability to change sector. Young people who have lost their jobs during the pandemic may have fewer resources to focus on reskilling or career progression than those still in employment. In addition, survey evidence suggests that during the pandemic fewer employers have been conducting specific outreach for young people from areas of poor social mobility areas, although many employers state that they have an increased focus on social mobility and diversity.
- A wide range of labour market interventions have been implemented during previous economic crises to support youth employment. Some specific characteristics of such programmes have been found to be effective, including early implementation and long duration, subsidised employment, job-search assistance and vocational training.

Impact of the pandemic on youth employment

The impact of the pandemic on young people's employment prospects has been two-fold. Firstly, the introduction of restrictions has directly resulted in increased rates of unemployment and impacted working conditions. Secondly, there is a potential long-term scarring effect of youth unemployment. These effects have been especially felt by young people exposed to poverty or with poor social mobility prospects.

It is worth noting that the initial negative impact on job losses amongst this age group in the earlier stages of the pandemic showed signs of abating by the end of the third lockdown in

March 2021. This positive trend has been experienced by all income groups, except for the lowest earners who have been, and still are, suffering financially as a result of the pandemic.⁹⁸

Job losses and impact of restrictions

Impact on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects

Analysis of UK-wide USOC data found that young people with parents in the lowest income quintile were more than twice as likely to experience job losses during the pandemic than those with parents in the middle or upper quintiles (41% compared to 16%). They warn that this unequal impact may have a long term impact on social mobility.⁹⁹ This is supported by UK-wide modelling¹⁰⁰ conducted by LSE's Centre for Economic Performance. The modelling predicts a decline in social mobility amongst those from poorer backgrounds due to the disproportionate job losses that they have suffered as a result of the pandemic.¹⁰¹

Commentators highlight that young people from lower income backgrounds have been especially likely to be furloughed during the pandemic, which is likely to lead to long-term scarring effects.¹⁰² Analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies indicates that lower earners were more than seven times as likely as high earners to have worked in a sector that was shut down during the first period of restrictions in the UK in 2020.¹⁰³

In the UK as a whole, ONS data indicates that the lowest earners have experienced a greater impact on their incomes than higher earners. Between April and October 2020, 43.8% of the economically active in the bottom income quintile reported reduced income, compared to 30.4% of those in the top income quintile.¹⁰⁴ As pandemic restrictions eased, polling in Wales found that higher income households (those earning in excess of £40,000/year) have on average seen incomes increase, whereas lower income households have seen their incomes fall.¹⁰⁵

Impact on wider groups of young people at risk of disadvantage

In a report written in the early phase of the pandemic, the Youth Futures Foundation raised concerns about the enduring impact that the pandemic could have on groups of young people that were already seen to be at a labour market disadvantage prior to the pandemic, especially those from ethnic minority groups and NEET young people. They highlighted that young people from ethnic minorities in particular were disproportionately likely to be NEET or underemployed prior to the pandemic.¹⁰⁶ Later analysis of UK-wide labour market figures from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) indicated that the fall in employment rates during the pandemic had been four times greater for young Black people than for young white people, whilst the fall for young Asian

⁹⁸ Thomas F. Crossley et al (2021) A Year of COVID: The Evolution of Labour Market and Financial Inequalities through the Crisis 2021-08.pdf (understandingsociety.ac.uk)

⁹⁹ Resolution Foundation (2021) [Social-mobility-in-the-time-of-Covid.pdf](https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/2021/03/social-mobility-in-the-time-of-covid-19) ([resolutionfoundation.org](https://www.resolutionfoundation.org))

¹⁰⁰ The modelling used longitudinal data from Understanding Society, Labour Force Survey and a bespoke survey.

¹⁰¹ Centre for Economic Performance (2021) [lem-ae-sm-february-2021](https://www.lse.ac.uk/economic-performance/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/lem-ae-sm-february-2021.pdf) (lse.ac.uk)

¹⁰² Lee Elliot Major and Stephen Machin (2020) [Democratic Audit: Covid-19 is increasing the divide in life chances between rich and poor](https://www.lse.ac.uk/economic-performance/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Democratic-Audit-Covid-19-is-increasing-the-divide-in-life-chances-between-rich-and-poor.pdf) (lse.ac.uk)

¹⁰³ IFS (2020) [BN278-Sector-Shutdowns.pdf](https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/1027) (ifs.org.uk)

¹⁰⁴ Office for National Statistics (2021) [Coronavirus and the Impact on UK households and businesses](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandlife/articles/coronavirus-and-the-impact-on-uk-households-and-businesses) - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

¹⁰⁵ Bevan Foundation (2021) [A snapshot of poverty in spring 2021](https://www.bevanfoundation.org/publications/2021/03/a-snapshot-of-poverty-in-spring-2021) - Bevan Foundation

¹⁰⁶ Youth Futures Foundation (2020) [YFF_NEET_Report51.pdf](https://www.youthfuturesfoundation.org/publications/2020/03/yff-neet-report51.pdf) (youthfuturesfoundation.org)

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people had been nearly three times greater.¹⁰⁷ L&W analysis of UK-wide LFS and ONS productivity data showed that in the first wave of the pandemic young black people experienced a 49% fall in working hours, compared to 26% drop for young Asian people and 16% reduction for young white people.¹⁰⁸

There is also evidence of unequal impact by gender, with analysis of UK-wide LFS data finding a greater negative impact of falls in youth employment amongst young men, compared to young women. Their analysis suggests that young women have been impacted less by shrinking jobs and have benefited more from employment growth; young women have also turned to education in greater numbers than young men.¹⁰⁹ However, analysis of Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme data by the Scottish charity Close the Gap found that young women in the UK were more likely to have been furloughed during periods of restriction.¹¹⁰ Similar analysis by The Women's Budget Group supports this, finding that young women aged 18-25 were the largest group to be furloughed by age and gender; the report suggests this is due to a concentration of young women's employment in sectors that have been most likely to be shut down during periods of Covid-19 restrictions.¹¹¹

Impact on young people more generally

Analysis of the LSE-CEP Social Mobility Survey shows that young people in general have been more likely than older employees to have lost their job as a direct result of the pandemic.¹¹² LFS data shows that for young people (aged 16-24), levels of employment declined substantially in 2020 compared to 2019.¹¹³

As stated in the Education chapter, LFS data shows that levels of participation in education increased in the second half of 2020.¹¹⁴ This increase in education participation has helped to limit a sharp rise in unemployment amongst young people.¹¹⁵ An evidence review on the impact of the pandemic on Londoners found that young people (aged 16-24) had the highest drop of income of any age group, other than 45 to 54 year olds.¹¹⁶ The Resolution Foundation suggests that this can be partly attributed to the limited access to the uplifts in benefits introduced at the beginning of the pandemic amongst this group nationally, compared to people in older age groups who have children.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁷ Youth Futures Foundation (2021) [IES-Report_12Feb2021_FINAL.pdf \(youthfuturesfoundation.org\)](#)

¹⁰⁸ Learning and Work Institute (2021) [Facing the future: employment prospects for young people after Coronavirus](#). L&W, Prince's Trust & HSBC UK.

¹⁰⁹ Youth Futures Foundation (2021) [IES-Report_12Feb2021_FINAL.pdf \(youthfuturesfoundation.org\)](#)

¹¹⁰ Close the Gap (2021) [Policymakers \(closethegap.org.uk\)](#)

¹¹¹ Women's Budget Group (2021) [Self-employed women are losing out on Government support \(wbg.org.uk\)](#)

¹¹² Centre for Economic Performance (2020) [cepcovid-19-011.pdf \(lse.ac.uk\)](#)

¹¹³ ONS (2021) [Coronavirus and changing young people's labour market outcomes in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

¹¹⁴ Office for National Statistics (2021) [Coronavirus and changing young people's labour market outcomes in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

¹¹⁵ Resolution Foundation (2021) [Uneven-steps.pdf \(resolutionfoundation.org\)](#)

¹¹⁶ University of Manchester (2020) [Rapid Evidence Review - Inequalities in relation to COVID-19 and their effects on London.pdf \(airdrive-secure.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com\)](#)

¹¹⁷ Resolution Foundation (2020) [living-standards-audit.pdf \(resolutionfoundation.org\)](#)

Various sources argue that the provision of active labour market policies and a youth guarantee will be vital to guard against rising levels of youth unemployment.^{118,119} Concerns have been expressed by Unions that interventions such as Kickstart are not adequate in terms of remit or duration, to have sufficient impact on those who need the most employment support.¹²⁰

Analysis of UK-wide LFS data found that young people are more likely to be employed in sectors such as retail and hospitality that were hit hardest during periods of Covid-19 restrictions. Whilst it is reported that, as restrictions eased and some young people benefitted from securing employment in sales, administration and public service roles, these positives are not likely to have outweighed the damage done in the sectors that traditionally employ young people.¹²¹ This is supported by analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies that found that young people aged under 25 were about two and a half times as likely to work in a sector that was closed during lockdown.¹²² Analysis of UK-wide USOC data highlights the need for young people to move job sector as a result of loss of employment due to the pandemic, which raises concerns about career disruption and that this will have long-term consequences for their earnings and progression.¹²³

Regional impact

No evidence was identified that analysed the regional impact of the pandemic on employment for specific groups of young people. However, analysis of LFS data found that the largest drop in youth employment was in the South of England. Youth employment has fallen in both Wales and Scotland, but has risen in Northern Ireland. The report highlights that areas that are more reliant on employment in health and in public services saw employment growth, whereas those with a higher share of private sector jobs (such as the South of England) saw employment fall. The largest falls in employment were in areas with the highest overall employment in accommodation and food services pre-pandemic, which were Wales, the South West, Scotland and London.¹²⁴

Similarly, analysis of UK-wide LFS data and ONS productivity data found that, in the first wave of the pandemic, the largest regional drops in working hours for young people were in London and the South East. The analysis found that the North East had the smallest drop in working hours, although Wales and Scotland were also found to have relatively smaller drops in hours.¹²⁵

¹¹⁸ Centre for Economic Performance (2020) [cepcovid-19-007.pdf \(lse.ac.uk\)](#)

¹¹⁹ Learning & Work Institute (2021) [We need bold and coherent action to ensure young people get their fair share of economic recovery - Learning and Work Institute](#)

¹²⁰ TUC (2021) [Jobs and recovery monitor - update on young workers | TUC](#)

¹²¹ Tony Wilson and Dafni Papoutsaki (2021) [IES-Report_12Feb2021_-FINAL.pdf \(youthfuturesfoundation.org\)](#) (An unequal crisis)

¹²² IFS (2020) [BN278-Sector-Shutdowns.pdf \(ifs.org.uk\)](#)

¹²³ Thomas F. Crossley et al (2021) A Year of COVID: The Evolution of Labour Market and Financial Inequalities through the Crisis [2021-08.pdf \(understandingsociety.ac.uk\)](#)

¹²⁴ Youth Futures Foundation (2021) [IES-Report_12Feb2021_-FINAL.pdf \(youthfuturesfoundation.org\)](#)

¹²⁵ Learning and Work Institute (2021) [Facing the future: employment prospects for young people after Coronavirus. L&W, Prince's Trust & HSBC UK.](#)

Long term impact

Impact on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects

Mixed methods research (focused on Britain) conducted during the pandemic by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and published by the Social Mobility Commission found that young people from lower socioeconomic groups are less likely to consider themselves able (in terms of qualifications or training) to move sector for work, which may slow the recovery in employment levels amongst this group. The authors express concerns that this may be exacerbated by the pandemic, which may reduce young people's willingness to move around the country for work. People in their early 20s are identified as being at the peak age to move for work, therefore it is suggested that the disruption caused by the pandemic may reduce these opportunities over the next few years. This may have a negative impact on an individual's career prospects and social mobility.¹²⁶

In their research with 203 employers that collectively employ 1.35m people, SMF report that, in 2021, 55% of employers were targeting social mobility "cold spots" in England for outreach to young people. This represents the second-lowest percentage in the past four years. These cold spots are areas of the country where social mobility is at its lowest. In these areas, people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are much less likely to have the same opportunities as their better-off peers.¹²⁷ However, almost a third (29%) of graduate employers across the UK surveyed by The Sutton Trust stated that social mobility and socio-economic diversity would be more of a priority for them in the aftermath of the pandemic, although a small proportion (11%) said it would be less of a priority.¹²⁸

The Resolution Foundation highlights that young people who have suffered from job losses as a result of the pandemic and who now have lower levels of disposable income are less able to engage in reskilling activities due to cost barriers. They believe that this will have a negative impact on social mobility and could also lead to young people taking on low quality jobs as they will be driven by financial need rather than career progression.¹²⁹ There is also the potential for similar impacts to be felt as a result of the recent changes to Universal Credit. Claimants will now be given four weeks, instead of three months, to find a job within their preferred sector. If claimants do not make "reasonable efforts" to secure work in that timeframe, or turn down a job offer, they will have part of their universal credit benefit withdrawn.¹³⁰ Concerns have been raised by social policy experts that this Way to Work campaign could be counterproductive and lead to people being employed in insecure or unsuitable employment.^{131,132} Previous research by the National Audit Office highlights that international evidence indicates that people who receive sanctions are more likely to get work, but the effect can be short-lived, leading to lower wages and an increase in the number of people moving off benefits into inactivity. That research

¹²⁶ Social Mobility Commission (2020) [Title] (employment-studies.co.uk) ([Moving out to move on](#))

¹²⁷ Social Mobility Foundation (2021) [Social-Mobility-Employer-Index-2021.pdf](#) (socialmobility.org.uk)

¹²⁸ The Sutton Trust (2020) [Access-to-the-Workplace-Impact-Brief.pdf](#) (ioe.ac.uk)

¹²⁹ Resolution Foundation (2021) [Social-mobility-in-the-time-of-Covid.pdf](#) (resolutionfoundation.org)

¹³⁰ Department for Work & Pensions (2022) [New jobs mission to get 500,000 into work - GOV.UK](#) (www.gov.uk)

¹³¹ Policy in Practice (2022). [Universal credit: why work search at four weeks is a lose-lose policy](#).

¹³² Guardian (2022) [Universal credit claimants face tough sanctions in UK job crackdown | Benefits | The Guardian](#)

also indicated that the Department for Work and Pensions had not used its own data to evaluate the impact of benefit sanction policies in the UK.¹³³

The Local Government Association has expressed concerns about the current model of recovery for young people's future employment prospects. They consider there to be a lack of adequate consideration of the need to develop digital and green skills, and highlight that these skills shortages are not being measured or planned for at a national level. This is important for social mobility as lower income households are more likely to lack digital skills and use technology less effectively than their peers.¹³⁴

Impact on wider groups of young people at risk of disadvantage

Analysis of labour market data and qualitative interviews with young people and employers suggests that the pandemic will exacerbate pre-existing disparities in patterns of employment. This is especially the case amongst young people with no qualifications, with demand for employees with lower-level qualifications projected to fall in the short, medium and long-term.¹³⁵ Young people with health conditions, disabilities, caring responsibilities and multiple disadvantages are all over-represented in the number of people not in employment. The Youth Employment Group argue that these groups have been neglected in the 'crisis response' and the risk is that in the period of recovery, as with previous periods of economic instability, it will be those furthest from work who continue to be left behind.¹³⁶

In evidence presented to the House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee, current models of careers guidance are seen as inadequate in preparing young people for the jobs market and a decline in work experience means that many young people don't understand what skills they need to be successful.¹³⁷ Although good progress is seen to have been made through the development of the Gatsby Benchmarks, evidence presented to the Lords Youth Unemployment Committee outlined the importance of young people at risk of disadvantage having access to targeted, one-to-one careers advice and guidance.¹³⁸

Impact of homeworking

Impact on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects

Although focused on all age groups, rather than young people specifically, a recent survey of workers who were aged 18 or over in England, Scotland and Wales, found that individuals from lower income backgrounds appreciated the ability to work from home, but were more likely than their peers to report challenges relating to workspace and utility bills. Low paid workers are also

¹³³ National Audit Office (2016) [Benefit sanctions \(nao.org.uk\)](https://www.nao.org.uk)

¹³⁴ Local Government Association (2021) [Tackling the digital divide - House of Commons, 4 November 2021 | Local Government Association](#)

¹³⁵ Princes' Trust (2021) [Facing the future: employment prospects for young people after coronavirus \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](https://www.princes-trust.org.uk)

¹³⁶ Youth Employment Group (2021) [Opportunity-Guarantee-YEG-paper-16.07.21.pdf \(impetus.org.uk\)](https://www.impetus.org.uk)

¹³⁷ House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee (2021) [House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee \(shorthandstories.com\)](https://www.shorthandstories.com)

¹³⁸ House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee (2021) [Skills for every young person \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk)

seen to be less likely to have jobs that allow them to work from home and are therefore missing out on opportunities to enjoy a better work-life balance.¹³⁹

Impact on young people more generally

There is evidence that, compared to other age groups, it is younger people who are more likely to prefer to be office-based, rather than working from home. There are practical and wellbeing reasons for why young people may find home-working to be challenging. For example, polling and interviews with young people find that many report having a lack of workspace at home, missing colleagues and have a disrupted work-life balance.^{140,141} A survey conducted by the Sutton Trust found that young apprentices also frequently found working from home to be challenging, as they often had insufficient access to IT, or could not do their job remotely.¹⁴² IES and Social Mobility Commission have raised concerns that an increased prevalence of remote working may mean that younger people do not move around the country for employment as they did prior to the pandemic, and that this may have a negative impact on social mobility.¹⁴³

Policies implemented to support youth employment

This section considers the youth employment support programmes that have been put in place during the pandemic and the emerging evidence on the impact on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects.¹⁴⁴

Overall findings

IES has expressed concerns that the multiple avenues of support available to young people will cause confusion about eligibility and where they can go to seek support. They highlight that young people already impacted by existing disparities are likely to be the most affected, especially in relation to programmes such as Kickstart where there is a high demand for places. In addition, IES¹⁴⁵ highlight that none of the national initiatives have a specific focus on those with more specialised or intensive needs, such as young people with long-term health conditions, or young parents.¹⁴⁶ There is evidence of where this is needed at a regional level; for example, the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP report that, in their region, they have seen substantial additional unemployment among young people who do not claim benefits and that therefore government support packages are not meeting the needs of these young people, as they are predominantly targeted at UC claimants.¹⁴⁷ A report for the European Social Policy Network on the social protection and inclusion policy responses to the pandemic in the UK,

¹³⁹ Demos (2021) [Inside-Jobs.pdf \(demos.co.uk\)](#)

¹⁴⁰ Ipsos MORI (2020) Working Post-COVID [DETAILED TEMPLATE \(ipsos.com\)](#)

¹⁴¹ Social Mobility Commission (2020) Moving out to move on [\[Title\] \(employment-studies.co.uk\)](#)

¹⁴² The Sutton Trust (2020) COVID-19 and Social Mobility Impact Brief #3: Apprenticeships [sutton-trust.pdf \(wordpress.com\)](#)

¹⁴³ Social Mobility Commission (2020) Moving out to move on [\[Title\] \(employment-studies.co.uk\)](#)

¹⁴⁴ Youth support programmes have only been included if evidence has been identified that relates to this group.

¹⁴⁵ Quality assessment indicated that the methods used in this study were of high quality

¹⁴⁶ IES (2021) [Title \(employment-studies.co.uk\)](#)

¹⁴⁷ Staffordshire University (2021) [Post Covid-19 Crisis and its Impact on Poverty & Destitution in Stoke-on-Trent - Final.pdf \(staffs.ac.uk\)](#)

concludes that there are young people who are missing out on employment support and identifies this as a gap in the social protection system and social inclusion policies.¹⁴⁸

Policies aimed specifically at young people

Kickstart

The Kickstart Scheme launched in England, Wales and Scotland in September 2020. It provides full funding for high-quality six month work placements for young people (aged 16-24) who are in receipt of Universal Credit and starting a new job. It includes the cost of wages (based on the National Minimum Wage), national insurance contributions and auto-enrollment pension contributions for 25 hours a week, alongside £1500 set up or training costs per placement.¹⁴⁹ It closed for application on 17 December 2021, with employers able to spread job start dates until 31 March 2022.¹⁵⁰

The National Audit Office (NAO) has questioned the effectiveness of the scheme, and the extent to which job opportunities created through Kickstart would have been created regardless of the intervention. NAO also raise concerns about the quality of the jobs created, and highlight that more could be done to ensure the scheme is targeted at those who need it most.¹⁵¹ The Youth Employment Group¹⁵² recommended an extension to the duration of Kickstart as this would have allowed for evidence on its effectiveness for different groups of young people to be collected. YEG also highlights the importance of Kickstart as an enabler for those young people facing disadvantage to start an apprenticeship or higher-level training course, and that the closure of the scheme prevents providers from creating these links between education and employment programmes.¹⁵³

The House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee heard evidence, including from L&W, about barriers to accessing Kickstart placements for young people. One major barrier identified was that, since Kickstart is limited to young people in receipt of universal credit, many young people, including care experienced and disabled young people, are excluded as they are more likely to be claiming Employment Support Allowance. In addition, some Kickstart roles have high entry requirements, and many young people only hear about placements that work coaches deem to be suitable.¹⁵⁴ Surveys and interviews conducted by The Employment Related Services Association (ERSA) with employers enrolled on the Kickstart scheme indicate that many disliked the role of work coaches in the referral process, preferring to see the whole range of candidates without initial filtering by work coaches. Young people who had started a job through the scheme gave similar feedback.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁸ ESPN (2021) [ESPN Thematic Report on Social protection and inclusion policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis United Kingdom \(whiterose.ac.uk\)](#)

¹⁴⁹ Gov.uk. (2020). [Landmark Kickstart scheme opens.](#)

¹⁵⁰ DWP (2021) [Kickstart Scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁵¹ National Audit Office (2021) [Employment support: The Kickstart Scheme \(Summary\) \(nao.org.uk\)](#)

¹⁵² The Youth Employment Group is a coalition of over 300 youth employment experts from across the UK

¹⁵³ Youth Employment Group (2021) [YEG-5-reasons-to-extend-kickstart.pdf \(impetus.org.uk\)](#)

¹⁵⁴ Youth Unemployment Committee (2021) [House of Lords - Skills for every young person - Youth Unemployment Committee \(parliament.uk\)](#)

¹⁵⁵ ERSA (2021) [ERSA Kickstart Report November 2021 - Extend Expand Empower.pdf](#)

Youth Hubs

Youth Hubs were launched UK-wide in June 2021 to help young jobseekers access local training and job opportunities, as well as a range of services to address wellbeing needs. The aim is to have at least one Youth Hub in every Jobcentre Plus district.¹⁵⁶

Limited evidence on the impact of Youth Hubs was identified. However, a report by IES¹⁵⁷ is critical of the fact that some of the Youth Hub provision is available only to those young people in receipt of Universal Credit (due to their DWP funding). Similarly to Kickstart, this limits who can be supported by the Work Coaches located within the Youth Hub, with many young people who are out of work and at risk of disadvantage in the labour market not claiming Universal Credit.¹⁵⁸ In their experiences of planning and developing a Youth Hub demonstrator at the Library of Birmingham, Impetus identified key criteria of what successful implementation looks like. This includes offering something different to the Jobcentre for young people, providing an attractive place that young people can go to for support that treats them like adults and collaborating with local employment support providers.¹⁵⁹

Expansion of Traineeships

Since the launch of traineeships in England in 2013, approximately 120,000 young people have been supported to progress towards employment, with data showing that 66% of trainees get a job, start an apprenticeship, or take up further learning within 6 months of completing their programme.¹⁶⁰ As part of the Chancellor's 2020 Plan for Jobs, the Government announced a boost in funding and a series of changes to the English traineeship programme. This included incentive payments of £1,000 for employers who took on new trainees and additional investment of £111 million, to triple the number of places available.

Youth guarantees

There are a range of national or local youth guarantee programmes to support employment and training opportunities for young people in devolved areas. For example, the Welsh Young Person's Guarantee brings together a range of Welsh Government programmes to ensure that young people (aged under 25) have support to progress into education, training or employment.¹⁶¹ Similarly, the Scottish Young Person's Guarantee aims to bring together employers, young people and other stakeholders in order to ensure all young people (aged 16 to 24) have opportunities for education, training, employment or volunteering.¹⁶² The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has announced a Young Person's Guarantee, which is intended to provide a job, training or apprenticeship for all young people out of work for more than six months.¹⁶³ Similarly, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority is developing a Young Person's Guarantee to provide support and opportunities for young people in relation to

¹⁵⁶ DWP (2021) [Over 110 new Youth Hubs offer job help - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

¹⁵⁷ Quality assessment indicated that the methods used in this study were of high quality

¹⁵⁸ IES (2021) [Title \(employment-studies.co.uk\)](https://employment-studies.co.uk)

¹⁵⁹ Impetus (2022) [Impetus | Lessons from the youth hub library - it's the details that...](#)

¹⁶⁰ Dorsett, R. et al (2019) [Estimating the impact of Traineeships](#). DfE.

¹⁶¹ Welsh Government (2021). [The Young Person's Guarantee](#).

¹⁶² Young Person's Guarantee. [Find your future](#).

¹⁶³ Youth Unemployment Committee inquiry (2021). [Liverpool city region combined authority – written evidence](#).

connectivity, health, transitions to education and employment and reducing disparities.¹⁶⁴ It should be noted that no evidence was identified on the impact of these programmes.

Policies aimed at all age groups

Apprenticeship employer incentives

In the March 2021 Budget, the UK Government announced that it would pay employers in England £3,000 for every new apprentice they hired between 1 April 2021 and 30 September 2021. In October 2021, it announced that the £3,000 would also be available for every new apprentice that was hired between 1 October 2021 and 31 January 2022.^{165,166} It should be noted that no evidence was identified on the impact of these incentives.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) supported large numbers of young people. On closure of the scheme (30 September 2021), 97,900 jobs held by young people aged 24 or below were on furlough, which was 3% of eligible jobs.¹⁶⁷ Analysis by the Resolution Foundation shows that 33% of young people (aged 18 to 24) who were employed before the pandemic experienced three or more months of furlough, compared to 18% to 19% of workers aged 25 to 54.¹⁶⁸ By January 2021, 9% of young people (aged 18 to 24) who were employed prior to the pandemic were on furlough, with a further 19% having lost their job and 13% having lost more than a tenth of their pay outside of furlough. Young people who were in insecure work were most affected: 36% of 18-24 year olds on a zero-hours, agency or temporary contracts were no longer working in January 2021.¹⁶⁹

The opening up of sectors such as hospitality had a big impact on the numbers of young people on furlough. The Resolution Foundation found young people (aged 18 to 24) were 25% more likely to be furloughed by May 2021 than workers in their 40s and 50s, compared to 60% at the beginning of the pandemic.¹⁷⁰

Restart

The Restart programme was announced as part of the November 2020 Spending Review. The programme applies to England and Wales, and supports unemployed people to find work. The scheme supports individuals who are long-term unemployed, and have been claiming Universal Credit in the Intensive Work Search Regime for between 12 and 18 months. Individuals have been referred to the scheme from July 2021.¹⁷¹ It should be noted that no evidence has been identified on the impact of Restart.

¹⁶⁴ GMCA (2020). [Young person's guarantee](#).

¹⁶⁵ Prior to the pandemic, the UK Government was providing £1,000 to English employers for every apprentice they took on who was either aged between 16 and 18 or aged between 19 and 24 and had previously been in care or had a Local Authority Education, Health and Care plan. The new payment will be in addition to this.

¹⁶⁶ House of Commons Library (2021) [Coronavirus: Getting people back into work - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

¹⁶⁷ House of Commons Library (2022) [Youth unemployment statistics - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

¹⁶⁸ Resolution Foundation (2021) [Begin again? - The Inquiry \(resolutionfoundation.org\)](#)

¹⁶⁹ House of Commons Library (2022) [CBP-8898.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)

¹⁷⁰ Tomlinson, D. (2021) [The-beginning-of-the-end.pdf \(resolutionfoundation.org\)](#) Resolution Foundation

¹⁷¹ [Coronavirus: Getting people back into work - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

Increased number of Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches

DWP launched a recruitment drive in the first wave of the pandemic to double the number of Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches in the UK, from 13,500 to 27,000. The increased number of Work Coaches was intended to support the delivery of new programmes such as Kickstart and the UK Government's Plan for Jobs, and to provide additional training and employment support for job seekers. The recruitment target was met by the end of the 2020/21 financial year.^{172,173} It should be noted that no evidence has been identified on the impact of the increased number of Work Coaches.

Universal Credit uplift

The removal of the UK-wide £20 Universal Credit uplift has been identified as having a potential impact on young people exposed to poverty. The uplift was introduced in April 2020 and was initially planned to last for a year, but the policy was extended by six months in the March 2021 budget and came to an end in October 2021.¹⁷⁴ Analysis by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation indicates that the removal of the uplift will result in half a million more people pulled into poverty, including 200,000 children and young people.¹⁷⁵ A policy paper by YMCA indicates that the removal of the uplift will disproportionately impact vulnerable young people. For example, those leaving supported accommodation may be forced to move to shared housing, an option often not suited to those with complex lives. The charity also expresses concerns that the removal of the uplift will stop young people from being able to afford to travel to job interviews, make any upfront payments for work clothing or have a good quality of life at the start of their careers.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, research with young people conducted by Centrepoint indicates that the uplift removal would mean that young people in receipt of the benefit would lose more than a quarter of their disposable income. The charity believes that the benefits cut will limit young people's access to work, education and training.¹⁷⁷ Care experienced young people are also identified by the National Leaving Care Benchmarking Forum as being negatively impacted by the removal of the uplift, especially in regard to their wellbeing.¹⁷⁸

Impact of previous crises

Impact on employment

Impact on wider groups of young people at risk of disadvantage

No evidence was identified on the impact of previous crises on the employment of young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects specifically. However, some evidence was identified which focuses on the impact on specific groups of young people.

Evidence shows that previous recessions have had a disproportionate impact on the employment prospects of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds. For example, a UK-

¹⁷² Gov.uk (2020). [Thousands of new Work Coach vacancies open across the UK.](#)

¹⁷³ Civil Service World (2021). [DWP hits recruitment target for 13,500 additional work coaches.](#)

¹⁷⁴ House of Lords Library (2021) [Universal credit: an end to the uplift - House of Lords Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

¹⁷⁵ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2021) [UK heading for the biggest overnight cut to the basic rate of social security since World War II | JRF](#)

¹⁷⁶ YMCA (2021) [Of little benefit \(ymcab.org.uk\)](#)

¹⁷⁷ Centrepoint (2021) [Keep the Universal Credit uplift for young people | Centrepoint | Centrepoint](#)

¹⁷⁸ Children & Young People Now (2021) [How the Universal Credit Cut will impact care leavers | CYP Now](#)

wide analysis conducted by IPPR found that during the 1990s recession unemployment among 16 to 24 year olds from ethnic minority backgrounds rose by 10 percentage points, compared to an average increase of 6 percentage points. Similarly, the analysis showed that young people aged 16 to 24 from black or black British backgrounds had the highest unemployment rate after the 2008 recession, increasing by 12.8 percentage points in 2009 to a high of 48%; this compared to an eight percentage point increase to a high of 12.4% for young people from a white background.¹⁷⁹

There is also evidence of unequal impact of previous crises by gender. For example, during the 2008 recession there was a greater increase in the NEET rate for young men (20-24) than young women.¹⁸⁰ A report for the Social Mobility Commission highlights that if the lack of post-crisis employment opportunities for young people seen in previous crises is repeated after the pandemic, it is likely that these disparities will be further exacerbated – particularly for young men from groups at risk of disadvantage.¹⁸¹

Impact on young people more generally

An evidence review on the impact of economic crises on the employment prospects of young people highlights that they are generally more vulnerable to economic downturns than people in older age groups. The review identifies several reasons for this:

- Youth unemployment rates tend to be higher than the overall population average during normal economic times.
- Young people are disadvantaged in the labour market as they often lack seniority or experience. During a financial crisis the overall number of vacancies goes down, and so the competition for vacancies increases.
- Young people are more likely to work in sectors that are particularly vulnerable to economic crisis such as hospitality or retail.¹⁸²

Figure 2,¹⁸³ taken from Petrongolo & Reenan (2011), demonstrates the impact of previous crises (since 1975) on youth employment. It shows the unemployment rates for young people aged 16-17 and 18-24, compared to 25-49 year olds and the wider working age population.¹⁸⁴ For each recession covered in this time period, youth unemployment has increased at a higher rate (in absolute terms) than the unemployment rate of older workers in the working age population.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁹ IPPR. (2012) [Youth unemployment and the recession](#).

¹⁸⁰ Meyer- Hamme, A. Thies, L and Meierkord, A. (2017) An Incomplete Recovery: Youth Unemployment in Europe 2008-2016 Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/display/322353875?recSetID=>

¹⁸¹ Social Mobility Commission (2020) [The long shadow of deprivation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁸² Marcus, R. and Gavrilovic, M. (2010) [The Impacts of the Economic Crisis on Youth Review of Evidence. Overseas Development Institute](#). October 2010.

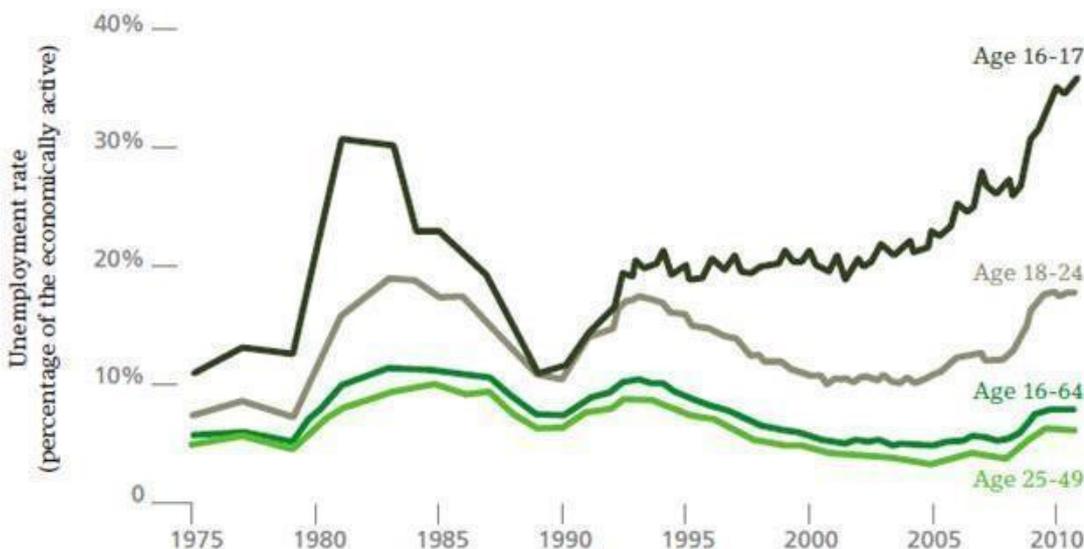
¹⁸³ Where relevant, charts identified in the evidence review have been included for illustration purposes.

¹⁸⁴ Petrongolo, B and Van Reenen. (2011) [The level of youth unemployment is at a record high. Policy makers should focus on strengthening and refining welfare-to-work and education-to-work programmes and forget about caps on immigration or reductions in the minimum wage which would do nothing to](#). LSE Blog.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. Petrongolo and Van Reenen. 2011

For example, during the 1979-80 recession, youth unemployment rose to 1.25 million and stayed at this level for several years.¹⁸⁶ The 1991-3 recession saw a similar (although smaller) rise in youth unemployment rates.¹⁸⁷ In addition, numerous studies show that the 2008 recession¹⁸⁸ had an adverse impact on young people's employment,^{189,190} with the youth unemployment rate increasing from 14.3% in 2007 to 19.1% in 2009.¹⁹¹

Figure 2: Unemployment rates by age group, 1975- 2010



Source: Petrongolo & Reenan (2011). Analysis of Labour Force Survey (annual data 1975-91, quarterly data 1992-2010)¹⁹²

Note: Unemployment rate of the working age population and three sub age groups

Economic crises can also increase the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). For example, the 2008 recession caused a sharp increase in the NEET rate. As Figure 3, taken from House of Commons Library (2021) shows, the

¹⁸⁶ Bivand, P. (2012) [The Generation Lost Youth Unemployment and the youth labour market](#). TUC.

¹⁸⁷ Bivand, P. (2012) [The Generation Lost Youth Unemployment and the youth labour market](#). TUC.

¹⁸⁸ The 2008 recession was one of the most severe economic downturns the UK experienced since the Great Depression. The nature of the 2008 recession and the current coronavirus crisis differs in many ways. The 2008 recession was a financial crisis that was caused by the mortgage payment crisis, whereas the current crisis has started as a health crisis. However, when the impact of these two crises on employment is examined, we see that young people were among the hardest hit in both economic downturns.

¹⁸⁹ Bell, D. and Blanchflower, D. (2009) [What should be done about rising unemployment in the UK? February 2009](#). IZA DP No. 4040.

¹⁹⁰ Chung, H. Bekker, S. and Houwing, H. (2012) [Young people and the post-recession labour market in the context of Europe 2020](#). Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research.

¹⁹¹ Heyes, J. (2014) [Vocational education and training and the Great Recession: supporting young people in the time of crisis](#). ETUI. Report 131.

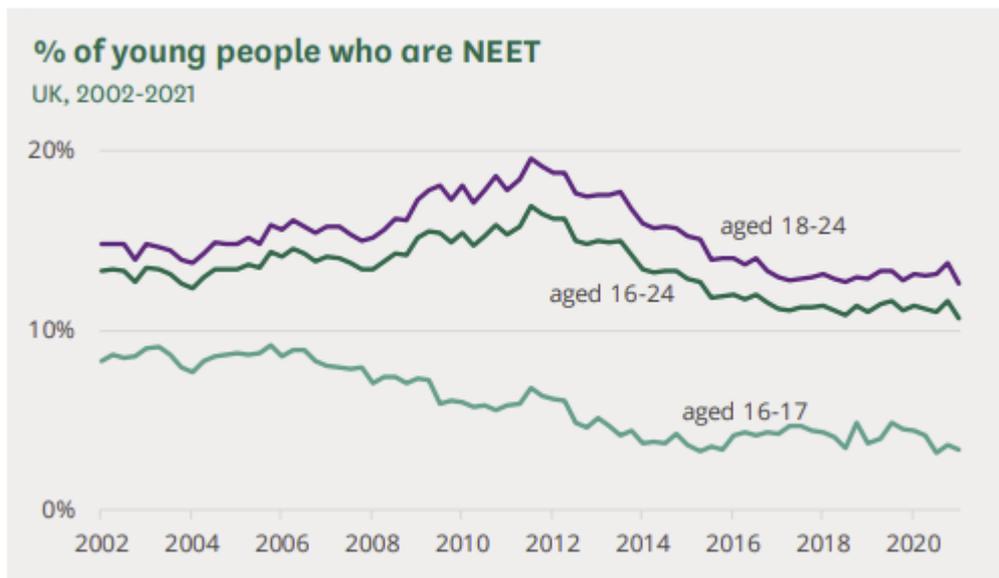
¹⁹² Petrongolo, B and Van Reenen. The level of youth unemployment is at a record high. [Policy makers should focus on strengthening and refining welfare-to-work and education-to-work programmes and forget about caps on immigration or reductions in the minimum wage which would do nothing to](#). LSE Blog.

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proportion of NEET young people peaked following the 2008 recession in July to September 2011, where the proportion of 16–24-year-old NEET young people was 16.9% (1.25 million people).¹⁹³

¹⁹³ House of Commons Library. (2021). NEET: Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training. 7 July 2021.

Figure 3. Percentage of young people who are NEET in the UK, 2002-2021



Source: House of Commons Library. 2021.

Note: NEET: Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training. 7 July 2021.

Evidence shows that economic crises can have a long-term impact on young people's employment prospects. For example, four years after the 2008 recession (in 2012), the youth unemployment rate was almost three times as high as for the working age population (22% compared to 8%).¹⁹⁴ Similar levels of youth unemployment were seen internationally, with over 9 million young people (aged 15-29) in the European Union unemployed during the same period.¹⁹⁵

Impact on pay

No evidence was identified on the impact of previous crises on the pay of young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects specifically. However, analysis of earnings by IFS shows that entering the labour market during a recession can have a negative impact on future employment and earnings. The earnings of young people who entered the labour market following the 2008 recession were 6% lower after one year, and 2% lower after five years, than those who were already in employment.¹⁹⁶ Another study based on the analysis of the National Child Development Survey (NCDS) found that being unemployed for six months or more at a young age had a long-term scarring effect that was equal to approximately a 13 to 21% reduction in earnings by age 42.¹⁹⁷ Analysis of BHPS data found that a period of unemployment

¹⁹⁴ TUC.(2012) [Youth Unemployment and Ethnicity](#).

¹⁹⁵ Heyes, J. (2014) [Vocational education and training and the Great Recession: supporting young people in the time of crisis](#). ETUI. Report 131.

¹⁹⁶ Johnson, P (2020) [A bad time to graduate](#). Institute for Fiscal Studies.

¹⁹⁷ Gregg, P. and E. Tominey (2005), 'The wage scar from male youth unemployment', *Labour Economics* vol 12(4):487-509.

at age 16 to 24 was associated with an average of an extra two months a year out of work compared to a period of unemployment at age 26 to 29.¹⁹⁸

Evidence on what works in supporting youth employment

As discussed above, previous recessions have had a negative impact on young people’s job prospects, as has the pandemic. However, as lessons were learned from the outcomes of these recessions, the approach to tackling youth unemployment has changed over the years. For example, during recessions in the 1970s and 1980s workers close to retirement age were encouraged to leave the labour market to create jobs for young people,¹⁹⁹ this is no longer considered to be an effective response to economic crises.

The table below shows the main policies implemented to support youth employment in the UK since the 1970s.

Table 1 Summary of significant policies implemented to support youth employment, 1970 - 2019²⁰⁰

Decade	Name of the Programme	Year	Region	Summary of the programme
1970s	Job Creation Programme	1975-76	UK	Temporary jobs were created for unemployed people which were targeted at both young people and those over 50.
	The Work Experience Programme (WEP)	Mid 1970s	UK	Placed unemployed young people with employers for a period of six months.
	Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP)	1977	UK	Provided work experience and skills training to young people

¹⁹⁸ The ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment. (2011). [Youth unemployment: the crisis we cannot afford](#). Nuffield Foundation.

¹⁹⁹ Bivand, P. (2012) The Generation Lost Youth Unemployment and the youth labour market. TUC. Available at: [generation_lost_touchstone_extras_2012.pdf \(tuc.org.uk\)](#)

²⁰⁰ International Labour Organisation. [Countering Unemployment in the United Kingdom](#).

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1980s	Youth Training Scheme (YTS)	1980	UK	Entitlement to a year's training with the guarantee of a place for all 16- and 17-years olds
	Young Workers Scheme (YWS)	1982- 1986	UK	Targeted at people aged 16-17 in their first year of employment. By taking part in the scheme, each employer was paid a subsidy each week for up to one year for each eligible young person ²⁰¹
	New Workers Scheme	1986	UK	The YWS was replaced by the NWS which extended the subsidy to recruits under 21 years of age
	The Restart Programme	1986 -1990	UK	Aimed to reduce long term unemployment by providing information, individual counselling and coaching to those who had been unemployed for a year or more ²⁰²
1990s	Modern Apprenticeship Initiative	1995	UK	Offered on-and-off the job training,

²⁰¹ Hutchinson, G. and Church, A. (1989). Wages, Unions, the Youth Training Scheme and the Young Workers Scheme. *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*. Vol 36. No 2. 1989

²⁰² Zeman, A. (1990). Return to Work New Directions for the Restart Scheme.

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				NVQs and delivery through agents
	New Deal for Young People	1998	UK	Offered employment support for young people aged 18 to 24 years old. It was mandatory for 18 to 24 years olds who had been unemployed and claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for six months. Approximately 960,000 people engaged with the programme ²⁰³ .
2000s	Future Jobs Fund	2009	Great Britain	Launched by the DWP in October 2009, the FJF aimed to support the creation of subsidised jobs for unemployed young people (aged 18 to 24) in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). As part of the programme, unemployed young people received a maximum contribution of £6,500 per job. A DWP quantitative evaluation found the

²⁰³ Beale, I. Bloss, C and Thomas, (2012) A. The Longer-term impact of the New Deal fro Young People. Department for Work and Pensions. Working Paper No 23.

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				<p>programme successful in getting young people into work and stated that it had long-term positive impact on participants' lives.²⁰⁴ Further information can be found in Appendix D.</p>
	The Work Programme	June 2011- 2015	Great Britain	<p>Implemented by the 2010-15 Coalition Government, the programme aimed to support people who were long-term unemployed or were at risk of becoming so.</p>
	Job Growth Wales for 16-24 years olds	2012-2016	Wales	<p>Funded by the European Social Fund, the programme was launched in April 2012. It aimed to provide young people with work experience for a 6-month period. It had a target to create 16,000 new job opportunities between April 2012 and March 2016. An evaluation conducted during the programme found that successful participants spent on average eight weeks</p>

²⁰⁴ Beale, I. Bloss, C and Thomas, (2012) A. The Longer-term impact of the New Deal for Young People. Department for Work and Pensions. Working Paper No 23. pg.7

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				longer in work than those who were not successful. ²⁰⁵
	The Youth Employment Scheme	2012	Northern Ireland	Aimed to assist young people who are ready to be employed but lack the necessary skills. For NEET young people aged 16 to 18 years old, it included mentorship and family support. For the 18 to 24 years old group, it included work experience placements and employer subsidies ²⁰⁶ .
	The Youth Contract	2012-2016	UK	A package of support worth nearly £1 billion to help unemployed young people (aged 16 to 24) prepare for work. It included a wage subsidy scheme and an apprenticeship incentive scheme. ²⁰⁷ As part of the YC, additional support for 16-17 NEET young people was provided to mitigate the negative impact of

²⁰⁵ Beale, I. Bloss, C and Thomas, (2012) [A. The Longer-term impact of the New Deal for Young People. Department for Work and Pensions. Working Paper No 23.](#)

²⁰⁶ Northern Ireland Assembly .(2012) UK Youth Employment and Training Schemes. [April 2009 \(niassembly.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁰⁷ Mirza – Davies, J. (2015) Youth Contract. [House of Commons Library.](#)

				<p>the recession. This programme also included apprenticeship support, job search support and wage incentives.²⁰⁸ A DfE evaluation assessed the impact of the programme from 2012 to March 2014. The evaluation found that the benefit arising from funding the national model was £12,900 per participant. Moreover, it showed that targeting of the young people with low educational attainment increased the social benefit for each participant.²⁰⁹ Further information can be found in Appendix D.</p>
2010s	Community Jobs Scotland	2011- present	Scotland	<p>Managed by the partnership of the Scottish Government, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and Social Enterprise Scotland, the</p>

²⁰⁸ Newton, B. Speckesser, S. Nafilyan, V. Maguire, S. Devins, D. Bickerstaffe, T. (2014). The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training evaluation. Revised September 2014. Department for Education.

²⁰⁹ Newton, B. Speckesser, S. Nafilyan, V. Maguire, S. Devins, D. Bickerstaffe, T. (2014). The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training evaluation. Revised September 2014. Department for Education. Pg 17

				<p>programme aimed to create jobs for young unemployed people.</p> <p>The jobs were created in third sector organisations, lasted for 6 months and paid at national minimum wage. An evaluation found that 1,861 jobs were created with 448 employers. In addition, the promptness of response was acknowledged as a positive. Further information can be found in Appendix D.</p>
	The Work and Health Programme	2017 -2019	England and Wales	<p>Provided employment support to people who were vulnerable or had health conditions or disabilities and had been unemployed for more than 2 years. In addition to this group, homeless people, care leavers, young people in a gang and refugees were also available for the support. It aimed to support 275,000 people over 5 years including 220,000 disabled people²¹⁰.</p>

²¹⁰ DWP, Work and Health Programme statistics to November 2019, February 2020

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	The European Social Fund (ESF) programme	2017	England	Aimed to “contribute to local growth by increasing labour market participation, promoting social inclusion and developing the skills of the potential and existing workforce.” ²¹¹ The funding provided by the European Union was allocated to over 450 projects to improve access to the labour market for job seekers, young people – those living in areas with high youth unemployment and people with multiple and complex barriers to employment. The budget was used in skill training.
	No One Left Behind (NOLB) Employability Funding Stream – Young Person’s Guarantee	April 2019- present	Scotland	Set out the employment support program for people from school leaving age up to 67 years old. As part of the programme, participants are offered a new role in an organisation for a

²¹¹ Department for Work & Pensions and Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (2021). Supporting Local Growth 2017 England European Social Fund Programme.

				minimum of 52 weeks ²¹² .
2010s to 2020s	Fair Start Scotland	2018 - 2021	Scotland	Provides employment support services to get people ready for work. Delivered in Scotland, it is available to individuals with disability or additional support, have been unemployed for a long time or currently in the Employment and Support Allowance Work Related Activity Group ²¹³ . While not specifically focused on young people, the service was available to care leavers, ethnic minorities and refugees.

Active Labour Market Policies

Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) have been among the most commonly implemented measures to reduce youth unemployment during recessions.²¹⁴ ALMPs are government policies that intervene in the labour market to help those out of work to get into employment. These policies can be in form of job search assistance, vocational training, wage subsidies or support

²¹² Scottish Borders. [No One Left Behind Employability Funding Stream](#).

²¹³ Scottish Government. (2021) [Fair Start Scotland: economic evaluation](#).

²¹⁴ Martin, J.P. (2015) [Activation and active labour market policies in OECD countries: Stylised facts and evidence on their effectiveness](#). IZA Journal of Labour Policy. SSN 2193-9004, Springer, Heidelberg, Vol. 4, pp. 1-29

to micro-entrepreneurs^{215,216,217}. Evidence from several countries shows the effectiveness of ALMPs in supporting young people into employment.^{218,219, 220,221}

Evaluations of ALMPs have identified a range of characteristics found to be effective in supporting youth employment:

- **The most effective programmes were implemented at an early stage.** A World Bank worldwide inventory of youth employment interventions found that the most effective programmes were implemented at an early stage during economic crises. For example, in Sweden, youth employment programmes have historically provided support before a young person has been unemployed for six months.²²²
- **Direct job creation and subsidised employment were also found to be effective at supporting youth employment during previous economic crises, particularly when carefully targeted.**^{223, 224} FJF was introduced in October 2009 to support young people at risk of disadvantage who were in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance. An impact evaluation of the FJF found that after 18 months in the programme, participants were on average 10 percentage points more likely to be in unsubsidised employment.²²⁵ A DWP evaluation of the FJF found that the scheme was successful in supporting young people in work and it had a positive long-term impact on participants' lives.²²⁶ An evaluation of an employment subsidy programme to support female workers at risk of disadvantage (of all ages) found it to be effective in supporting female workers into employment; participants had a 42% higher probability of employment than non-participants. The programme was particularly effective for younger and older workers, and for those with lower skill levels.²²⁷ Similarly, an evaluation of wage subsidies for female workers (of all ages) in Germany found that participants' employment rates were 40 percentage points higher than non-participants.²²⁸ However, there is some evidence that wage subsidies can have a negative impact, with a controlled experiment of wage subsidies in the US

²¹⁵ OECD, [Active Labour Market Policies: Connecting People with Jobs](#).

²¹⁶ Yeyati, E. L. Montane, M. and Sartorio, L. (2019) [Understanding what works for active labour market policies](#).

²¹⁷ Department for Business, Innovation & Skills. (2013) Youth unemployment: government evidence on EU Action to tackle youth unemployment. Available at: [Government evidence on EU action to tackle youth unemployment - Report to the EU sub-committee on the Internal Market, Infrastructure and Employment \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

²¹⁸ Tuomala, J. and Hamalainen, K. (2007) [Vocational Labour Market Training in Promoting Youth Employment](#).

²¹⁹ Ehlert C R; Kluve J ; Schaffner S. (2012) [Temporary Work as an Active Labor Market Policy: Evaluating an Innovative Program for Disadvantaged Youths](#).

²²⁰ Osikominu, A. (2013) [Quick job entry or long-term human capital development? The dynamic effects of alternative training schemes](#). Review of Economic Studies.

²²¹ Gerfin, M. and Lechnow, M.(2006) A micro econometric evaluation of the active labour market policy in Switzerland.

²²² Betherham, G. et al. (2007) A Review of Interventions to Support Young Workers: Findings of the Youth Employment Inventory. SP Discussion Paper. No. 0715. Available at: https://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/2007_Intervention_Support_Workers_eng.pdf

²²³ Local Government Association (2002). [Local Employment and skills recovery: Youth unemployment](#).

²²⁴ Local Government Association (2002). [Local Employment and skills recovery: Youth unemployment](#).

²²⁵ Department for Work and Pensions. (2012) [Impacts and Costs and Benefits of the Future Jobs Fund](#). 2012.

²²⁶ Department for Work and Pensions. (2012). Impacts and costs and benefits of the FJF. November 2012.

²²⁷ Deidda, M., et al. (2015). [Employment subsidies, informal economy and women's transition into work in a depressed area: evidence from a matching approach](#). IZA Journal of Labor Policy. 4:7

²²⁸ Bernhard S, Gartner H and Stephan G (2008) Wage subsidies for needy job seekers and their effect on individual labour market outcomes after German reforms IZA Discussion paper 3772: 1-25

(for all age groups) finding a level of stigma for those in receipt of them, and lower levels of employment.²²⁹

- **Vocational training can increase the likelihood of employment for young people.** Education and vocational training are crucial in preparing young people for the competitive labour market. Apprenticeships and traineeships can provide a vital pathway for young people who are NEET.²³⁰ A study analysed vocational training courses, employment programmes and temporary employment with wage subsidies in Switzerland. The study found that vocational training increased the probability of being employed one year after completing the program. The participants of the vocational training programmes were on average 13.7 percentage points more likely to be employed compared to those not part of an employment programme.²³¹
- **Programmes that last for a longer duration are shown to be more impactful in supporting young people at risk of disadvantage into employment.** A youth employment programme was implemented in three medium-sized cities with high unemployment rates in Germany from 2007 to 2009. The evaluation of the programme showed that “the likelihood of employment increases with a long-duration in the program.”²³² The evaluation showed that the short and medium long programmes did not have any significant impact on employment after the scheme was completed.
- **Additional Jobcentre Plus support during the Youth Contract was found effective in helping young people.** A case study evaluation looked at the delivery of the Youth Contract from the perspective of Jobcentre Plus staff. The research found that advisers were able to spend more time with claimants when there were dedicated Youth Contract teams. This allowed advisers to better understand the needs of claimants and what would suit them the best.²³³
- **There is some evidence that transition planning/ coordinating interventions can result in positive employment outcomes.** An academic evaluation explored the relationship between transition planning/ coordinating interventions and transitions outcomes for secondary-aged disabled young people. The study found that student focused planning which includes curricula on both academic and non-academic skills (development of networks, career preparation) could have a substantial positive outcome for disabled students.²³⁴
- **Entrepreneurship and microenterprise programmes can have a positive impact in supporting young people into employment.** Jennings found that young black men in

²²⁹ Burtless, G. (1985) Are targeted wage subsidies harmful? Evidence from a wage voucher experiment. *Industrial Labour Relations Review* 39: 105-114

²³⁰ Department for Business Innovation & Skills. (2013) [Report to the EU sub-committee on the Internal Market, Infrastructure and Employment.](#)

²³¹ Gerfin, M and Lechner, M. (2002) A Microeconomic Evaluation of the Active Labour Market Policy in Switzerland. *The Economic Journal*. Volume 112, Issue 482.

²³² Ehlert, Christoph & Kluve, Jochen & Schaffner, Sandra (2012) "[Temporary Work as an Active Labor Market Policy: Evaluating an Innovative Program for Disadvantaged Youths,](#)" *IZA Discussion Papers* 6670, Institute of Labor Economics (IZA).

²³³ Jordan, L and Thomas, A. (2013) The Youth Contract: Findings from Research Jobcentre Plus staff in five case study districts. Department for Work and Pensions.

²³⁴ Cobb, B. R. and Alwell, M (2009) Transition Planning/ Coordinating Interventions for Youth with Disabilities. A systematic Review. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*. Volume 32 Number 2 August 2009 70-81

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the US especially benefited from “increased autonomy, engagement and risk avoidance”.²³⁵

²³⁵ Jennings, L. (2014) “Do men need empowering too? A systematic review of entrepreneurial education and microenterprise development on health disparities among inner-city black male youth” *J Urban Health*. 2014 Oct; 91 (5): 836 - 850

Impact on health and wellbeing

Key findings

- Young people from poorer backgrounds are more likely than their wealthier peers to have experienced negative impacts on their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic, and for these impacts to have persisted after restrictions have eased.
- Certain groups of young people are also disproportionately likely to have experienced a negative impact. These include young women, LGBTQ+ young people, young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled young people and care experienced young people. Young carers and young adult carers are also likely to have been impacted by increased caring responsibilities during periods of restrictions.
- Impacts on young people's mental health and wellbeing are particularly concerning due to evidence of deteriorating mental health amongst young people pre-pandemic. There is also evidence that levels of wellbeing have continued to decline during the pandemic, with later lockdowns having a greater impact than the initial lockdown.
- Although limited evidence was identified in relation to the impact of previous crises, there is some evidence that the 2008 recession was associated with a marked increase in mental health problems.

Impact of the pandemic

Physical health impact

An evidence review concluded that the physical health impacts of the pandemic on young people are generally of less concern in the literature than the impact on their mental health and wellbeing. This is due to young people being generally much less likely to experience serious immediate physical health impacts from contracting Covid-19.²³⁶ However, a range of evidence identifies two groups of young people for whom contracting the virus is seen to pose a particular risk to their physical health. These are young people with disabilities or pre-existing health conditions and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds.^{237,238} Surveys conducted by Barnardos also found that young people from ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to have suffered from bereavement due to the virus, and that this will also have a detrimental impact on their wellbeing.²³⁹

²³⁶ Greater London Authority (2020) [Rapid Evidence Review - Inequalities in relation to COVID-19 and their effects on London - London Datastore](#)

²³⁷ Tom Shakespeare et al (2021) [Disabled People in Britain and the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic\[v1\]](#) | Preprints

²³⁸ Inside Government (2021) [The Impact of COVID-19 for Pupils Using English as an Additional Language \(insidegovernment.co.uk\)](#)

²³⁹ Barnardo's (2020) [mental-health-covid19-in-our-own-words-report.pdf \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)

Mental health & wellbeing impact

Impact on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects

A grantee survey conducted by BBC Children in Need²⁴⁰ across the UK identified that young people living in poverty have been at particular risk of developing long term problems with their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic. This has been due to a combination of worry about family job losses and the impact of challenging home and family environments, without the respite provided by school, project activities and clubs.²⁴¹ A Child Poverty Action Group survey found that, during the first year of the pandemic, a high proportion of low-income families in the UK had experienced a mental or physical health problem as a result of the pandemic. This was experienced by almost half (48%) of low-income families between May and July 2020, rising to 56% between September and November 2020.²⁴² A report by Barnardo's found that support workers in contact with families living in, or at risk of, poverty during the pandemic reported that the young people that they supported were likely to report being anxious about their own and/or their family finances.²⁴³

Several studies have focused on the mental health and wellbeing of school aged children and young people. Although children under the age of 16 are outside of the scope of this evidence review, these studies have been included as part of their age range is within scope (young people aged 16 to 18). In addition, poor mental health amongst children aged under 16 may persist as long-term conditions. For example, a UK-wide survey of school aged children and their families found that symptoms of poor mental health associated with lockdown were more likely to persist after the easing of restrictions among children from lower income households than their wealthier peers.²⁴⁴ Mind found that over half (58%) of under-18s surveyed in England and Wales who had received FSM reported poor or very poor mental health during the pandemic, with nearly three quarters (73%) of this group saying that it had further declined during periods of lockdown.²⁴⁵ In their annual UK-wide household survey of young people aged 10-17, The Children's Society found that a higher proportion of children in relative poverty reported that they were very worried during the pandemic than their wealthier peers (23% and 15% respectively).²⁴⁶

Impact on wider groups of young people at risk of disadvantage

There is a range of evidence identifying a disproportionate impact of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of different groups of young people, in particular LGBTQ+ young people, those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, young people with disabilities and/or

²⁴⁰ Quality assessment indicated that the methods used in this study were of high quality

²⁴¹ BBC Children in Need (2020) [CN1081-Impact-Report.pdf \(bbcchildreninneed.co.uk\)](#)

²⁴² Child Poverty Action Group (2020) [Poverty-in-the-pandemic_update.pdf \(cpag.org.uk\)](#)

²⁴³ Barnardo's (2020) [mental-health-covid19-in-our-own-words-report.pdf \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)

²⁴⁴ CoSpace (2021) [Co-Space-report-11-Changes-in-MH-symptoms_FINAL_29-07-21_updated.pdf \(cospaceoxford.org\)](#)

²⁴⁵ Mind (2020) [the-mental-health-emergency_a4_final.pdf \(mind.org.uk\)](#)

²⁴⁶ The Children's Society (2020) [life-on-hold-childrens-well-being-and-covid-19.pdf \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](#)

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SEND and young women.^{247,248, 249,250} Findings of the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities in England show that young people from black and minority ethnic groups are more likely to have experienced impacts to their mental or physical wellbeing during the pandemic.²⁵¹ This is supported by the findings of an evidence review on the impact of the pandemic in London, which found that the mental health of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds was particularly impacted, with substantially increased risks of suicidal thoughts, self-harm and anxiety compared to their white peers. The review also found substantial impacts on many LGBTQ+ young people, with increased levels of loneliness, less opportunity to escape hostile home environments and consequences such as missed medical appointments.²⁵² According to findings of the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities in England, young women have been more likely to suffer from anxiety during the pandemic than young men²⁵³. UK-wide polling commissioned by the Prince's Trust found that NEET young people have reported high levels of anxiety and panic during the pandemic.²⁵⁴ In addition, evidence reviewed by the All-party Parliamentary Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood found that young people from precarious backgrounds, unstable families or who are living with a parent who has a mental health illness have been particularly impacted.²⁵⁵

Young carers and young adult carers also report being negatively impacted due to the extra caring responsibilities that they have had to take on during periods of restrictions.²⁵⁶ A survey of care-experienced young people in England and Wales found that care leavers were also particularly impacted during periods of lockdown and were likely to report feeling lonely and anxious at these times.²⁵⁷

During the pandemic, young homeless people have been especially impacted by social distancing restrictions and their effect on sofa-surfing. During lockdown there has been a doubling in the number of individuals contacting Centrepoin for housing support.²⁵⁸

²⁴⁷ NIHR (2020) [Young-Peoples-Mental-Health-during-the-COVID-19-Pandemic-Report-Final.pdf](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/resources/produced-content/young-peoples-mental-health-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-report-final.pdf) (nihr.ac.uk)

²⁴⁸ National Youth Trends (2021) [Beatfreeskyouthtrends.pdf](https://www.beatfreeskyouthtrends.com/beatfreeskyouthtrends.com) (beatfreeskyouthtrends.com)

²⁴⁹ Skripkauskaitė, S. et al (2021) [Co-Space-report-11-Changes-in-MH-symptoms_FINAL_29-07-21_updated.pdf](https://www.cospaceoxford.org/cospaceoxford.org) (cospaceoxford.org)

²⁵⁰ Lindsay Helen Dewa et al (2020) [CCopeY: A Mixed-Methods Co-Produced Study on the Mental Health Status and Coping Strategies of Young People During COVID-19 Lockdown in the UK](https://www.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3711111) by Lindsay Helen Dewa, Caroline Crandell, Elizabeth Choong, Jack Jaques, Alex Bottle, Catherine Kilkenny, Anna Lawrence-Jones, Martina Di Simplicio, Dasha Nicholls, Paul Aylin :: SSRN Pre-prints with the Lancet

²⁵¹ Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (2021) [4. Children and young people - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/children-and-young-people) (www.gov.uk)

²⁵² Nazroo, J. et al. (2020). Rapid evidence review: inequalities in relation to Covid-19 and their effects on London. University of Manchester; University of Sussex; The Ubele Initiative.

²⁵³ Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (2021) [COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing surveillance: report - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report) (www.gov.uk)

²⁵⁴ Princes@ Trust (2020) [Young people's anxiety increases as fears for future employment prospects mount, warns the prince's trust | News and views | About The Trust | The Prince's Trust](https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/news-and-views/about-the-trust/the-prince-s-trust) (princes-trust.org.uk)

²⁵⁵ All-Party Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood (2021) [A REPORT BY THE ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON A FIT AND HEALTHY CHILDHOOD](https://www.northampton.ac.uk/reports/a-report-by-the-all-party-parliamentary-group-on-a-fit-and-healthy-childhood) (northampton.ac.uk)

²⁵⁶ Carers Trust (2020) [my-future-my-feelings-my-family.pdf](https://www.carers.org/my-future-my-feelings-my-family.pdf) (carers.org)

²⁵⁷ National Youth Advocacy Service (2020) [NYAS-Mental-Health-Report](https://www.nyas.org.uk/nyas-mental-health-report)

²⁵⁸ Centrepoin (2020) [locked-out-report.pdf](https://www.centrepoin.org.uk/locked-out-report.pdf) (centrepoin.org.uk)

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A policy briefing by the Children's Society suggests that young migrants and refugees may be at a particular disadvantage during the pandemic if, due to their immigration status, they are unable to access public funds or gain access to support services and healthcare. It is acknowledged that this has a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of young people. For example, they may miss out on the provision of free school meals or have been at an increased risk of contracting Covid-19 due to living in overcrowded conditions. Services that support individuals in these circumstances have been under pressure during the pandemic, which has meant that disparities and discrimination faced by this group is likely to have increased.²⁵⁹

Impact on young people more generally

The impact of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of young people is an area of concern across the literature. For example, a policy paper by the UK-wide Youth Employment Group argues that this impact is considerable, with symptoms of depression, anxiety and loneliness being more common amongst this group compared to older age groups.²⁶⁰ Analysis of UK-wide USOC data found a clear negative impact on young people's mental health (measured by the GHQ-12 scale), particularly during periods when social restrictions and lockdown were in place.²⁶¹

A briefing paper by Youth Access highlights that this is particularly concerning due to evidence of deteriorating mental health amongst young people pre-pandemic; further decline as a result of the pandemic is therefore likely to have a substantial long-term impact.²⁶² Qualitative research and surveys of young people have found that many have reported high levels of loneliness and anxiety as a direct result of lockdown and social restrictions, especially in relation to lack of social contact with friends and family and being worried about missing out on education.^{263,264} An evidence review summarising the impact of the pandemic on young people under the age of 18, found that worries arising about the educational impact of the pandemic were most commonly linked to the move to online learning, a lack of understanding amongst young people of what was expected of them and a loss of pastoral support.²⁶⁵ A survey run by the Covid-19 psychological research consortium of young people aged 13 to 23 in the UK found that the health of family members if they contract the virus was a significant worry for some young people, and that this was having a negative impact on their personal well-being.²⁶⁶

²⁵⁹ The Children's Society (2021) [the-impact-of-covid-19-on-children-and-young-people-briefing.pdf](https://childrenssociety.org.uk/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-children-and-young-people-briefing.pdf) (childrenssociety.org.uk)

²⁶⁰ Youth Employment Group (2021) [Opportunity-Guarantee-YEG-paper-16.07.21.pdf](https://impetus.org.uk/opportunity-guarantee-yeg-paper-16.07.21.pdf) (impetus.org.uk)

²⁶¹ Michael Daly, Angelina R. Sutin and Eric Robinson (2020) [Longitudinal changes in mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic: evidence from the UK Household Longitudinal Study](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychmed.2020.07.011) | Psychological Medicine | Cambridge Core Psychological Medicine

²⁶² Youth Access (2021) [generation-covid.pdf](https://youthaccess.org.uk/generation-covid.pdf) (youthaccess.org.uk)

²⁶³ Stephanie Scott, Victoria J. McGowan and Shelina Visram (2021) ['I'm Gonna Tell You about How Mrs Rona Has Affected Me': Exploring Young People's Experiences of the COVID-19 Pandemic in North East England: A Qualitative Diary-Based Study – DOAJ International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health](https://doi.org/10.1080/17445019.2021.1911111)

²⁶⁴ Prince's Trust (2020) [Young people's anxiety increases as fears for future employment prospects mount, warns the prince's trust](https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/news-views/about-the-trust/the-prince-s-trust) | News and views | About The Trust | The Prince's Trust (princes-trust.org.uk)

²⁶⁵ Public Health Wales (2021) <https://phw.nhs.wales/publications/publications1/children-and-young-peoples-mental-well-being-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-report/>

²⁶⁶ Levita, L. et al (2021) [PsyArXiv Preprints | Report1: Impact of Covid-19 on young people aged 13-24 in the UK- preliminary findings](https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-1000000/v1)

There is some evidence of a deterioration in levels of wellbeing amongst young people between the lockdown which began in March 2020 and the later lockdown which started in January 2021. A Welsh study that compared levels of anxiety and wellbeing amongst young people across the two periods of restrictions found that children and young people were more likely to report feeling worried, and less likely to state that they felt happy, by the time of the 2021 lockdown.²⁶⁷ A longitudinal study in Scotland also highlights a decline in wellbeing amongst young people (aged 18-24), with 50% of those surveyed in February 2021 reporting they had felt lonely as a result of the pandemic. This was a much higher rate of loneliness than among Scottish adults generally (29%) and also higher than the rate reported by this age group in March 2020, when 26% reported that they had felt lonely as a result of the pandemic.²⁶⁸ These findings are mirrored in a survey in England and Wales conducted by Mind during March to May 2021, as Covid-19 restrictions were eased. In total, a third (34%) of surveyed young people (aged 13-24) reported that their mental health had been much worse compared to the same time the previous year.²⁶⁹ Similarly, an evidence review conducted by the Office for Health Improvement & Disparities found that, whereas during the first lockdown impacts on mental health were predominantly experienced by young women and those with pre-existing mental health concerns, between September 2020 and January 2021 there was a general decline in wellbeing and increased anxiety amongst young people. The review also found evidence of an increase in behavioural, emotional and restless/attentional difficulties amongst young people in January 2021, that had subsequently decreased by March 2021.²⁷⁰

Overall, young people's well-being has been disproportionately affected as a result of social restrictions and lockdowns.²⁷¹ Analysis by the Resolution Foundation suggests that the furlough scheme had a preventative effect to some extent on deterioration in young people's mental health; however, they raise concerns that, as in times of previous economic crises, any rise in youth unemployment is likely to put pressure on people's mental health.²⁷² Addressing the mental health support needs of the individuals who have been negatively impacted is identified as a priority by 85% of 88 youth support organisations who responded to a survey by the Centre for Youth Impact.²⁷³ Looking ahead, a qualitative study²⁷⁴ on the impact of lockdowns on young people suggests that educational settings are seen to have the potential to play a key role in supporting young people and signposting them to information and wider support²⁷⁵. This is important, as young person focus groups found that young people themselves report a lack of awareness about where they can access mental health support outside of school. The findings show that young people would welcome access to a variety of forms of support, including self-

²⁶⁷ Children's Commissioner for Wales (2021) [CoronavirusAndMe_Jan21_ENG_110221_FINAL.pdf](#) ([childcomwales.org.uk](#))

²⁶⁸ Mental Health Foundation (2021) [COVID-19 Scotland Wave 10: Key Findings | Mental Health Foundation](#)

²⁶⁹ Mind (2020) [the-consequences-of-coronavirus-for-mental-health-final-report.pdf](#) ([mind.org.uk](#))

²⁷⁰ Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (2021) [4. Children and young people - GOV.UK](#) ([www.gov.uk](#))

²⁷¹ All-Party Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood (2021) [A REPORT BY THE ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON A FIT AND HEALTHY CHILDHOOD](#) ([northampton.ac.uk](#))

²⁷² Resolution Foundation (2021) [Double-trouble.pdf](#) ([resolutionfoundation.org](#))

²⁷³ The Centre for Youth Impact (2020) [Data standard V1.1 analysis paper.pdf](#) ([youthimpact.uk](#))

²⁷⁴ Quality assessment indicated that the methods used in this study were of high quality

²⁷⁵ Alison R. McKinlay et al (2021) ["You're just there, alone in your room with your thoughts" A qualitative study about the impact of lockdown among young people during the COVID-19 pandemic | medRxiv](#)

help and one-to-one support.²⁷⁶ A mixed methods study on the coping strategies of young people found that they were more likely to be able to cope with the impact of social restrictions by establishing a new routine for their day.²⁷⁷

Impact of increased poverty

An evidence review found that reliance on welfare support as a sole source of income during the pandemic has had a negative impact on wellbeing.²⁷⁸ In addition, a survey of young people and their families in Scotland shows that people who have claimed state benefits during the pandemic face particular pressure in relation to food insecurity, ability to access the internet, heating, transport and housing costs.²⁷⁹ Organisations such as the Trussell Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation have raised concerns about the removal of the £20 Universal Credit uplift.^{280,281} The Resolution Foundation report that this will lead to a further 1.2 million people falling into relative poverty, 400,000 of whom are children and young people. They project that by 2024-25, 23% of individuals will be living in relative poverty.²⁸²

Positive impact of periods of lockdown

Across a number of studies, some young people reported that a positive aspect of lockdown is that they had been able to spend more time with family and take up new hobbies, which had improved their wellbeing.^{283,284} There is some evidence that these findings do not apply to lower-income families; an Ipsos MORI survey of 1000 parents with children under 17 in the UK reported that parents on the lowest incomes felt the least benefit from time spent together. Parents on lower incomes were less likely to identify improvements in their relationships with their children or to report feeling closer as a family, compared to those from the highest earning households.²⁸⁵ However, in contrast, a survey of nearly 13,000 English young people in June 2020 found that those in receipt of FSM reported an increase in life satisfaction during the first period of school closure. Although these results should be interpreted with caution due to low response rates, the authors speculate that these pupils may be disproportionately unhappy when attending school and so became happier during lockdown.²⁸⁶

A UK-wide survey by the Carers Trust found that some young carers and young adult carers reported developing closer bonds with those that they care for due to the increased amount of

²⁷⁶ NatCen (2021) [Youth Evidence Review Phase 2 deep dive report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

²⁷⁷ Lindsay Helen Dewa et al (2020) [CCopeY: A Mixed-Methods Co-Produced Study on the Mental Health Status and Coping Strategies of Young People During COVID-19 Lockdown in the UK by Lindsay Helen Dewa, Caroline Crandell, Elizabeth Choong, Jack Jaques, Alex Bottle, Catherine Kilkenny, Anna Lawrence-Jones, Martina Di Simplicio, Dasha Nicholls, Paul Aylin :: SSRN](#)

²⁷⁸ Alex Tiley, Dave Morris and Halima Yusuf (2021) [Youth-Affairs-Report-2021.pdf \(ymca.org.uk\)](https://www.ymca.org.uk) YMCA

²⁷⁹ Includem (2020) [Poverty-and-the-Impact-of-Coronavirus-on-Young-People-and-Families.pdf \(includem.org\)](#)

²⁸⁰ [dignity-or-destitution-UC-standard-allowance-report-final.pdf \(trusselltrust.org\)](#)

²⁸¹ Universal credit - the impact of cutting the £20-a-week | JRF

²⁸² Resolution Foundation (2021) [The Living Standards Outlook 2021 • Resolution Foundation](#)

²⁸³ Leeds Trinity University (2020) [british-families-in-lockdown-report.pdf \(leedstrinity.ac.uk\)](#)

²⁸⁴ Levita, L. et al (2021) [PsyArXiv Preprints | Report1: Impact of Covid-19 on young people aged 13-24 in the UK-preliminary findings](#)

²⁸⁵ Parent Zone (2020) [Lockdown ParentZone Report Nov2020.pdf](#)

²⁸⁶ SchholDash (2020) [SchoolDash - Blog \(August 2020\)](#)

time that they were spending together.²⁸⁷ A UK-wide survey of care experienced young people also reported positive impacts in terms of less exposure to school-related stress.²⁸⁸

Impact of previous crises on health and wellbeing

Limited evidence on the impact of previous crises on health and wellbeing was identified, with no evidence found for specific groups of young people. However, there is some evidence that mental health problems in the UK increased markedly after the 2008 recession. For example, there was a steady increase in the rate of suicides in the UK after the recession. Between 2008 and 2010, there were an estimated 1,000 excess deaths from suicide in the UK, with the greatest increase in suicide among young men.^{289,290} A study including an evidence review and secondary data analysis found that unemployed people's overall wellbeing had been impacted by the 2008 recession, with reported low levels of positive wellbeing, low levels of life satisfaction and higher levels of depression.²⁹¹ Job insecurity, poverty and debt is widely recognised to be linked with poor mental health and wellbeing.²⁹²

²⁸⁷ Carers Trust (2020) [my-future-my-feelings-my-family.pdf \(carers.org\)](#)

²⁸⁸ Adoption UK (2020) [Download.ashx \(adoptionuk.org\)](#)

²⁸⁹ The source did not specify the age range for this finding.

²⁹⁰ Gunnell D. et al. (2015) The 2008 Global Financial Crisis: effects on mental health and suicide <http://www.awp.nhs.uk/media/757861/policyreport-3-suicide-recession.pdf>. Policy Bristol.

²⁹¹ Bell, D., & Blanchflower, D. (2010). [UK Unemployment in the Great Recession](#). *National Institute Economic Review*, 214, R3-R25.

²⁹² Green, F. (2020) [Health effects of job insecurity \(iza.org\)](#) IZA World of Labor

Young people's voice and experience

Key Findings

- A wide range of evidence highlights that many young people feel that their concerns during the pandemic have not been listened to, and that their priorities have not been taken into account.
- There is a general consensus amongst organisations that support young people that a tailored approach is essential in lessening the impact of the pandemic. Evidence suggests many areas in which young people require support, including identifying the relevance of their skills to employers, opportunities for work experience and practical skills development and wider emotional and holistic support.
- Although there is limited evidence on specific groups of young people, several studies suggest that those from poorer backgrounds are more pessimistic about their future employment prospects and are less likely to believe that they will be able to achieve their future goals.
- Evidence suggests that young people have generally high levels of motivation to make positive changes in their lives, and to be active participants in recovery from the pandemic, but do not at the moment feel empowered to make these changes.

Background

Evidence on young people's views and experiences of the pandemic, support needs and outlook for the future is limited both in terms of quantity, and in the availability of evidence for specific groups of young people. The evidence does not generally consider differences between young people from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and is therefore largely presented in relation to young people in general.

There are concerns in the literature that young people's voices have often been unheard during the pandemic. In terms of official statistics, the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) found that there is a gap in the official statistics produced during the pandemic that give a voice to children and young people. Much of the data that does include youth voice was found to be collected by non-official sources such as charities and think tanks. The OSR acknowledged that these groups have often come up with creative ways to encourage young respondents to express their thoughts and feelings, and recognise that non-official sources of data and research have an important role to play in contributing to the wider evidence base on the impact that the pandemic has had on young people. However it is stressed that official statistics producers should consider whether there are weaknesses in existing official statistics that should be addressed.²⁹³

²⁹³ Office for Statistics Regulation (2021) [Systemic Review: Children and Young People Statistics in the pandemic \(statisticsauthority.gov.uk\)](https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk)

Opinions of young people going unheard

Despite the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on young people,^{294,295, ,296,297} there is concern that young people's opinions have not been listened to and have not been afforded political attention.²⁹⁸ For example, in a survey of 1535 UK young people aged 14-25²⁹⁹ and a survey of over 2000 UK young people aged 11-19, young people themselves highlighted that they had not been listened to during the pandemic.^{300,301} Specialists in paediatric bioethics have raised concerns that the needs of young people have been a lower priority in decisions relating to Covid-19 restrictions.³⁰² This is especially the case in relation to the impact of restrictions on young people's education, where their voices are perceived to be missing from policy discourse. An example of this is the UK government's handling of school closures and exam cancellations, which is widely considered to have exacerbated existing disparities and hardship.^{303,304,305,306} As highlighted in a policy paper by the National Youth Agency, including young people's voice is widely considered to be important in understanding their support needs during recovery from the pandemic; this is particularly important given the likely surge in the number of young people needing support due to the pandemic, and the often hidden and unforeseen impacts on young people.³⁰⁷

Research by Youth Employment UK with young people aged 14 to 24 across the UK suggests that they feel disconnected from the services, opportunities and local support systems around them; over four fifths (81.9%) of surveyed young people felt that there were not enough opportunities to share their views on important issues in their area.³⁰⁸ There is a sense that they do not feel listened to and are 'let-down' by decision-makers, with over half of the young people surveyed by Speakers for Schools in the UK thinking that business leaders have a poor understanding of their needs during recovery and almost three-quarters thinking similarly of politicians.³⁰⁹ A UK survey of young people conducted by the Prince's Trust during Covid-19

²⁹⁴ Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (2021) COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing surveillance: report - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

²⁹⁵ The Health Foundation (2020) [Generation COVID-19 - The Health Foundation](#)

²⁹⁶ Prince's Trust (2020) <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/news-views/aspiration-gap-research>

²⁹⁷ Speakers for Schools (2021) [SFS-Research-Report-2021-2.pdf \(speakersforschools.org\)](#)

²⁹⁸ British Science Association (2020) [The forgotten generation: The impacts of COVID-19 on young people | British Science Association](#)

²⁹⁹ Respondents self-selected, but covered a broad demographic and were recruited via social media and youth organisations

³⁰⁰ National Youth Trends (2020) [BF-NYT-Take-the-Temperature-Report.pdf \(beatfreesyouthtrends.com\)](#)

³⁰¹ Speakers for Schools (2021) [SFS-Research-Report-2021-2.pdf \(speakersforschools.org\)](#)

³⁰² Joe Brierley and Vic Larcher (2021) [The Birkenhead drill suggests 'women and children first': government and society's reversal of the drill during the COVID-19 pandemic, left children last and cannot be allowed to continue | Postgraduate Medical Journal \(bmj.com\) Postgraduate Medical Journal](#)

³⁰³ Louise Holt & Lesley Murray (2021) [Full article: Children and Covid 19 in the UK \(tandfonline.com\) Children's Geographies](#)

³⁰⁴ Buttle UK (2021) [State of Child Poverty 2021 - Buttle UK](#)

³⁰⁵ BBC Children in Need (2020) [CN1081-Impact-Report.pdf \(bbcchildreninneed.co.uk\)](#)

³⁰⁶ Education Policy Institute (2020) [EPI-Policy-paper-Impact-of-Covid-19_docx.pdf](#)

³⁰⁷ National Youth Agency (2020) [Inside-Out-NYA-Brook-2020-1.pdf](#)

³⁰⁸ Youth Employment UK (2021) [youth-voice-census-report-2021.pdf \(youthemployment.org.uk\)](#)

³⁰⁹ Speakers for Schools (2021) [SFS-Research-Report-2021-2.pdf \(speakersforschools.org\)](#)

lockdown restrictions found that young people generally felt less in control of their lives during this period than prior to the pandemic.³¹⁰

The National Youth Trends survey found that whilst young people across the UK have been generally compliant in terms of adhering to Covid-19 restrictions, they believe that their priorities have not been taken into account.³¹¹ Similarly, a survey of 7000 young women across the UK found that 61% would welcome more information directly from the government in relation to pandemic restrictions that is targeted specifically at their age group.³¹² In their research, National Youth Trends found that a recurring narrative was that many young people are struggling to get a sense of where their voices, feelings and experiences fit into building a 'new normal' post-pandemic.³¹³ Evidence from the Prince's Trust UK Youth Index³¹⁴ shows that young people have a high level of motivation to make positive changes for the future; however, there is a sense that they feel powerless to make these changes as they feel that their aspirations will not be listened to.³¹⁵ Surveys shows that the types of opportunities that young people consider to be important relate to training, work experience, careers information, mental health support, volunteering and support outside of educational settings.^{316,317}

Impact on youth service provision

Impact on wider groups of young people at risk of disadvantage

No evidence was identified on the impact of the pandemic on youth service provision on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects specifically. Most of the evidence in this area focuses generally on young people who use their services, who are typically defined as disadvantaged or similar. For example, qualitative research conducted by the Youth Endowment Fund with over 100 of their grantee organisations found a general consensus that young people at risk of disadvantage will need tailored support to lessen the impact of the pandemic.³¹⁸

As discussed in the digital exclusion section, youth support organisations moved much of their delivery online during periods of restrictions. However, not all young people have found this approach to be fully accessible and inclusive. Much of the evidence written during periods of

³¹⁰ Prince's Trust (2020) [Young people in lockdown \(princestrust.org.uk\)](https://princestrust.org.uk)

³¹¹ National Youth Trends (2020) [Take the Temperature: Covid-19 effects young people in the UK \(beatfreeskyouthtrends.com\)](https://beatfreeskyouthtrends.com)

³¹² Girlguiding UK (2020) [girlguiding-covid19-research-briefing.pdf](#)

³¹³ National Youth Trends (2020) [Take the Temperature: Covid-19 effects young people in the UK \(beatfreeskyouthtrends.com\)](https://beatfreeskyouthtrends.com)

³¹⁴ The Index is based on a representative sample of 2,180 16 to 25-year-olds.

³¹⁵ Prince's Trust (2021) [Youth Index 2021 | Research, policies and reports | About The Trust | The Prince's Trust \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](https://princes-trust.org.uk)

³¹⁶ Jack Petchey Foundation (2020) [Shaping-Our-Future-The-Jack-Petchey-COVID-19-Youth-Survey.pdf \(jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk\)](https://jackpetcheyfoundation.org.uk)

³¹⁷ Speakers for Schools (2021) [SFS-Research-Report-2021-2.pdf \(speakersforschools.org\)](https://speakersforschools.org)

³¹⁸ Youth Endowment Fund (2020) [YEF-Insights-Brief-1-Engaging-young-people-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic-FINAL.pdf \(youthendowmentfund.org.uk\)](https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk)

restrictions focuses on the practicalities of supporting young people during this especially challenging point in time.^{319,320,321}

The evidence identifies a number of ways in which young people at risk of disadvantage can be better supported as restrictions are reduced. A review of support measures for young people found that involving them directly in the co-design of resources and/or interventions can be particularly effective; this process can empower young people, make them part of decision making processes and give them a chance to develop new skills.³²² Evidence from a National Youth Agency evidence review, complemented by insights from health practitioners and specialist youth workers, suggests that youth organisations and others that support young people need to take a holistic approach and ensure that interventions cater for all the needs of the individual. For example, by providing emotional support, allowing for the development of social capital, signposting to financial and practical support and fostering the development of academic, technical and personal skills.³²³ An opinion piece for the Institute of Youth Work indicates that fostering individual young people's sense of resilience, so that they are able to make positive changes to their lives, is also considered important.³²⁴

Impact on careers-focused support

Impact on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects

Little evidence on the effect on youth service provision was identified that specifically focuses on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects. However, research conducted prior to Covid-19 using linked administrative data from England has shown that young people from poorer backgrounds are less likely than their peers to have access to the knowledge and networks to help them to make choices about their futures.³²⁵

Outcomes from a review of evidence and consultation events with career guidance stakeholders conducted by the Careers and Enterprise Company show that school-mediated support is especially important for young people from poorer backgrounds (defined as being in receipt of FSM), as this has the potential to help expose young people to a range of people, jobs and career options.³²⁶

³¹⁹ London Youth (2020) [Business Plan \(londonyouth.org\)](https://www.londonyouth.org)

³²⁰ Youth Endowment Fund (2020) [YEF-Insights-Brief-1-Engaging-young-people-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic-FINAL.pdf \(youthendowmentfund.org.uk\)](https://www.youthendowmentfund.org.uk)

³²¹ Young Camden Foundation (2020) [COVID-19-Impact-and-Response-Report-by-YCF.pdf \(youngcamdenfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.youngcamdenfoundation.org.uk)

³²² Charles Coughlan et al (2020) [Working with communities to mitigate the collateral impact of COVID-19 on children and young people | BMJ Paediatrics Open](https://www.bmj.com)

³²³ National youth Agency (2020) [Inside-Out-NYA-Brook-2020-1.pdf](https://www.nya.gov.uk)

³²⁴ Institute for Youth Work (2020) [Young People, the pandemic and jobs – “optimism needed” - Institute for Youth Work \(iyw.org.uk\)](https://www.iyw.org.uk)

³²⁵ Social Mobility Commission (2016) [Social and ethnic inequalities in choice available and choices made at age 16.](https://www.socialmobility.org)

³²⁶ Careers and Enterprise Company (2021) [Effective Careers Interventions for Disadvantaged Young People: Evidence review | The Careers and Enterprise Company](https://www.cecompany.org)

Impact on wider groups of young people at risk of disadvantage

An opinion piece from the Institute for Youth Work draws parallels with previous economic crises, especially in respect of high levels of youth unemployment and the type of support that will be needed.³²⁷ In a policy paper outlining an economic response to the pandemic, the lead organisations of YEG³²⁸ consider it important that funding is prioritised to support youth employment in any labour market response. Findings from a survey of UK careers companies and professionals conducted by Careers England highlight that assistance should be provided at every step of the journey to and into employment, and should draw on what young people want and what is known to work, to build a better youth employment system overall.³²⁹

Findings from the Careers England survey highlight that young people are often unsure about the relevance of their skills and how they relate to employer requirements; there is therefore a need for support in this area. Increased face-to-face support opportunities are considered important in helping young people to be able to make informed choices about their future.³³⁰ An evidence review conducted by the What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth indicates that taking a local approach to labour market support may be beneficial, as local organisations are seen to be well positioned through local knowledge, relationships and networks to understand how long-term scarring from high levels of youth unemployment can be prevented.³³¹ Mixed methods research³³² conducted by the Health Foundation found that young people themselves especially welcome interventions that allow them to access work-based learning in order to develop technical and employability skills.³³³ Polling of young people aged 11 to 19 found that internships and work experience are generally seen by young people as the most important way for them to improve their confidence in their future careers.³³⁴

Outlook for the future

Impact on young people living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects

Little evidence on young people's outlooks for the future was identified that specifically focuses on those living in poverty or with poor social mobility prospects. However, mixed methods research conducted by the Social Market Foundation^{335,336} found that young people from poorer backgrounds, and those who are at risk of disadvantage, report less belief in their ability to achieve their goals compared to peers from more affluent backgrounds.³³⁷ A UK-wide survey of young people in September 2020 conducted by the Prince's Trust found that those from poorer

³²⁷ Institute for Youth Work (2020) [Young People, the pandemic and jobs – “optimism needed” - Institute for Youth Work \(iyw.org.uk\)](#)

³²⁸ That is the Youth Futures Foundation, Impetus, Youth Employment UK, The Princes Trust and the Institute for Employment Studies.

³²⁹ Impetus (2020) [Youth-Employment-Covid19-Response-FINAL.pdf \(impetus.org.uk\)](#)

³³⁰ Dr Deirdre Hughes (2020) [Where-do-I-go-for-careers-support-FINAL-03062020.pdf \(careersengland.org.uk\)](#)

³³¹ What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth (2020) [COVID_19_Local_responses_to_Youth_Scarring.pdf \(whatworksgrowth.org\)](#)

³³² This included a large-scale UK survey, interviews and focus groups

³³³ The Health Foundation (2021) [Not just any job, good jobs!.pdf \(employment-studies.co.uk\)](#)

³³⁴ Speakers for Schools (2021) [SFS-Research-Report-2021-2.pdf \(speakersforschools.org\)](#)

³³⁵ This included an evidence review, UK-wide survey and interviews

³³⁶ Quality assessment indicated that the methods used in this study were of high quality

³³⁷ Scott Corfe and Aveek Bhattacharya (2021) [A-matter-of-perspective-Jul-2021.pdf \(smf.co.uk\)](#) Social Market Foundation

backgrounds were more likely to believe that their future goals were “impossible to achieve” than those from wealthier backgrounds.³³⁸

Impact on wider groups of young people at risk of disadvantage

Little evidence has been identified in relation to different groups of young people. However, mixed methods research conducted by the Social Market Foundation³³⁹ found that young people from minority groups are likely to be less positive about their future outlook.³⁴⁰ In addition, the UK-wide survey commissioned by the Prince’s Trust (described above) found that almost half (48%) of young people who were NEET reported that they are worried that they will “never get a job”.³⁴¹

Impact on young people more generally

Evidence shows that whilst some groups of young people feel more optimistic about the future since the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, there is still a general sense that they feel ‘forgotten about’ and remain pessimistic about future plans (see for example evidence from the London Assembly and The Prince’s Trust).^{342,343} In a UK-wide survey commissioned by The Prince’s Trust, 41% of young people believed that their future goals seemed “impossible to achieve”, with almost three fifths (58%) of young people “scared” of being unemployed. The Prince’s Trust 2021 Youth Index found a high level of pessimism about future job prospects.³⁴⁴ Mixed methods research³⁴⁵ conducted by the Health Foundation suggests that there is a discrepancy between young people’s aspirations for work, and the reality of their working conditions. The findings suggest that the pandemic may have had a lasting impact on young people’s perception of what constitutes good quality work.³⁴⁶

A survey of UK young people (aged 13-25) found that young people generally perceive that the effects of the pandemic on their lives will be long-lasting and that their generation will be permanently disadvantaged.³⁴⁷ Focus groups with young people aged 13-24 from urban, rural and coastal areas in England indicates that young people have the desire to be active participants in the recovery and want to be actively involved in decision making processes about policies and services that affect them;³⁴⁸ however, research with young people who are part of

³³⁸ Prince’s Trust (2020) [Pandemic highlights “aspiration gap” as young people lose hope | News and views | About The Trust | The Prince’s Trust \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](#)

³³⁹ Quality assessment indicated that the methods used in this study were of high quality

³⁴⁰ Scott Corfe and Aveek Bhattacharya (2021) [A-matter-of-perspective-Jul-2021.pdf \(smf.co.uk\)](#) Social Market Foundation

³⁴¹ Prince’s Trust (2020) [Pandemic highlights “aspiration gap” as young people lose hope | News and views | About The Trust | The Prince’s Trust \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](#)

³⁴² Mayor of London (2021) [A New Deal for Young People | London City Hall](#)

³⁴³ Prince’s Trust (2021) [Youth Index 2021 | Research, policies and reports | About The Trust | The Prince’s Trust \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](#)

³⁴⁴ Prince’s Trust (2021) [Youth Index 2021 | Research, policies and reports | About The Trust | The Prince’s Trust \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](#)

³⁴⁵ This included a survey and interviews

³⁴⁶ The Health Foundation (2021) [Not just any job, good jobs!.pdf \(employment-studies.co.uk\)](#)

³⁴⁷ Co-op (2021) [FINAL REPORT Covid the shadow on a young generation.pdf \(ctfassets.net\)](#)

³⁴⁸ NatCen (2021) [Youth Evidence Review Phase 2 deep dive report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

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Great Ormond Street's Youth Forum indicates that they need more information about how they can achieve this and access appropriate channels for their voices to be heard.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁹ Vic Larcher et al (2020) [Young people's views on their role in the COVID-19 pandemic and society's recovery from it | Archives of Disease in Childhood \(bmj.com\)](#)

Appendix A – Research questions

The evidence review covers two broad topics, each with a number of specific research questions.

Firstly, the review looks at the impact of the current crisis on young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, or at risk of poor social mobility, across the four nations of the UK. This includes the following research questions:

- How are young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, or at risk of poor social mobility, experiencing the crisis in each of the four nations?
- How has the crisis affected their education and employment? How has it affected their wellbeing and mental health?
- How has the crisis impacted on young disabled people, young women and young men, and young people from minority ethnic groups and people with combinations of these characteristics?
- How do young people feel about their future, particularly their education, employment, and social mobility prospects? What support do they think they need from the government?
- What do they think of the different support measures that governments have put in place so far?

Secondly, the review considers how similar previous crises have affected young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, or at risk of poor social mobility, and what lessons can be learnt from the policy responses. This includes the following research questions:

- What has the impact of previous comparable crises been on young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, or at risk of poor social mobility?
- What have previous policy responses been to past crises?
- What has been effective in improving the prospects for young people in post-crisis recovery?
- What lessons should policy makers be learning for the recovery?

Appendix B – Definitions

SMC’s State of the Nation report sets out key definitions for social mobility, poverty and socioeconomic status.³⁵⁰ These are included verbatim below for reference.

Social Mobility	<p>This is the idea that where you start in life shouldn’t determine your future, and that you have a good chance to do better than your parents. To measure it, we look at what occupation or income your parents had and what occupation or income you end up with.</p>
Absolute social mobility	<p>This is the idea that you have a good chance to do better than your parents, especially in terms of occupation and income.</p> <p>Absolute mobility rates look at the proportion of the population who are in different positions (occupational class or income) from their parents, and are usually given as a simple percentage.</p> <p>For example, a person experiences upward absolute income mobility if their income is greater than their parents’ income.</p> <p>They experience upward absolute occupational mobility if their occupation class is higher than their parents’. Absolute social mobility increases if more and more people do better than their parents.</p>
Relative social mobility	<p>This is the idea that your parents’ position in society doesn’t determine your position in society, especially in terms of occupational class and income.</p> <p>Relative mobility rates compare the chances that people from different backgrounds have of ending up with a particular occupational class or income. They are usually given as a ratio or a similar statistic (such as a slope in a regression model). For example, we note in this report that people from a professional background are 60% more likely to be in a professional job.</p> <p>Relative occupational mobility is low if almost everyone ends up in the same occupational class as their parents. Relative income mobility is low if almost everyone ends up in a similar place in the income</p>

³⁵⁰ SMC (2021) [State of the nation 2021: Social mobility and the pandemic - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/state-of-the-nation-2021)

	<p>distribution as their parents – for example, if parents in the bottom decile of earnings have children that mostly end up in the bottom decile of earnings.</p> <p>While absolute and relative social mobility often go together, they are not the same concept. For example, if a society creates more professional jobs, absolute occupational mobility should improve. But if most of these professional jobs go to people from professional backgrounds, relative social mobility may remain static.</p>
Poverty	<p>Poverty can be defined in several different ways, two common measures are absolute and relative poverty.</p>
Absolute poverty	<p>This is one measure of poverty (see also Relative poverty). A household is in absolute poverty if its income is below 60% of the average (median) net household income as it was in 2010/11. This threshold stays the same over time – it does not adjust for changes in average income.</p> <p>Many experts, including us, prefer the relative poverty measure, because it shows the number of households significantly below today’s normal living standards. In contrast, the UK’s absolute poverty measure becomes increasingly out of date over time.</p>
Relative poverty	<p>This is one measure of poverty (also see Absolute poverty). A household is in relative poverty if its income is below 60% of the average (median) net household income in the same year. In other words, the pound amount of the poverty line changes each year based on current average income in the country.</p> <p>Many experts, including us, prefer the relative poverty measure, because it shows the number of households significantly below today’s normal living standards. In contrast, the UK’s absolute poverty measure becomes increasingly out of date over time.</p> <p>We can look at relative poverty in two ways: before and after housing costs. We look at poverty after housing costs to see how much households have in disposable income. Ignoring the cost of housing means you only have half of the picture of financial pressures on struggling households. Since housing costs have spiralled over the past 25 years (increasing by almost half in real terms for private tenants), and because housing costs differ dramatically across the country, it makes a real difference to families’ disposable income.</p>

NS-SEC, the National Statistics Socio- economic Classificatio n	<p>This is the best national measure to monitor occupational social mobility. We define an individual's socio-economic background according to the occupation of their higher earning parent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional/managerial: NS-SEC 1 and 2 – managerial and professional. Examples include CEOs, senior police officers, doctors, journalists, barristers, solicitors, teachers and nurses.• Intermediate: NS-SEC 3 and 4. Examples include: shopkeepers, paramedics, and police officers.• Working class: NS-SEC 5, 6, and 7 – routine and manual. Examples include receptionists, electricians, plumbers, butchers and van drivers.
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Appendix C – Evidence review framework

The evidence review framework on which the evidence search has been based is included in this appendix.

Criteria for including evidence in review – Topic 1	
Population	<p>Target population is young people (aged 16-24) affected by poverty or poor social mobility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Although young people are defined as aged 16-24, the review will take a flexible approach to evidence that has a wider age range for young people ▪ Recognising that there may be limited evidence focused specifically on young people affected by poverty or poor social mobility, the review will initially focus on young people in general and then narrow down to young people from these groups where possible. However, some evidence not specifically focused on these groups of young people may be included. <p>The review will include as much granular detail on separate subgroups of young people as possible, whilst recognising that evidence focused on subgroups may be limited. Subgroups of interest include young adult carers, care experienced young people, and refugees and asylum seekers. Where possible we will consider characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, disability (and combinations of these) and how these interact with poverty and social mobility. Where possible the review will also include regional comparisons and comparisons between young people who are in education and training and those who are NEET.</p>
Geographical and time limitations	<p>The review will primarily focus on UK evidence from the start of the pandemic onwards, but may include examples from other comparable countries (e.g. USA, Europe) where they are considered useful and relevant.</p>
Research questions and areas of focus	<p>The review will seek to answer the following research questions. However, it is recognised that limited evidence may be available for some questions, and new evidence may be published over the course of the review. A flexible approach will therefore be taken, with review of questions and focus as necessary.</p> <p><i>1. How are young people affected by poverty and/or with poor social mobility experiencing the crisis in each of the four nations?</i></p> <p>Focus will be on the qualitative experiences of young people, as captured through their own voices. We will be interested in understanding how they have experienced the pandemic not only in terms of health, employment, and education, but also community,</p>

access to culture and sport, socio-economic and emotional challenges, and family life.

*2. How has the crisis affected their education and employment?
How has it affected their wellbeing and mental health?*

Focus will be on quantitative measures such as employment rates, number of NEET young people, referrals to mental health services, and comparing educational attainment across different groups, as well as quantitative and qualitative measures of loneliness, and well-being. For health and well-being, we will consider the impact of Covid-19 on young people, but anticipate that the main focus for health and well-being will be the impact of Covid restrictions rather than Covid-19 as a disease. Further education will be a key policy area of focus. However, we also recognise the importance of school experience and wider support for young people who have reached adulthood during the crisis, alongside the impact of the crisis on exams (changes to the exam system, results and comparability of qualifications to other periods), access to schools (i.e. home learning) and access and entry to higher education. Another key aspect is the digital divide, its impact on outcomes in relation to areas such as young people's experience of school, job applications and (in the case of care leavers) wider contact with providers, and how this varies between the UK nations. We will also seek to identify evidence relating to young people who have entered employment or an apprenticeship directly from school.

3. How has the crisis impacted on young disabled people, young women and young men, and young people from minority ethnic groups and people with combinations of these characteristics?

Focus will be on an intersectional approach to exploring how Covid-19 has impacted young people. Within the cohort of young people, we will consider characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, disability, family circumstances (e.g. single parents, large households, housing quality) and how these interact with poverty and social mobility. We recognise the uneven impact of Covid-19 and suggest a particular focus is needed on young people with disabilities and health conditions as well as young adult carers as their experience of the health dimensions of Covid-19 is unique and is unlikely to be replicated in previous crises.

4. How do young people feel about their future, particularly their education, employment, and social mobility prospects? What support do they think they need from the government?

Focus will be on how different groups of young people feel about their prospects. We will seek to identify the relationship between young people's experiences, their characteristics and how they feel about their prospects.

5. What do they think of the different support measures that governments have put in place so far?

Focus will be on interventions including Kickstart, the furlough scheme, investment in apprenticeships and traineeships, the youth

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	<p>offer in JCP and youth hubs, with the aim of exploring young people's views of support measures. Where possible, this will include evidence about the impact of a range of programmes, including the new Youth Guarantee in Scotland, and expansion of traineeships and apprenticeships across England and Wales. The review will aim to map out the schemes in place across the four UK nations, and identify evidence on their impact.</p>
Types of evidence	<p>The review will primarily focus on emerging evidence on the impact of the pandemic. This is likely to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Qualitative research and surveys that capture young people's thoughts, insights and opinions▪ Secondary data analysis reports▪ Impact assessments and projections▪ Existing evidence reviews▪ Policy papers▪ Blogs and think pieces

Appendix D – Evaluated active labour market programmes

Overview of the Future Jobs Fund (FJF)	
Geography	UK wide
Aim	Launched by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in October 2009 with “the aim of preventing long-term scarring of young people as a result of the recession.”
Target group	Unemployed young people and people living in disadvantaged areas with a maximum DWP contribution of £6,500 per job
Description	The goal of the fund was changed to the creation of 200,000 jobs when it was extended to March 2012. The scheme was closed with 105,000 FJF job starts in March 2011 citing high costs as the reason.
Design	Required each job to be at least 25 hours per week, to be paid at least the minimum wage, to last at least six months, to benefit local communities. The providers were also required to provide support for employees to create sustainable employment
Evaluation	DWP carried a quantitative evaluation (based on propensity score matching) of the FJF bases on the cohort of young participants who started their job between October 2009 and March 2010 ³⁵¹ .
Methodology	This was a quantitative evaluation based on Propensity Score Matching (PSM). The evaluation also included a cost-benefits analysis of FJF based on DWP Social Cost-Benefit Analysis Framework ³⁵²
Results	The evaluation found the scheme to be successful in supporting young people into work and had a positive long-term impact on participants’ lives. The likelihood of receiving welfare support was 7 percentage points less even 104 weeks after the start of the participation.
Overview of the Youth Contract (YC) : Support for disengaged 16-17 year olds	
Geography	England

³⁵¹ Department for Work and Pensions (2012) Impacts and costs and benefits of the FJF. November 2012. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/223120/impacts_costs_benefits_fjf.pdf

³⁵² Ibid DWP 2012. Pg. 7.

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Target group	16-17 year old NEET young people
Aim	Mitigating the “disproportionate impact of the economic downturn on the youth labour market and young people’s transition into adulthood ³⁵³ .” It was launched in April 2012 to support young people into employment.
Description	It was a package scheme combining existing schemes with the new ones: Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16-24 years olds, placements available for 16-24 years olds, support for 16 and 17 years old NEETs, sector-based work academies, extra support at Jobcentre Plus, funding for localised Youth Contracts and wage incentives.
Design	<p>The YC for 16-17 year olds started in September 2012. It was based on a payments-by-results (PbR) model. The programme was delivered by the Education Funding Agency (EFA). Local authorities were responsible for finding sufficient number of places for young people. The YC was initially focused on at least 55,000 young NEET people who had no GCSEs A*- Cs. Eligibility criteria was subsequently extended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people who had one GCSE A*-C ▪ Young offenders released from custody ▪ Young people in care/were in local authority care with one or more GCSE A*- C.
Evaluation	The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned an evaluation to assess the impact of the YC between October 2012 to March 2014. The national YC continued to recruit young people until 31 March 2015.
Methodology	The evaluation was composed of multiple strands of analysis. The first strand, impact assessment included analysis of datasets such as the National Client Caseload Information System, the National Pupil Database and the Individual Learner Record ³⁵⁴ . The evaluation also included a process evaluation based on a multi-method and longitudinal assessment of delivery. As part of the evaluation, interviews with national stakeholders, prime contractors and lead staff in the core cities were conducted. Moreover, two surveys with local authorities and nine multi respondent case studies were conducted.

³⁵³ Newton, B. Speckesser, S. Nafilyan, V. Maguire, S. Devins, D. Bickerstaffe, T (2014) [The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training evaluation. Revised September 2014.](#) Department for Education.

³⁵⁴ Newton, B. Speckesser, S. Nafilyan, V. Maguire, S. Devins, D. Bickerstaffe, T (2014) [The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training evaluation. Revised September 2014.](#) Department for Education.

Results	<p>The evaluation found that engagement with a key worker was crucial in increasing young people's confidence in their ability to progress³⁵⁵.</p> <p>The evaluation also assessed value for money. It found that the benefit arising from funding the national model was £12,900 per participant³⁵⁶.</p> <p>Evidence on young people at risk of disadvantage: The evaluation found that the national targeting of the YC on young people with low educational attainment increased the net social benefit arising for each participant.</p>
Community Jobs Scotland	
Geography	Scotland
Target group	Young unemployed people
Aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Providing young people with paid work and additional training to help them progress into employment ii. Supporting the development of third sector organisations³⁵⁷
Description	Managed by a partnership of the Scottish Government, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and Social Enterprise Scotland.
Design	<p>Jobs were created in third sector organisations</p> <p>Jobs lasted for 6 months</p> <p>As a minimum, jobs consisted of 25 hours per week and paid at national minimum wage</p>
Evaluation	The University of Glasgow carried out an evaluation of the CJS in May 2012. The evaluation had a mixed methodology which included "interviews with CJS delivery partners and stakeholders, focus groups with employers, an e-survey with employers, data analysis of the programme management systems data and value for money comparisons with similar interventions" ³⁵⁸ .
Results	The evaluation found that the employers were satisfied with the programme. At the end of the programme, 1861 jobs were created with

³⁵⁵ Newton, B. Speckesser, S. Nafilyan, V. Maguire, S. Devins, D. Bickerstaffe, T (2014) [The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training evaluation. Revised September 2014](#). Department for Education.

³⁵⁶ Newton, B. Speckesser, S. Nafilyan, V. Maguire, S. Devins, D. Bickerstaffe, T (2014) [The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training evaluation. Revised September 2014](#). Department for Education. Pg 7

³⁵⁷ Training and Employment Research Unit (TERU) (2012) [Evaluation of Community Jobs Scotland Programme Final Report](#). The University of Glasgow. June 2012

³⁵⁸ Training and Employment Research Unit (TERU) (2012) [Evaluation of Community Jobs Scotland Programme Final Report](#). The University of Glasgow. June 2012

	<p>448 employers. The programme was able fill vacancies promptly which was addressed as a key strength. The evaluation also acknowledged the flexibility to provide for early entrants as crucial in meeting its goals.</p> <p>Delays in accessing the programme, not having clear job brokerage role and delays to the start of the Training and Employability Support were noted as weaknesses.</p>
Job Growth Wales	
Geography	Wales
Target group	Unemployed young people aged 16 -24
Aim	<p>Providing young people with work experience for a 6 month period.</p> <p>It aimed to create 16,000 new job opportunities between April 2012 to March 2016</p>
Description	JGW was funded by the European Social Fund. It was launched in April 2012.
Design	<p>Provides participants with a job opportunity for a six month period</p> <p>Supports small to medium sized enterprises</p>
Evaluation	Ipsos MORI, Wavehill and WISERD were commissioned by the Welsh Government in October 2012 to conduct an evaluation of Jobs Growth Wales.
Methodology	The evaluation had a mixed methodology including a desk based research, a stakeholder consultation involving in-depth interviews, qualitative research with employers and young people, case studies, telephone surveys of young people (595 interviews) and telephone survey of employers (328 interviews) ³⁵⁹
Results	The evaluation assessed the short term impact of the programme. At the time of the evaluation, the JGW “exceeded its goal of filling 4,000 job opportunities in the first year. The number of vacancies filled up until 24 December 2013 is approximately equivalent to 18 per cent of all unemployed young people in Wales.” ³⁶⁰ The evaluation also found that successful participants spent on average eight weeks longer in work than those were not successful. They estimated that more than a quarter of participants (27%) who found work through the scheme would not be able to find a job without JGW. However, the evaluation

³⁵⁹ Ipsos MORI, Wavehill Consulting, WISERD (2014) [Interim evaluation report: Jobs Growth Wales.](#)

³⁶⁰ Ipsos MORI, Wavehill Consulting, WISERD (2014) [Interim evaluation report: Jobs Growth Wales.](#)

also noted that they were not able to observe long-term consequences of the scheme³⁶¹.

³⁶¹ Ipsos MORI, Wavehill Consulting, WISERD (2014) [Interim evaluation report: Jobs Growth Wales](#).

Glossary

Include any terms that may not be familiar to all audiences (see SMC's 'State of the Nation 2018-19' for an example).

Apprenticeships	A work-based training system, where students earn a qualification after completing a blended mix of study and work.
Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs)	A CAG is the grade that a young person would be most likely to have achieved if they had sat their exams and completed any non-exam assessment. These were used to award grades to students who were not able to sit GCSE and A Level exams during the period of school closures during the coronavirus pandemic.
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)	A scheme offered by the UK Government to provide grants to employers to ensure that they can retain and continue to pay staff, despite the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.
Degree apprenticeships	Degree apprenticeships are similar to higher apprenticeships but allow the learner to gain a full bachelor's degree or master's degree.
Digital exclusion	Digital exclusion refers to the lack of internet access, digital devices or skills that prevents people from effectively engaging with digital services and environments.
Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)	An Education, Health & Care Plan sets out the education, health and social care needs of a child or young person aged up to 25, and the support that is necessary to help them achieve their full potential.

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English as an additional language (EAL)	An EAL learner is a student whose first language is other than English.
Free school meals (FSM)	In England, FSM is a statutory benefit available to school-aged children and young people from families who receive other qualifying benefits. It provides a school meal to a child or young person during a school break.
Higher level apprenticeships	Higher apprenticeships provide an opportunity for learners to gain Level 4 qualifications or above. Learners need at least five 9-4 grade GCSEs, as well as some Level 3 qualifications in relevant subjects, to apply.
Kickstart	The Kickstart Scheme provided funding to create new jobs for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long term unemployment.
Labour Force Survey (LFS)	The LFS is a survey of households living at private addresses in the UK. Its purpose is to provide information on the UK labour market which can then be used to develop, manage, evaluate and report on labour market policies.
Local enterprise partnerships (LEPs)	LEPs are non-statutory bodies responsible for local economic development in England.
Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	In the UK, this refers to young people aged 16-24 who are not in education, employment or training.
Office for National Statistics (ONS)	The ONS is the UK's independent producer of official statistics and the recognised national statistical institute of the UK.
Ofqual	The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) is a non-ministerial government body that regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.

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Restart	The Restart supports unemployed people in the UK to find work. It will gives support to people who have been claiming Universal Credit for between 12 and 18 months, with the intention of getting them back into work.
Special educational needs and disability (SEND)	Some children or young people may need more help to learn and develop than children and young people of the same age. SEND provision supports children and young people with additional needs throughout their education.
Traineeships	Traineeships are courses with work experience for young people in England that aim to prepare them for work or an apprenticeship.
Understanding Society (USOC) data	USOC is longitudinal study that follows individuals over time, regularly collecting data about each participant, together with similar data about all other members of his or her household.
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)	UCAS is an independent charity providing information, advice, and admissions services for post-16 learners.
Youth Hubs	Youth Hubs were launched in the UK in June 2021 and support young people in receipt of benefits to address barriers to work.