



## BRIEFING PAPER

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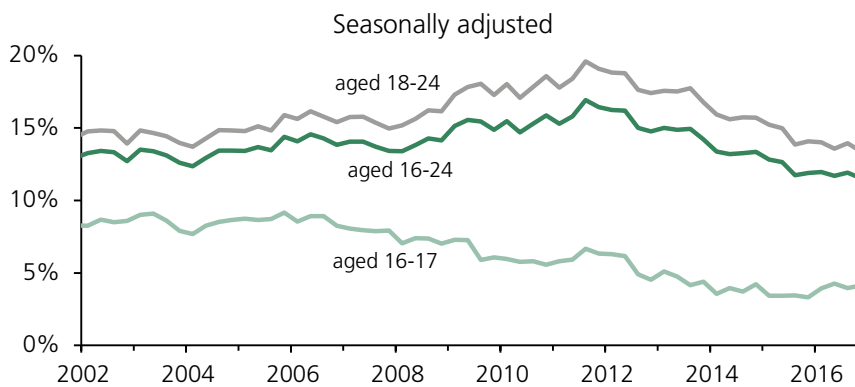
# NEET: Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training

By Jennifer Brown

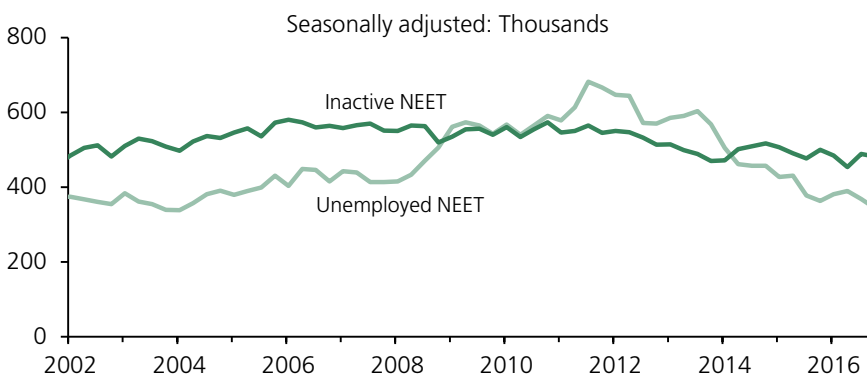
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**% of young people who are NEET: UK, 2002-2016**



**NEET 16-24 year olds by economic activity: UK, 2002-2016**



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## Summary

'NEET' stands for young people aged 16-24 Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

- 826,000 people aged 16-24 were NEET in the fourth quarter of 2016, representing 11.5% of the age group.

Not all unemployed 16-24 year-olds are NEET and not all people who are NEET are unemployed:

- 60.6% of unemployed 16-24 year-olds were NEET in October- December 2016 and the remaining 39.4% were in education or training.
- 41.7% of all people who were NEET were unemployed, while the rest were economically inactive.

In England, the regions with the highest proportion of 16-24 year-olds who are NEET were the North East (15.2%), Yorkshire and the Humber (13.1%) and the West Midlands (12.5%).

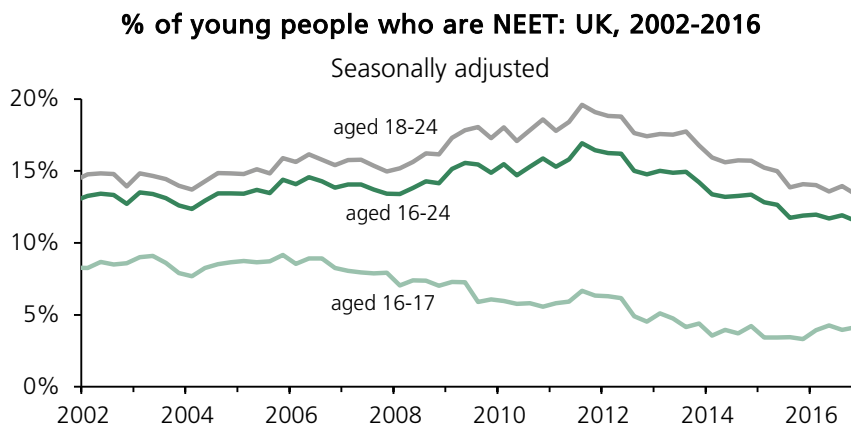
The proportion of 15-19 year-olds who are NEET in the UK is above the OECD average, but below average for 20-24 year olds.

# 1. UK NEET Statistics

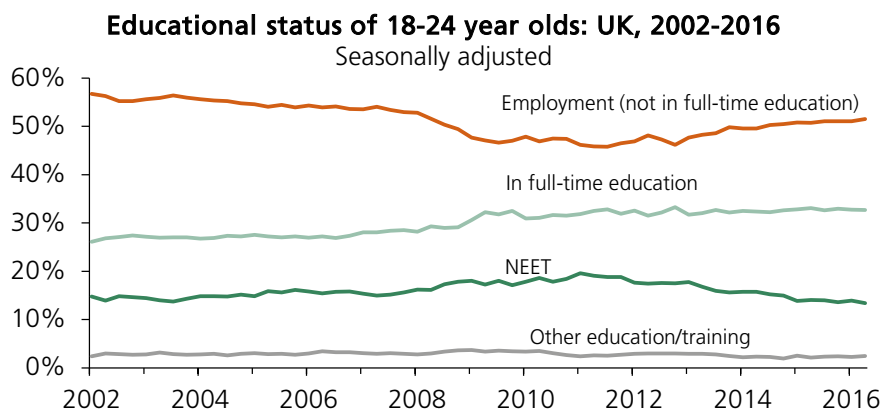
826,000 people aged 16-24 were NEET in the fourth quarter of 2016 – or 11.5% of all young people in the 16-24 age group. This was down 31,000 on the previous quarter and down 36,000 on the year before.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 Age and Educational Status of people who are NEET

In October- December 2016, 767,000 18-24 year-olds were NEET down 33,000 on the previous quarter. This compares to 60,000 people aged 16-17 year old and NEET – up slightly on the previous quarter and up 11,000 on the previous year.



The number of 16-17 year-olds who are NEET has generally been declining since the mid-2000s as more young people stayed in full-time education. 88% of 16-17 year-olds were in full-time education in the fourth quarter of 2016 compared to 73% in the fourth quarter of 2001. There has also been an increase in participation in full-time education among 18-24 year-olds over the past decade.



<sup>1</sup> Data in this section are from ONS, [Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training \(NEET\)](#), February 2016, and ONS, [Labour Market Statistics](#), March 2016, and are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise stated.

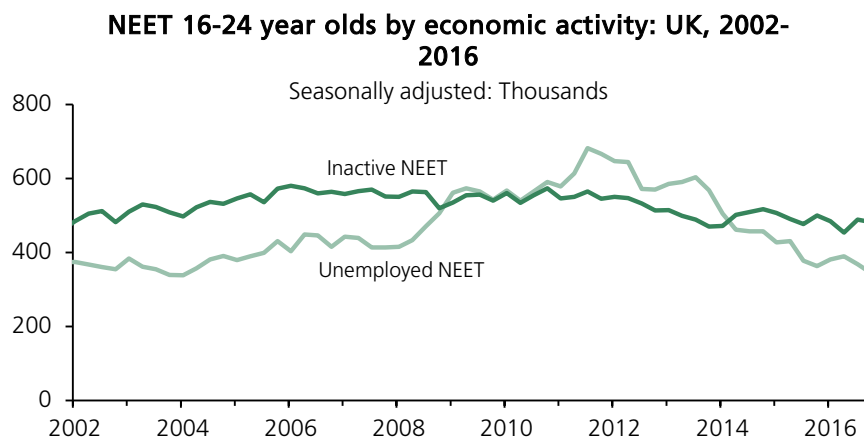
## 1.2 NEET unemployment and inactivity

Not all unemployed young people are NEET. Out of 568,000 unemployed 16-24 year-olds in October- December 2016;

- 199,000 were in full-time education
- 25,000 were in some other form of education or training
- 344,000 (60.6%) were NEET

Similarly, under half (41.7%) of young people who were NEET (826,000) were unemployed (344,000).

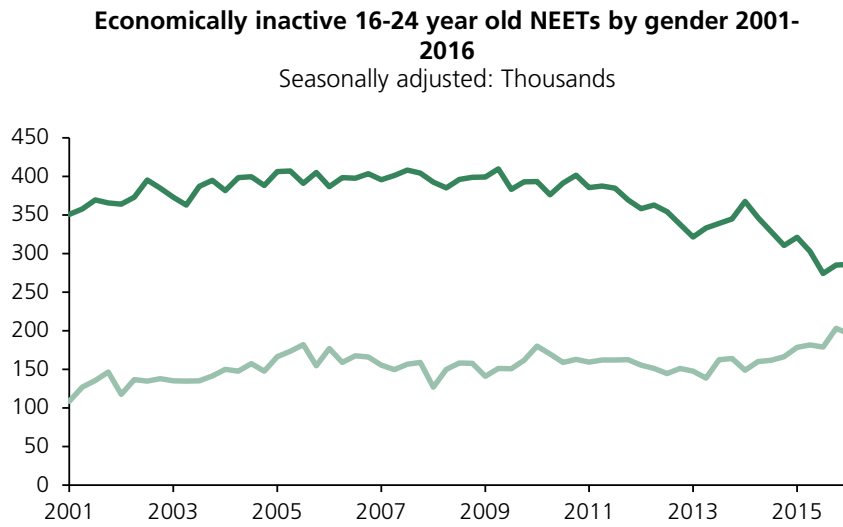
The remaining 482,000 were economically inactive – not working, not seeking work and/or not available to start work.



## 1.3 Gender

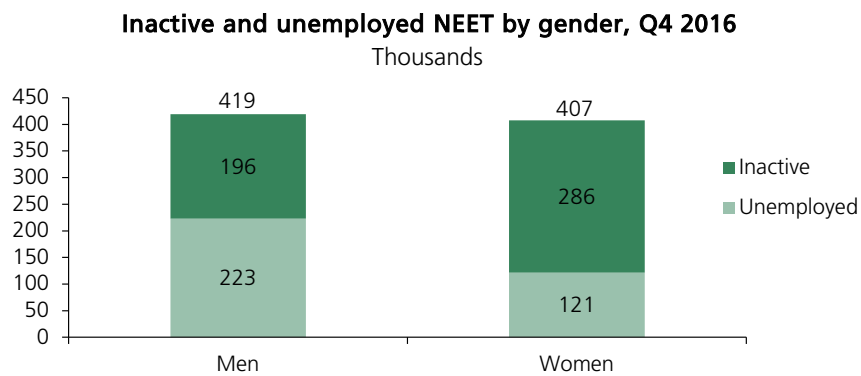
Women made up 49.3% of 16-24 year-olds classified as NEET, in the fourth quarter of 2016. This is the lowest proportion since comparable records began in October-December 2001. The two most recent quarters are the first in which men who are NEET have outnumbered women. This is because the number of economically inactive women NEETs has been falling where as the number of economically inactive men NEETs has been rising. Since Q4 in 2015 economically inactive women NEETs have decreased by 10.9% whereas the number of economically inactive men NEETs has risen by 9.8%.

## 6 NEET: Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training



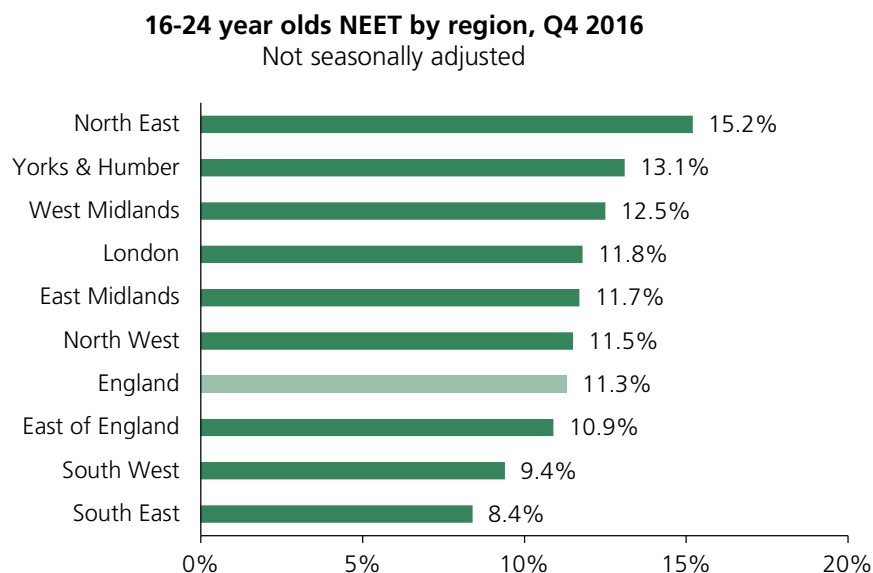
407,000 women aged 16-24 were NEET compared to 419,000 men.

70.2% of women who were NEET were economically inactive compared to 46.8% of men who were NEET.



## 1.4 NEET by Region

The [NEET Statistics Quarterly Brief](#) contains regional NEET data covering England.



In October-December 2016, 11.3% of 16-24 year-olds in England were NEET. Part of the difference between England and UK data is because data for England is not seasonally adjusted.

The North East had the highest proportion of young people NEET (15.2%) and the South East had the lowest (8.4%).

## 1.5 NEET data sources

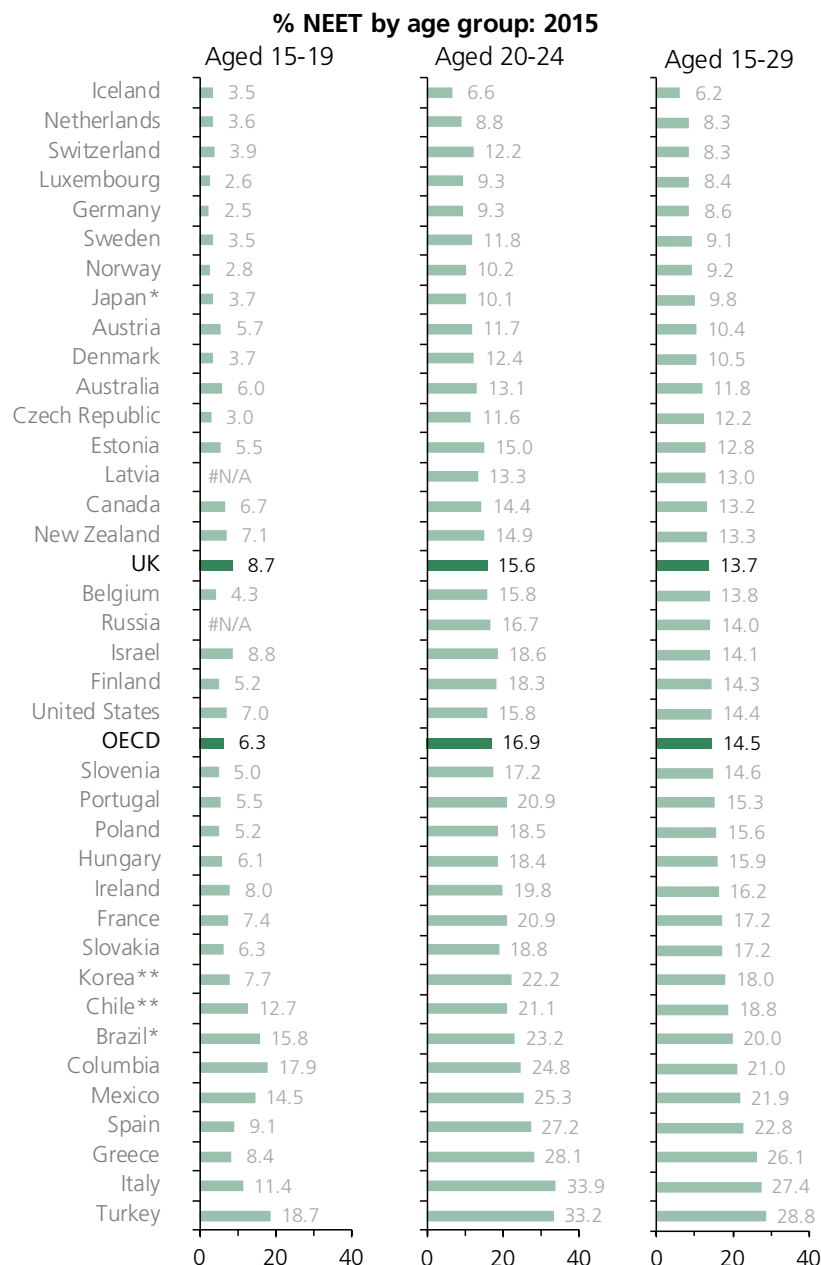
The Office for National Statistics published harmonised estimates of the number of [Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training \(NEET\)](#) for the whole of the UK. Other NEET statistics for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are non-comparable and should be used only to look at each individually.

- **England:** The [NEET Statistics Quarterly Brief](#) includes NEET statistics based on Labour Force Survey data for England. The Department for Education also provides [data on 16-18 year-olds NEET](#).
- **Wales:** The Statistical First Release [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\)](#) is the definitive source for NEET estimates in Wales.
- **Scotland:** Scottish NEET estimates were published as part of the [Annual Local Area Labour Markets](#) publication up until 2014. The official measure of NEET in Scotland is based on those aged 16-19 and is now released through [Skills Development Scotland Participation Measure](#).
- **Northern Ireland:** When given, Northern Ireland NEET figures are based on the [Labour Force Survey](#).

## 2. International NEET Statistics

The OECD publishes NEET data by age group – though these are not directly comparable with UK national estimates.<sup>2</sup>

The proportion of 15-29 year olds NEET in the UK (13.7%) is below the OECD average (14.5%). However, the proportion for 15-19 year olds in the UK (8.7%) was above the OECD average (6.3%).



\* Data for 2014

\*\* Data for 2013

Source: OECD, Youth not in employment

<sup>2</sup> OECD (2016), Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) (indicator). doi: [10.1787/72d1033a-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/72d1033a-en) (Accessed on 20 September 2016)



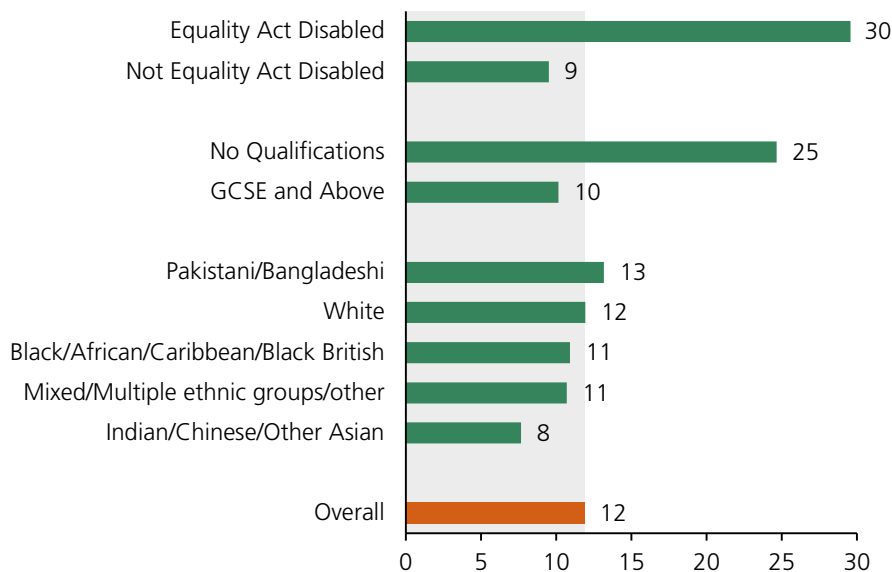
### 3. Characteristics of people who are NEET

#### 3.1 Key characteristics from the Labour Force Survey

As shown in the chart below using data from the ONS Labour Force Survey, over the four quarters to Q2 2016:

- The proportion of 16-24 year olds who are NEET was higher for those with disabilities (30%) than those without (9%).
- A higher proportion of 16-24 year olds without any qualifications are NEET (25%) than the proportion of those qualified to GCSE level and above (10%).
- By ethnicity, the proportion of 16-24 year olds NEET was highest for those from Pakistani/Bangladeshi backgrounds (13%) and lowest for those from Indian/Chinese/Other Asian backgrounds (8%).

**% of 16-24 year olds who are NEET**  
Q3 2015 - Q2 2016



Source: ONS Labour Force Survey microdata and House of Commons Library calculations

Notes: Disability is defined using the Government Statistical Service harmonised standard definition. This covers people reporting (current) physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting, or expected to last, 12 months or more, which reduce their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Those who gave no response have been excluded from the analysis.

GCSE and above includes those with a highest qualification of GCSEs, A-Levels, Higher Education or Degrees.

## 3.2 The Longitudinal Study of Young People in England

### Key characteristics

[The Longitudinal Study of Young People in England](#)<sup>3</sup> gives some more detailed information on characteristics of young people who were NEET and aged 19 in 2010.<sup>4</sup>

- Young people who have achieved five or more GCSEs grade A-C are less likely to be NEET than those who have not.
- Those eligible for free school meals are more likely to be NEET than those not eligible.
- Those who have been excluded or suspended from school are more likely to be NEET than those who have not.
- Those with their own child are more likely to be NEET than those without.
- Those who have a disability are more likely to be NEET than those who do not.

### Characteristics of people who are long-term NEET

The Longitudinal Study of Young People in England also gives information on characteristics by the length of time for which somebody is NEET. 14% of 19 year-olds in 2010 had been NEET for over a year at some stage. 65% had never been NEET.

Over half of people age 19 in 2010 with their own child had been NEET at some point. This also applied those who had ever been excluded or suspended from school and those eligible for free school meals. It was also the case that over half of those who have not achieved five or more A\*-C GCSEs had been NEET at some point. In all of these groups at least a quarter experienced a period of over a year NEET.

48% of 19 year-olds with a disability had ever been NEET, with 24% having been NEET for over a year at some stage.

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<sup>3</sup> Department for Education, [Longitudinal Study of Young People in England](#), July 2011

<sup>4</sup> Note that the ages in this note are 'academic ages', the age at the beginning of the school year in which the survey interview took place – many of the people with academic age of 19 will be 20 by the time of the interview.

### 3.3 Audit Commission: Risk Factors in becoming NEET

The Audit Commission produced a report in July 2010, [Against the odds](#), which examined NEET characteristics, the geographic distribution of NEET people and how government can work effectively to help them.<sup>5</sup> Contained in this report is a table (below) which summarises the increased likelihood of young people becoming NEET associated with certain risk factors.

#### Increased chances of being NEET

Factor	Increase in chance of being NEET for six months or more
Being NEET at least once before	7.9 times more likely
Pregnancy or parenthood	2.8 times more likely
Supervision by youth offending team	2.6 times more likely
Fewer than three months post-16 education	2.3 times more likely
Disclosed substance abuse	2.1 times more likely
Responsibilities as a carer	2.0 times more likely

Source: Audit Commission, analysis of Connexions data from fieldwork areas (approximately 24,000 people). 2010

<sup>5</sup> Audit Commission, [Against the odds](#), July 2010

## 4. Policies to reduce the number of people who are NEET

Schemes introduced by the previous Government with elements aimed at reducing the number of young people who are NEET are listed below.

### 4.1 Raising the Participation Age

The age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training was increased. From summer 2014, pupils leaving year 11 were required to continue to participate in education or training until their 18th birthday.<sup>6</sup> Post-16 options include:

- Full-time education (e.g. school, college or home education).
- An apprenticeship or traineeship.
- Part-time education or training if employed, self-employed or volunteering full-time.

### 4.2 Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are paid jobs that incorporate on and off the job training. Successful apprentices receive a nationally recognised qualification on completion of their contract. The Government pays a proportion of the training costs for apprentices, depending on their age, with remaining training costs normally covered by the employer.

Further information is available in the Commons Briefing Paper, [Apprenticeship Policy](#).

### 4.3 Traineeships

People aged under 24 who are unemployed and have little work experience, but can be prepared for employment or an apprenticeship within six months are able to start traineeships. Traineeships provide education, training and work experience to young people to help them get an apprenticeship or other job.

### 4.4 Work Programme

The Government's main welfare-to-work scheme, the Work Programme, offers support to various groups of long-term unemployed people depending on their particular circumstances. Individuals are referred on to the Work Programme from their local Jobcentre Plus after they have been receiving JSA or ESA for a minimum amount of time. Those aged 18-24 on JSA are referred to the programme after the 9-month point of their claim. Some claimants who are NEET are referred early to the Work Programme, after claiming for three months.

Further information is available in the Briefing Paper, [Work Programme](#).

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<sup>6</sup> Gov.uk, [Increasing opportunities for young people and helping them to achieve their potential](#), 5 September 2014

### 13 NEET: Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training

A new welfare-to-work programme the Work and Health Programme is due to be launched in autumn 2017. The Programme will target people who with specialist support are likely to be able to find work within 12 months. It takes the place of both the Work Programme and Work Choice (a voluntary support programme for people who are disabled), although many jobseekers who would previously have been supported by the Work Programme will now receive support directly through Jobcentre Plus rather than the Work and Health Programme.

Further information is available in the Briefing Paper, [Work and Health Programme](#).

## 5. Further Reading

Further Commons Briefing Papers which may be of interest include:

- [Youth Unemployment Statistics](#)
- [Work Programme](#)
- [Apprenticeship Policy](#)
- [Unemployment by Constituency](#)
- [Youth Contract](#)

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