



All-Party Parliamentary  
Group  
For Youth Employment



## Making Youth Employment Policy Work

Meeting minutes: 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020

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**Chair:** James Daly MP

**Contact:** Josh Adcock, Apprentice Policy and Research Coordinator  
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### Agenda

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| 14:00 | Welcome and housekeeping   |
| 14:10 | Introduction from Chair, <b>James Daly MP</b>  |
| 14:15 | Covid-19 and the Labour Market, <b>Tony Wilson</b> ,<br>Director of the Institute for Employment Studies   |
| 14:30 | The Youth Employment Group (YEG), <b>Samantha Windett</b> ,<br>Director of Policy at Impetus and YEG Chair |
| 14:45 | Follow-up questions and discussion   |
| 14:55 | Meeting Close  |

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### Attendee List

Martin McLean	Abena Oppong-Asare MP	Leo Watson
Laura-Jane Rawlings	Marilyn Bailey	Kim Lupton

Sharon Weetman	Matt Lent	Barry Fletcher
Hannah Chapman	Penny Mathews	Lucy Hunte
Liz Slee	Olga Denisova	Sam Keely MP
Cerys Welch	Feryal Clark MP	Harvey Morton
Mark De Backer	Huw Davies	Ria Hale
Simon Laurence	Amarjit Pawar	Laura Carey
Marcus Thornton	Janet Noble	Nicola Watts
Helena Vine	Fleur Anderson MP	Tony Wilson
Clare Boden-Hatton	Sam Windett	Claire Glasscock
Sara Britcliffe MP	Mike Kane MP	Cameron Macleod
Adam Peel	Lynsey Sweeney	Kate Robson
Sarah-Jane Fulton	Owen Thompson MP	Lindsey Valkenborgs
Matthew Torbitt	Gemma Campbell-Gray	Ciara O'Donnell
Patrick Cantellow	Cat Smith MP	Joanna Wake
Ben Lake MP	Deuvaunn Darroux	

## Minutes

Welcome and Housekeeping		
Introductions	Good afternoon and thank you for coming today. We have a very important inquiry -the ONS data shows the scale of the issue faced by young people.	James Daly MP
16-24 y/o Labour Market Statistics from the ONS	<p>16-24 year olds labour market data: 3.6 million employed, 52.9% employment rate. This has fallen by 156,000 over the last quarter and 153,000 in the year.</p> <p>The figures bear out how much of a challenge this is for the government and everyone going forward. Young people, no matter their background, have learning difficulties or other barriers -we need to create a situation where everyone has an equal chance and quality of opportunity. We as a parliament need to ensure that young people are the top of the agenda and getting them into employment , education or training so they can achieve what they want to in life.</p>	James Daly MP
The Inquiry	We would like this to be really positive and a constructive inquiry that offers advice, guidance and solutions where necessary. This is so the government can	James Daly MP

	<p>get the point of view of the APPG, alongside that of experts and the wider general public who would like to contribute to the debate.</p> <p>The questions of the inquiry include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are the summer announcements #PlanForJobs ambitious enough to address the youth unemployment challenge?</li> <li>2. Are there gaps and tensions that may cause a rise in further inequalities amongst groups of young people such as those furthest from the labour market?</li> <li>3. What more needs to be done to accelerate impact and ensure no young person is left behind?</li> </ol>	
Our guest speakers	James introduced Tony and Sam as our guest speakers. [full bios can be found in the briefing document]	James Daly MP
	<b>Covid-19 and the labour market for young people</b>	
	<p>Tony explained the labour market context for young people, the government response so far and some of the challenges and opportunities we may face in the years ahead.</p> <p>Young people are facing a ‘quadruple whammy’ over the next year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Labour market participation for young people has been severely impacted: the number of young people who are not in full-time education, employment or training (NEET) has been rising. It is now at its highest since 2015 -and the claimant count has more than doubled to nearly 500,000. This increase has been extraordinarily fast and concerning, from 1 in 15 to 1 in 7 in the space of four months. Bear in mind that young people are less likely to claim benefits anyway and that figure disguises high levels of worklessness and low income amongst young people. Significant impact already, driven by young people in insecure work and so were not picked up through the CJRS or SIESS -they are falling through the cracks at a greater extent than other groups.</li> <li>2. Young people are much likely to work in shut down sectors and therefore are more likely to have been furloughed. 1.9 million young employees were furloughed out of 4 million -nearly half of 16-24 year olds were placed on furlough. Furlough numbers fell quite quickly through July and probably continued to fall through August. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Well under 1 million young people still furloughed, but those still furloughed are most at risk of not being able to come back to work/not having a job to return to when the scheme ends.</li> <li>b. Risk of significant risk of job loss and redundancies, we think around 600,000 redundancies will be made, with a quarterly peak of 450,000 towards the end of October. Within that young people will be disproportionately affected groups -they are more likely to be made</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	Tony Wilson

	<p>redundant than any other group. We likely see a few hundred thousand young people at risk or even made redundant.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Slow down in hiring as vacancies levels are well below the historic levels; this is the most concerning of the issues so far. Slow hiring leads to a slow accumulation and rise of youth unemployment over a number of months/years as they take longer to get back to work, leading to higher levels of long term unemployment -those who have been searching for a long time will slip further and further back in the queue as other job seekers enter the labour market (job changes and young people leaving education).</li> <li>4. The impact on education as a consequence of the pandemic: most experienced a break in their education as lockdown forced the closure of education facilities. This has served young people badly, particularly for those who have left education over the summer -affecting attainment, how employers might see their grades but moreover their access to careers advice and job seeking support that they would have had in an education setting in the run up to leaving education. They are now poorly equipped in their search for employment, in a time when it has moved online and when inductions may be online or in a socially distanced environment.</li> </ol> <p>Set against that -an increase in the number of young people participating in education has offset the fall in the employment rate. We saw the same fluctuation in the last recession and will most likely see that again -investing in human capital is generally positive</p> <p>However this should be treated with caution as it would be the second choice for most people who would have wanted to compete for jobs, earn a wage and start a career. Education is most likely going to be done remotely, will be tougher and therefore will probably be less productive and valuable than a year ago.</p> <p>All told -we are exiting the first phase of the crisis where lockdown really impacted the economy, businesses and workers. We're entering a new phase, a prolonged and large recession. We are technically out of the recession now, but the prolonged recovery will see a rise in youth unemployment for the next few years rather than the next few months.</p>	
	<p><b>Government response so far</b></p>	
	<p>We welcomed, as many did, some of the measures announced in the Plan for Jobs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The focus on supporting those out of work in getting back into work; broadly what we would call for and hope to see. A doubling of resourcing in Jobcentre Plus (JCP) is hugely positive for young people, work coaches</li> </ol>	<p>Tony Wilson</p>

	<p>are amongst the best employment advisors that we have. Investing in developing them and increasing their number is a welcomed thing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Things we need to change around how the conditions are applied, benefits receipt, the threat of sanctions and sometimes the punitive nature of the regime but the core point around increasing investment around employment services employment support is a huge plus. The challenge comes with recruiting and delivering that on time, of which we are running out of.</li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The commitment to create local youth hubs where JCP will be working with local government, the voluntary and community sector, colleges, careers service and others to build the capacity for a no wrong doors system for those on or off benefits that wanted support with their employability, skills and preparing for their futures. Again, hugely welcomed -myself, LJ and Sam have been really involved with the department in trying to steer that work and development of these youth hubs.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. It won't be straight forward but the core idea is one we can build on.</li> <li>b. Tony was involved in a prototype version of these called MyGo based in Ipswich about 6 or 7 years ago -it really highlighted the benefits of integrated, co-located youth focussed sights. But it also pointed to some of the risks, in particular risk for those who have for example health conditions, poor mental health or may have childcare responsibilities or other things that may mean that a single opened planned youth hub type resource may not be the right model for them and would need to be taken into consideration in the design.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Investment in sector based work academies will be really beneficial for young people; short focused pre-employment training that is employer responsive alongside work experience placements that lead to a guaranteed job. That model is a short, light touch aspect and has been proven to work and have a really positive impact. Investing and developing that is really positive.</li> <li>4. Finally Kickstart; it learns from the good practices within the Future Jobs Fund and more broadly the literature around the creation of intermediate labour markets: 'false' labour markets where you create transitional jobs for disadvantaged groups in order to give the skills, confidence and motivation, the social networks, the employment experience to then find a permanent job. But there are a few requirements that need to be met for it to be successful:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. These jobs must be additional jobs and we shouldn't subsidise jobs that would of been created by employers anyway (this increases the risk of substituting or replacing one worker with another)</li> <li>b. The quality and appropriateness of the jobs -there has been no guidance from the government so far. These jobs need to be suitable for those who have been out of a job for a long time and provide the in-work support those people are going to need to thrive. Finally</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	
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	<p>support at the end of the scheme so the individual can find permanent work is vital, otherwise people could be in a worse off position before they started the scheme.</p> <p>c. This intervention must be targeted at those who are most disadvantaged.</p>	
Questions from Young people	James thanked Tony and invited the Youth Ambassadors to share their thoughts on the government response so far -Ciara, Patrick, Sophie and Laurence all spoke.	James Daly MP
	For me it's about what comes after the programme. I don't want to be pessimistic but how do I know after Covid-19 that the government is really going to be on top of this once the programme ends and the years to come after Covid-19? Young people shouldn't have to rely on their own luck and fortune to get where they want to be.	Ciara, Youth Ambassador
	There is a point to be said about young people , good talent, that are having to stay in education or find themselves in job losses. These young people already don't know what to do in life, the current times are an added uncertainty. Where do young people go to find support?	Patrick, Youth Ambassador
	I would just say the holistic approach to support that has been mentioned in other sessions, that there are other factors at play that lead to unemployment or arise during it.	Sophie, Youth Ambassador
	There are so many young people affected at different stages of their journey in education or to employment, it is going to be really hard to put a finger on how to help each cohort. It comes back to being kept informed, knowing where to turn to and what support can be accessed.	Laurence, Youth Ambassador
Thoughts from Youth Friendly Employers	James then asked for thoughts from Youth Friendly Employers Sharon, Coca-Cola European Partners (CEEP); Claire, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)	James Daly MP
	My view is very much that the opportunities are out there and there are lots of them -they just need to be joined up so that employers and young people understand what is available out there for them.	Sharon
	I think we need to ensure all the programmes announced by the Government are all moving in the right direction with a regional economy perspective. That is that our employers know SMEs can get involved and that our young people are supported through the process -as Ciara said, it's not just about the certificate and a short intervention. It is the outcome and onward progression. I guess our role is holding the system to account at a local level.	Claire
	<b>The Youth Gap</b>	

	<p>Sam introduced the work of Impetus; their work with disadvantaged young people and charities that support them Sam also shared a quick overview of Impetus' Youth Gap research; a set of 9 reports over a year that helped to establish the employment gap between disadvantaged young people and their better off peers. Our data and charts show they are twice as likely to be NEET, and this was before the 'covid-19 crisis hit. We know that young people are hit worse in recession and we were concerned that the most disadvantaged would fare the worst. The findings were stark -one of the driving reasons behind forming the YEG and working closely with LJ to bring all the chairs together. The change in youth employment has been really huge.</p>	Samantha Windett
<p><b>Youth Employment Group (YEG) recommendations</b></p>		
	<p>The secretariat (Impetus, Youth Employment UK, The Prince's Trust, The Institute for Employment Studies and Youth Futures Foundation) came together knowing that this challenge is so big and that not one organisation was going to be able to take that on. We have 165 members that include colleges, employers, universities, charities, local authorities and more -to bring research from different sectors. It is such a big challenge it must be done together. The group has been running since March and has achieved a great deal so far.</p> <p>We were keen to ensure that young people wouldn't be the most impacted in the labour market and so we creating working groups for the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The immediate labour market impacts</li> <li>2. Employability support during lockdown</li> <li>3. A support system after lockdown</li> <li>4. Ensuring a healthy labour market</li> <li>5. Ensuring self employment as a viable option</li> <li>6. Ensuring the most accurate and efficient data informs our work</li> </ol> <p>Out of those working torup we put a stringent set of recommendations (published 21/09/2020) backed by the evidence of what works. The Prime Minister in June announced an Opportunity Guarantee for young people, something that came from the YEG.</p> <p>We welcomed the announcements from the Chancellor in July. A lot of positives, however we have a lot more to do -Kickstart is only one peice of the puzzle and will do quite a lot of work for those on it. Of course, it cannot be one scheme for all young people.</p> <p>Brief overview of recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We flesh out what offer is really needed; high quality, training education or placement or offer of employment?</li> <li>• Ensure the youth hubs are national and local -expanding to all young people, not just those not just those young people who are not involved with the JCP or Universal Credit.</li> </ul>	Samantha Windett

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrap around support for the schemes -they need to lead to sustained employment, not just 6 months of work.</li> <li>• We made recommendations toward targeting apprenticeship -changes to the apprenticeship levy, that was designed in a very different labour market.</li> <li>• Careers advice, information and guidance and supporting self employment.</li> <li>• Finally, how do we measure this -how do we set a target for the Government to meet? What does good look like? We need to understand what works.</li> <li>• You can <a href="#">read the full recommendations paper</a> here.</li> </ul> <p>We launched our findings that to reduce the NEET rate to pre-crisis levels by this time year -we need an additional 1000 opportunities every day, on top of what is already happening.</p> <p>This is how big a challenge this is.</p>	
	James stressed the importance of Youth Voice in understanding the problems young people are facing and that youth voice has an important role that should inform the solutions. Chrys and Deuvaunn both spoke.	James Daly MP
	Cerys echoed what Ciara had said -keeping that support going and not just dropping young people once they have been through these schemes. What support will be there for people like me who are half way through their university degree -what support is going to be there in one or two years time?	Cerys, Youth Ambassador
	A lot of the Ambassadors have voiced my opinions already too -we are one big mind and Youth Employment UK. To add, I would say my friends and I agree that the government is listening but not necessarily hearing .	Deuvaunn, Youth Ambassador
	<b>Open Q&amp;A Session</b>	
Q	James, what does this all mean in your local context? How is the plan for jobs landing amongst your constituents?	Laura-Jane Rawlings
A	The local discussions are regarding the creation of those much needed jobs -working with employers to ensure the traineeships, apprenticeships and other opportunities are there, that local colleges have the funding to upskill and that young people entering the labour market have the skills to work in new industries and develop our local green economy and technical economy. A wide variety of fields, Bury college are doing a fantastic job.	James Daly MP
Q	Can I ask Sam or Tony about SEND needs in children who have difficulties and how they will cope with this?	James Daly MP
A	I think you're right to focus on those particular youngsters -we have done this with some of our YEG members. Different cohorts and sets of young people are	Samantha Windett

	<p>going to need different levels of support in accessing the schemes designed for all young people. We need to ensure it is not a one size fits all scheme and that the opportunities on the table are there for all young people.</p> <p>My worry is that the schemes don't just focus on those closest to the labour market -those that don't need that much support. There are going to young people that need that additional support and additional offers. Also that employers that want to get involved with young people who may need additional support step forward now -we want to offer placements to specific young people. It has to be a combined effort from everyone.</p>	
Q	Perhaps Tony you could answer this one: is this an opportunity to transform the labour market locally? I'm working with Bury college to bring in new skills, bringing employers in.	James Daly MP
A	<p>Yes definitely, this is where the other schemes (that we haven't heard the details on yet) come into play. For example green jobs, and foundational jobs (social and health care), construction industries and manufacturing and so on. These things will take time, we would like to see lining up the economic development strategy, local employment strategy, skills strategy and how we support residents (social inclusion and welfare). Bringing this together will make it clear for individuals how this all fits together.</p> <p>The government now has great links to local employers with various measures, financial support and bailouts -hopefully we can build on this going forward.</p>	Tony Wilson
Q	<p>I'd like to talk about young people with SEND -if they don't get a job by the time they are 25, there is a good chance they will never work. Supported internships are critical as a route out of education and into the labour market for these young people. Our concerns are that the schemes do not give incentive for employers to take on someone with SEND; kickstart offers wages paid and apprenticeships offer a few grand. We risk seeing employment rates (which are in single figures) plummeting even lower. Why would employers choose SEND young people with no incentive. We want parity with apprenticeships</p> <p>(James Daly MP stated his personal, strong agreement with Hugh)</p>	Hugh Davis
A	<p>Hugh and Base have done amazing work around these models, a well evidence effective model. We shouldn't be creating choices for employers between kickstart, apprenticeship or support internships.</p> <p>We are making the point to officials that if these measures have been put in place for those not so far away from the labour market and without disadvantage, we should be doing even more for those with disadvantage. Otherwise they end up falling further behind and further away from work.</p> <p>I'm not sure of the answer but perhaps increased funding and support from government to incentive is an option and money from the kickstart fund could be a potential way of doing this</p>	Tony Wilson

Q	Careers advice -what is going to be in recommendations? The YVC tells us that young women are much less likely to hear about apprenticeships and sold the university route. Also having career advice starting lower school years. In year 10 and 11 there is a sudden pressure to know what you want to do. What is going to be done about quality careers advice from an earlier age that doesn't skip over the disadvantaged groups too?	Ciara, Youth Ambassador
Q	Hi James, I'm a YEUK ambassador and self employed. I'm hearing from my clients and other SMEs that they want to offer opportunities, but the kickstart scheme is fantastic but not accessible for them -far too complicated for them. What could be done to make it more accessible for small businesses and even freelance who want to recruit young people?	Harvey, Youth Ambassador
A	Ciara -completely agree with that, we have a big section in the recommendations that look at careers advice and guidance -how they access their entitlement to high quality and personalised careers advice and guidance.  On the kickstart question, this is really important: smaller employers will be able to apply for the scheme through what is now being called a gateway organisation -they are forming and the DWP is putting together a list on their website. Any organisation can register their interest on the site and someone will be in contact. They're just as important as the biggest national employers.	Samantha Windett
Q	The appropriateness of jobs being earmarked within Kickstart, which areas of the labour market would be most appropriate for young people at the moment?	Mathew
Q	What about the wrap around support for looked after children and care leavers, who need that additional support?	
A	There are two aspects to the quality of jobs within the Kickstart scheme: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be really clear to employers are not setting expectations or requirements that cant be met by participants -experience and qualifications for example</li> <li>2. Real risk of poor quality jobs -if we aren't setting criteria around the support, having regular work schedules, access to training and support. What are the fundamental points around a decent job?</li> </ol> <p>Less about sectors and types of jobs, but rather rather a criteria of what is meant by quality and a criteria for the support</p>	Tony Wilson
Q	I'm keen to understand more about sectors and their resilience; that the opportunities presented to young people relate to future jobs and skills.	Sophie, Youth Ambassador
A	The combination of potential shutting down sectors again, the sectors we know young people are working in, alongside the end of furlough -this is a massive issue. We absolutely need kickstart to work, we need quality jobs and we need	Samantha Windett



	more opportunities. We could be facing a rising number of young people falling through the gaps, with the most disadvantaged being pushed the furthest back.	
	<b>Meeting Close</b>	
	A huge thank you to all of our speakers, young people and youth friendly employers and the fantastic LJ, Lian-James.  Upcoming meeting dates (found below)	James Daly MP

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## Upcoming Meeting Dates 2020

**19<sup>th</sup> October** -Anna Smee, CEO Youth Futures Foundation and a representative from business

**December TBC** -a Minister will be invited to give evidence and receive a copy of the Inquiry Report.

[www.appgyouthemployment.org](http://www.appgyouthemployment.org)

Chair – James Daly MP

Secretariat – Youth Employment UK CIC

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