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Coronavirus: Getting people back into work



Summary

- 1 Recruitment incentives
- 2 Employment support
- 3 Skills and training

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Summary

The coronavirus pandemic has had a substantial impact on the UK labour market.

The initial impact was a large fall in employment, with a rise in both unemployment and inactivity. Although unemployment has since fallen back below pre-pandemic levels, there remains fewer people in work, and fewer people who are economically active.

In the three months to April 2022, [labour market statistics](#) published by the Office for National Statistics show that there were almost 280,000 fewer people in employment than prior to the pandemic. Over 370,000 more people were [economically inactive](#).

Government employment support

The Government has put in place various initiatives aimed at getting people into employment:

- In July 2020, the Government published the [Plan for Jobs](#) which contains measures aimed at getting people back into employment, keeping people in their jobs and creating new jobs. This included the introduction of the **Kickstart scheme**. An expansion of this package worth over £500 million was announced in October 2021.
- As part of the November 2020 Spending Review, the **Restart** programme was announced. It will support unemployed people to find work.
- In the Plan for Jobs and the March 2021 Budget, incentive payments were announced that will be paid to employers when they take on **new apprentices or trainees**. Other skills related measures, linked to the [National Skills Fund](#), were announced in the January 2021 [Skills for Jobs White Paper](#).
- On the 27 January 2022, the ‘Way to Work’ campaign was announced. This looks to support Universal Credit claimants into work.

In the [2020 Spending Review](#), the Government said it will provide labour market support worth £2.6 billion in 2021/22.

The evolving impact of the pandemic on the labour market is tracked in the Library paper [Coronavirus: Impact on the labour market](#).

1 Recruitment incentives

Various schemes that provide funding to employers to encourage them to take on new workers have been put in place.

These schemes were particularly aimed at young people. The Government reported that young people were two and a half times more likely to be in a sector that had to close as a result of the pandemic, and were particularly vulnerable to becoming unemployed due to their lack of work experience.^{1 2}

1.1 Kickstart Scheme

The Kickstart Scheme provided funding to employers who created new jobs for young people. The scheme closed to new applications for funding as of 17 December 2021, and Kickstart jobs could be started until the end of March 2022.³

The Government has provided funding to cover the National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week for six months for those who start these jobs. It also provided £1,500 per job placement to cover setup costs and to support the jobholder to develop their employability skills.⁴

As of 24 April 2022, 162,000 young people had been reported as having started a Kickstart job, and a further increase is expected as more employers report the commencement of employment.⁵

During the period that the Kickstart scheme was open, 305,000 job placements were approved and 235,000 were advertised.⁶

The Kickstart Scheme was announced as part of the Plan for Jobs, and employers were able to apply from 2 September 2020.^{7 8} Kickstart jobs originally needed to be started by the end of 2021, but the scheme was extended as part of the [Plan for Jobs Expansion](#).

¹ HM Treasury, [A Plan for Jobs speech](#), 8 July 2020

² HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p8

³ DWP, [Kickstart Scheme](#), 5 October 2021

⁴ DWP, [Apply for a Kickstart Scheme grant](#), 3 February 2021

⁵ [PQ 159037](#), 25 April 2022

⁶ Ibid

⁷ HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p9

⁸ [PQ 82595](#), 3 September 2020

The scheme intended to create “hundreds of thousands” of six-month work placements. It was aimed at 16-to 24-year-olds in Great Britain who were on Universal Credit and deemed at risk of long-term unemployment.⁹

The Kickstart Scheme is in place across Great Britain. The Northern Ireland Assembly put in place a [JobStart scheme](#). This is very similar to Kickstart, although one difference is that jobs may be extended to nine months in Northern Ireland for people who meet certain criteria.¹⁰ As of 17 December 2021, 700 young people had started the scheme and almost 3,800 Jobstart opportunities had been approved.¹¹

Conditions of funding

The Kickstart Scheme paid employers to create new jobs for young people (“kickstarters”), and funding was conditional on the employer proving that the jobs were new, and not replacing jobs held by staff who had recently been made redundant. The jobs created must provide a minimum of 25 hours per week, for six months. Once a job placement is created, a different person was able to take over the role at the end of the six-month period.

Employers were also expected to provide training and support to the jobholder to help them to find a permanent job.

Jobcentre Plus work coaches support Universal Credit claimants “who are ready for an opportunity” to enrol in the scheme. Employers then interviewed applicants and selected the best candidate for their role.¹²

Applying for funding

When the scheme was first announced, applications for Kickstart grants had to be for a minimum of 30 job placements. This was amended in February 2021, and the minimum number was removed, and all employers were able to apply directly for a grant.

Previously, employers were expected to partner with other employers until they were collectively able to offer 30 job placements. Kickstart ‘gateways’ were put in place to help them partner together.

Kickstart gateways

An employer was able to get help from a Kickstart gateway with the process of getting a Kickstart grant. The gateway could put in an application for the employer and pay the employer the Kickstart funding. They were also able to

⁹ HM Treasury, [A Plan for Jobs speech](#), 8 July 2020

¹⁰ Invest Northern Ireland, [Jobstart](#)

¹¹ NI Assembly questions, [AQW 24202/17-22](#), 11 January 2022

¹² DWP, [Kickstart scheme: A guide for employers](#), 2 September 2020

add the young person to their payroll and pay their wages using the funding from Government.¹³

Gateways had to have a grant agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions. Any organisation was able to apply, but applications from new gateways closed on 27 January 2021.¹⁴

Kickstart gateways could also offer employability support to jobholders. They were able to provide this directly to the jobholder, or by sharing their expertise with employers. They were also able to offer employability support to employers outside of their grant agreements.

Gateways were paid £360 for the admin costs of each placement. They may have also received a share of the £1,500 paid to employers if they agreed to provide employability support.

Over 700 organisations were approved as gateways, and a list of these is available on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).¹⁵

Funding for the scheme

An initial £2 billion was provided for the Kickstart scheme, and there was not a cap on the number of places available. The Government reported that, for a 24-year-old, the grant was worth around £6,500. This is based on the National Minimum Wage for those aged 21 to 24. The grant was lower for those aged below 21 as the minimum wage is less for those workers.¹⁶

The £2 billion was intended to provide funding for over 250,000 Kickstart jobs.¹⁷ Funding of £1.62 billion was provided in the 2021-22 financial year, although there was an underspend of at least £665 million as the number of job starts was less than the number of jobs that had been funded.¹⁸

Evaluation of the scheme

The Government has described the Kickstart scheme as a “pandemic success story”. The employment minister, Mims Davies, has said that the scheme provided “valuable opportunities” for young people:

Kickstart has provided valuable opportunities for tens of thousands of young people who would have otherwise faced the scarring effects of long-term unemployment caused by the pandemic. It enabled them to gain experience, become more confident, build skills and help improve their chances of progressing to long-term sustainable

¹³ DWP, [Help employers with the Kickstart Scheme \(Kickstart gateway\)](#), 3 February 2021

¹⁴ Gov.uk, [Apply for a Kickstart Scheme Grant for Employers](#)

¹⁵ [PQ 145014](#), 2 February 2021

¹⁶ Gov.uk, [National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage rates](#)

¹⁷ HM Treasury, [Spending Review 2020](#), November 2020

¹⁸ [PQ 4563](#), 23 May 2022

work. And for Businesses were able to create their future workforce, building up skilled, reliable and resilient workers.¹⁹

The Government has also said that, although funding for 250,000 jobs was available, that the lower take up of jobs should be considered in the wider context of economic recovery and the lower than expected rise in unemployment. They also pointed to the processes that had been put in place with the aim of ensuring that Kickstart jobs would add additional value. For example, people should only have started Kickstart jobs if they would have been unlikely to have found other paid work.²⁰

The Government has said that it will evaluate the longer-term outcomes for Kickstart participants after they have completed their placements. This will include an estimate of how many people remained in employment after they finished their Kickstart job.²¹

The shadow employment minister, Alison McGovern, has said that the lower number of starts shows that the scheme has failed, and questioned the quality of the placements created by the scheme.

Public Accounts Committee

The scheme was described as being “chaotic” in the report on the scheme that was published by the Public Accounts Committee:²²

The scheme was implemented at immense speed, but the early delivery was chaotic with the Department neglecting to put in place basic management information that would be expected for a multi-billion-pound grant programme. As a consequence, the Department has not monitored and does not know whether it is putting the right people onto Kickstart, why people who are not taking up Kickstart jobs are not doing so, or what employers are providing with the £1,500 employability support grants awarded for each young person taken on through the scheme.

The report also said that:

- Many young people who started to claim Universal Credit at the start of the pandemic have remained on the benefit and have not moved into Kickstart jobs.
- Many employers experienced delays in filling Kickstart vacancies, with “many waiting months for vacancies to be filled”.

¹⁹ The Times, [Kickstart scheme was a pandemic success story](#), 28 April 2022

²⁰ HC Deb, [Kickstart Scheme](#), 15 March 2022

²¹ [PQ 101775](#), 19 January 2022

²² Public Accounts Committee, [“Chaotic” £1.9BN Kickstart scheme for youth employment fails to deliver for young people or taxpayer](#), 25 February 2022

- It was “hard to see” how the Kickstart scheme was used alongside other employment schemes and whether maximum value was therefore achieved without duplicating spend.
- It will be difficult for the DWP to evaluate the scheme as there was not sufficient monitoring of the scheme. The Committee called on the DWP to publish performance data on its website on a regular basis, rather than on an ad hoc basis in response to parliamentary questions.
- The DWP “neglected to put in place basic management information that would be expected for a multi-billion-pound grant programme”.

The Government disagreed with many of these findings, and with many of the conclusions made by the Committee.²³ The Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Simon Clarke, described the report as an “unfair characterisation” of the scheme, and claimed that an increase in employees aged under 25 showed that the Government’s policy on youth employment had been a success.²⁴

National Audit Office

The National Audit Office published a report on the Kickstart scheme in November 2021. In this report, the NAO said that there was a clear rationale for the scheme in the summer of 2020, but that as the economy recovered it may have funded jobs that employers may have funded themselves. They also concluded that the overall impact of the scheme will not be clear until the DWP completes planned evaluations of the scheme and which will take “several years”.²⁵

House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee

In their [Skills for every young person Inquiry](#), the House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee reported that the reaction to the scheme was generally positive, although there were a “number of barriers” that were stopping people from starting Kickstart jobs. The Committee suggested that the scheme could be expanded and potentially made permanent, and called for it to be extended.²⁶

The Government responded that the scheme was a time-limited scheme in response to the pandemic, and that other employment support for young people will remain available after Kickstart closes to new starts. It also reports that there are a high number of job vacancies.²⁷

²³ DWP, [Treasury minutes: Government response to the Committee of Public Accounts on the Thirty Ninth report from Session 2021-22](#), 28 April 2022

²⁴ HC Deb, [Kickstart Scheme](#), 15 March 2022, Col 747

²⁵ National Audit Office, [Employment support: The Kickstart Scheme](#), 26 November 2021

²⁶ House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee, [Skills for every young person - Report of Session 2021-22](#), 26 November 2021

²⁷ House of Lords Youth Unemployment Committee, [Government Response to the Skills for every young person Report](#), 17 March 2022

Initial reaction to the scheme

When the scheme was first introduced, the Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Jonathan Reynolds, welcomed the scheme “in principle”, but put forward three “key tests” of the scheme:²⁸

- whether the jobs it provides are real, quality jobs;
- whether it is available to support smaller businesses as well as larger ones; and
- whether it provides opportunities for long-term employment beyond the initial subsidised placement.

In April 2021, the Labour Party claimed the Kickstart scheme was “too slow” and called on the Government to transform the scheme, and instead put in place a ‘Jobs Promise’. This would provide a “quality education, training or employment opportunity” to any young person away from work for six months.²⁹

1.2 Apprenticeships

The number of people starting apprenticeships fell following the outset of the coronavirus pandemic. In April to September 2020, there were 82,400 fewer starts than for the same period in 2019, which was a 41% fall.³⁰

Various initiatives were put in place to encourage employers to take on new apprentices.

Incentive payments

In response to the pandemic, two increases to the incentive payments that are paid to employers when they take on new apprentices were announced.

In the March 2021 Budget, the Government announced that it will pay employers in England £3,000 for every new apprentice they hire between 1 April 2021 and 30 September 2021.³¹ In October 2021, it announced that the £3,000 would also be available for every new apprentice that is hired between 1 October 2021 and 31 January 2022.³²

This was an increase from the incentive that had been announced as part of the Plan for Jobs (July 2020).³³ This paid £2,000 for new apprentices who

²⁸ HC Deb, [Kick-start scheme](#), 3 September 2020, Col 294

²⁹ Labour Party, [Labour’s jobs plan would support 400,000 new jobs and put in place ‘Jobs Promise’ for young people](#), 23 April 2021

³⁰ Explore education statistics, [Download latest data files](#), Extracted from Underlying data - apprenticeship monthly starts on the 9 February 2021

³¹ HMT, [Budget 2021](#), p47

³² ESFA, [Incentive payments for hiring a new apprentice](#), 27 October 2021

³³ HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p8

were under 25 and £1,500 for those aged 25 and over if they were employed from August 2020 to the end of March 2021.³⁴

Prior to the pandemic, the Government was providing £1,000 to 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 incentive payments introduced following the pandemic were in addition to this.

As of the 11 April 2022, incentive claims had been submitted for 186,230 apprentices.³⁵

Flexi-job apprenticeships

In the Skills for Job White Paper, the Government reported that some employers are unable to commit to offering apprenticeships for 12 months. Therefore, as part of the White Paper, the Government announced it was testing the idea of “sectoral apprenticeship agencies” that would allow people to move between work placements during their apprenticeship, and support those employers who predominantly offer short-term, project-based employment to be able to offer apprenticeships.³⁶

On 3 August 2021, the flexi-job apprenticeship offer was launched. From this date, sector bodies, groups of employers and other interested organisations have been able to register as flexi-job apprenticeship agencies.³⁷

These agencies employ an apprentice directly for the duration of their apprenticeship and arrange placements with different employers.³⁸

16 organisations were admitted onto the register of flexi-job apprenticeship agencies and £5 million of funding was made available to 11 of these organisations.³⁹ Further organisations may be allowed to join the register in the future.

Flexi-job apprenticeships can also take place without the assistance of a flexi-job apprenticeship agency if the apprentice arranges the different placements. These are called ‘portable’ flexi-job apprenticeships, and are being tested in a pilot that started in April 2022 and which will run across 23 apprenticeship standards. These standards cover three sectors: creative, digital and construction.⁴⁰

³⁴ ESFA/DWP, [‘Plan for Jobs’ skills and employment programmes: information for employers](#), 10 December 2020

³⁵ Explore education statistics, [Apprenticeships and traineeships](#) Additional analysis (accessed 31 January 2022)

³⁶ DfE, [Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#), 21 January 2021, p22

³⁷ DfE, HM Treasury, DCMS, [Cash boost to create new flexible approach to apprenticeships](#), 3 August 2021

³⁸ ESFA, [Flexi-job apprenticeship offer](#), 3 August 2021

³⁹ ESFA, [Register of Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agencies](#), 14 March 2022

⁴⁰ ESFA, [Flexi-Job Apprenticeships](#), 10 February 2022

Funding of £7 million has been made available across 2021/22 and 2022/23, and organisations can apply for between £100,000 and £1 million to set up the agencies.⁴¹

Legislation was introduced in April 2022 that allowed employers to take on a flexi-job apprentice for a 3 month or longer period, as long as the whole apprenticeship lasted for at least a year.⁴²

Other initiatives

Various other initiatives were announced as part of the Skills for Jobs White Paper:

- **Transfers from levy-paying employers:** The White Paper pledged to make it easier for apprenticeship levy-paying employers to transfer levy funds to other employers.⁴³ Since September 2021, levy-paying employers have been able to pledge specific amounts as available for transfer. They are able to transfer up to 25% of their levy funds each year.⁴⁴ ⁴⁵ The Government has reported that over £7 million has been pledged since September 2021.⁴⁶
- **Front-loaded training/accelerated apprenticeships:** The White Paper announced that, from April 2021, **front-loaded training** would be introduced for some apprenticeships in the construction sector. This means that a greater level of training is provided to the apprentice when they first start, to help them enter the workplace more quickly. The Department for Education published a [Flexible Apprenticeships in Construction](#) manual at the end of April 2021 which provided further information on the different flexible training models, and on **accelerated apprenticeships**. In an accelerated apprenticeship, the length of the apprenticeship is less than the typical duration to take into account the prior learning of the apprentice. The minimum requirements of an apprenticeship still need to be met, so it must last for at least 12 months.⁴⁷

⁴¹ DfE, HM Treasury, DCMS, [Cash boost to create new flexible approach to apprenticeships](#), 3 August 2021

⁴² [The Apprenticeships \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) \(Amendment\) \(England\) Regulations 2022](#), 6 April 2022

⁴³ UK employers with a pay bill of over £3 million pay the [apprenticeship levy](#). Levy funds can only be spent on apprenticeship training and assessment.

⁴⁴ DfE, [Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#), 21 January 2021, p21

⁴⁵ ESFA, [Transferring your apprenticeship levy to another business](#), 28 September 2021

⁴⁶ [PQ 18881](#), 20 June 2022

⁴⁷ DfE, [Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#), 21 January 2021, p21

Further information on apprenticeships are provided in the Library briefings, [Apprenticeships and skills policy in England](#) (June 2020) and [Apprenticeship statistics for England](#) (April 2020).

1.3 Traineeships

A traineeship is an education and training programme with work experience. They focus on helping young people become ready for work or for an apprenticeship. They can last from six weeks up to one year, although most last for less than six months.⁴⁸

They were previously only available to people aged 16-24 who were qualified below [level three](#), but eligibility was expanded in July 2020 to also include those with level three qualifications.⁴⁹

The Government said it will pay employers £1,000 for every new trainee they take on from the start of September 2020 to the end of July 2022.⁵⁰

An additional £126 million was provided to fund this, which was intended to provide funding for 40,000 more traineeships.

Occupational traineeships were introduced in 2021. These are focused on an actual occupation, with the aim of supporting a trainee into a relevant apprenticeship or a specific job.⁵¹ Pilots for these traineeships have been introduced in the rail and construction sectors.⁵²

There were 17,400 traineeship starts in 2020/21 which was over 5,000 more than in 2019/20 and 2,500 more than in 2018/19. Between August 2021 and January 2022 there have been a further 8,900 starts.⁵³

The number of traineeship starts had been falling since 2015/16 when there were 24,100 starts.

Further information on traineeships is provided in the Library briefing, [Traineeships](#) (July 2020).

⁴⁸ Gov.uk, [Find a traineeship](#)

⁴⁹ HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p9

⁵⁰ ESFA/DWP, ['Plan for Jobs' skills and employment programmes: information for employers](#), 29 July 2021

⁵¹ ESFA, [Traineeships: framework for delivery 2021 to 2022](#), 13 August 2021

⁵² Learning and Work Institute, [Review of occupational traineeship pilots](#), 19 October 2021

⁵³ Explore education statistics, [Apprenticeships and traineeships](#), Extracted from Traineeships - starts, completions and conversions to apprenticeships on the 31 January 2022

2 Employment support

Various schemes to provide employment support to unemployed people have been put in place since the start of the pandemic.

2.1 The Way to Work campaign

On the 27 January 2022, the Government announced the [Way to Work](#) campaign. This campaign aims to support Universal Credit claimants into work and will predominantly target those in the intensive work search group.⁵⁴

Previously, these claimants had been expected to search for work outside their previous occupation or sector after claiming for three months. As part of the Way to Work campaign, these claimants are instead expected to do so from the fourth week.

Tailored support will be provided by Jobcentre Plus work coaches to help these claimants find work.⁵⁵

The campaign also offers various services to employers to help them fill vacancies, including the provision of an employer adviser. Recruitment support will also be provided to help employers speed up the recruitment process.⁵⁶

The campaign will aim to support 500,000 into work by the end of June 2022. The Government has reported that they met this target and that over 500,000 claimants have been supported into work as a result of the campaign.⁵⁷

Announcing this campaign, the DWP said that if people were unable to find work in their previous occupation or sector, they would be expected to look for work in another sector and “this will be part of their requirements for receiving their benefit payment”.⁵⁸

Shadow Employment Minister Alison McGovern said that people should be helped into jobs which better matched their skills as this would improve their long-term employment prospects. For the Liberal Democrats, Wendy

⁵⁴ DWP, [New jobs mission to get 500,000 into work](#), 27 January 2022

⁵⁵ UK Government, [Way to Work support from your Work Coach](#) (accessed 22 June 2022)

⁵⁶ UK Government, [Way to Work: Get your recruitment moving](#) (accessed 22 June 2022)

⁵⁷ DWP, [Half a million benefit claimants get jobs in under 6 months](#), 30 June 2022

⁵⁸ DWP Press Release, [New jobs mission to get 500,000 into work](#), 27 January 2022

Chamberlain criticised the “harsh sanctions” which “could be applied within weeks of applying for Universal Credit”.⁵⁹

2.2 The Restart Scheme

As part of the 2020 Spending Review, the Government announced the Restart Scheme across England and Wales. The scheme provides up to 12 months of support to participants, and is intended to support over 1 million unemployed people.⁶⁰ Individuals have been referred to the scheme since July 2021, and referrals will be made over a 3-year period.⁶¹

The three-year programme will provide £2.9 billion of funding, with around £400 million in 2021/22.⁶² The original estimate of the average cost per participant on the scheme was approximately £2,000.⁶³

The DWP is not publishing statistics for this scheme on its website, and only provides information on take up of the scheme through responses to PQs and FOIs. By the end of April 2022, around 225,000 individuals had started on the scheme, with 16,000 leaving the scheme. Reasons for leaving the scheme include finding a job, or if an individual stops claiming Universal Credit.⁶⁴

Eligibility criteria

The scheme initially offered “enhanced support” to Universal Credit claimants who have been out of work for at least 12 months. Support was provided to people who had been claiming Universal Credit in the Intensive Work Search Regime for between 12 and 18 months. Work coaches were able to give early access to the scheme to some claimants, if this is felt to be the most appropriate route for them.⁶⁵

In January 2022, the eligibility criteria was expanded to include people who have been claiming Universal Credit for longer than nine months, with no upper limit. It was expanded further in April 2022 to include Income Based Jobseekers Allowance claimants.

Support provided by the scheme

The Government said that the scheme will provide up to 12 months of tailored support. Participants will receive a personalised offer, which will be tailored to individual and local need, with regular contact. The provider guidance

⁵⁹ BBC News, [Universal Credit: Jobseekers told to widen job search faster or face cut](#), 27 January 2022

⁶⁰ HM Treasury, [Spending Review 2020](#), 15 December 2020

⁶¹ DWP, [How the Restart Scheme will work](#), 26 April 2022

⁶² HM Treasury, [Spending Review 2020](#), 15 December 2020

⁶³ [PQ 233](#), 12 May 2022

⁶⁴ [PQ 232](#), 20 May 2022

⁶⁵ DWP, [How the Restart scheme will work](#), 26 April 2022

states that Restart should “design and tailor interventions in accordance with the labour market” at local levels:

This means seeking out and taking advantage of opportunities such as local growth sectors and local training initiatives and flexing the offer throughout the lifetime of the Restart Scheme based on emerging labour market challenges and opportunities.⁶⁶

The guidance says the scheme should keep strong relationships with local stakeholders to make sure it complements “local efforts”.

A customer satisfaction measure will be built in. It will consist of a quarterly survey of a random sample of participants and will be conducted by an independent contractor.⁶⁷ The results of the customer satisfaction measure will not be published.⁶⁸

Providers

The programme will be delivered in England and Wales across 12 ‘contract package areas’, and following a commercial process, [providers have been selected](#) for each of these areas.⁶⁹

Providers will be paid predominantly using a payment by results model, meaning that the more people they help into sustained employment, the higher the payment they will receive. 70% of the total contract value will only be paid to the providers when a participant has met the qualifying conditions which could involve a contract of employment with an employer, or the participant becoming self-employed.⁷⁰

If someone has been supported into a contract of employment with an employer then the Restart Scheme provider can claim an ‘employed outcome payment’. They are eligible if the participant has:

- Started employed work within 547 calendar days from their start date on the programme, and;
- They have accumulated earnings that are equal to or exceed the equivalent of someone working for 16 hours per week for 26 weeks, earning the National Living Wage (NLW) (earnings threshold).⁷¹

If someone has been supported into self-employment then the Restart Scheme provider can claim a ‘self-employed outcome payment’. They are eligible if the participant has:

⁶⁶ DWP, [Restart Scheme provider guidance, Chapter 1: Introduction and overview](#), 28 June 2021

⁶⁷ DWP, [Restart Scheme provider guidance, Chapter 16: Customer satisfaction measure](#), 28 June 2021

⁶⁸ [PQ 5398](#), 24 May 2022

⁶⁹ DWP, [How the Restart scheme will work](#), 29 June 2021

⁷⁰ DWP, [Restart Scheme provider guidance, Chapter 17: Funding model and claim process](#), 28 June 2021

⁷¹ *Ibid*, [employed outcomes](#)

- Been self-employed for a cumulative period of six months or more within 547 calendar days from their start date on the programme, and;
- Begun the six-month period of self-employment within 365 days of starting on the programme.⁷²

Providers can also be paid an increased outcome payment if the number of participants they successfully help exceeds the volume set out in the performance offer in their contract with the Government.⁷³

2.3

Support announced in the Plan for Jobs

Extra funding for some of the existing employment support programmes was announced in July 2020 as part of the Plan for Jobs.

Job Entry Targeted Support

The **Work and Health Programme** provides support to help people in England and Wales to find and keep a job. It is available, on a voluntary basis, to those with health conditions or disabilities, and to various groups of vulnerable people. It also supports those who have been unemployed for over two years, and is compulsory for this group.⁷⁴

As part of the Plan for Jobs, this programme will be expanded in Great Britain to give additional voluntary support for people receiving benefits, who have been unemployed for more than three months.⁷⁵

This expanded support is the **Job Entry Targeted Support programme** which was launched in England and Wales in October 2020 and in Scotland from January 2021.⁷⁶ The programme offers “light touch personalised support” for six months.⁷⁷

£238 million was provided for this expansion which was initially targeted to support over 250,000 people.⁷⁸ In October 2021, the programme was extended until September 2022.⁷⁹

⁷² Ibid, [Self-Employed Outcomes](#)

⁷³ Ibid, [Accelerated payment mechanism](#)

⁷⁴ DWP, [Work and Health Programme statistics](#), 27 May 2021

⁷⁵ HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p9

⁷⁶ HM Treasury, [Budget 2021](#), 3 March 2021,

⁷⁷ UK Government, [Job Entry Targeted Support \(JETS\)](#) (accessed 22 June 2022)

⁷⁸ DWP, [JETS job scheme relaunching 100,000 careers](#), 25 May 2021

⁷⁹ HM Treasury/DWP, [£500 million Plan for Jobs Expansion](#), 4 October 2021

By the end of August 2021, 168,020 people had started the programme in England and Wales, with 8,440 starting in Scotland. These led to 41,830 ‘job outcomes’ in England and Wales and 1,540 in Scotland.^{80 81}

Further information on the Work and Health programme is in the Library briefing, [Work and Health Programme](#) (June 2020).

Sector-based Work Academies

The Sector-based Work Academy programme offers employment placements for people receiving benefits, but who are ready for work. These placements can last up to six weeks and provide pre-employment training, a work experience placement and a guaranteed job interview. Although the programme is open to jobseekers of all ages, they are primarily aimed at young people.⁸²

The programme was launched in England in August 2011, and was extended to Scotland in January 2012.⁸³ The scheme was relaunched as part of the Plan for Jobs with £17 million pledged to support 40,000 placements in 2020/21.⁸⁴ In 2021/22, the Government intended to increase the number of placements on the scheme to 80,000.^{85 86}

In 2020/21, 64,500 people started this programme, while 85,480 started between April 2021 and the 27 March 2022.⁸⁷

Youth Offer

As part of the Plan for Jobs, the intensive support offered by the Department for Work and Pensions was expanded to young jobseekers.⁸⁸ The Youth Offer aims to provide extra help to Universal Credit claimants aged 18-24 who are in the Intensive Work Search Group.⁸⁹

In October 2021, eligibility for the Youth Offer was extended to include 16 and 17 year olds, with support provided until 2025.⁹⁰

This support, which began in September 2020, is provided in three ways:

⁸⁰ [PQ 53344](#), 18 October 2021

⁸¹ A [job outcome](#) is defined as when a person has achieved £1,000 cumulative earnings within eight months of starting the programme

⁸² DWP, [Sector-based work academies: employer guide](#), 18 August 2020

⁸³ [PQ 142083](#), 21 March 2022

⁸⁴ HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p10

⁸⁵ [PQ 121146](#), 3 December 2020

⁸⁶ DWP, [Government commits to 80,000 new SWAPs opportunities](#), 8 February 2021

⁸⁷ [PQ 149250](#), 4 April 2022

⁸⁸ HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p9

⁸⁹ DWP, [Help to find work for Universal Credit claimants aged 18 to 24](#), 8 January 2021

⁹⁰ HM Treasury/DWP, [£500 million Plan for Jobs Expansion](#), 4 October 2021

The **Youth Employment Programme** is a 13-week programme to help people prepare for work. It will include an employment and skills review, and a work search review.

Youth employability coaches were introduced to support young people who have complex needs or other barriers stopping them from finding a job.⁹¹ By October 2021, 150 specialist Youth Employability Coaches had been recruited across the UK.⁹²

Youth Hubs have been set up to offer support for up to six months from a youth hub work coach.⁹³ As of February 2022, over 160 Youth Hubs had opened across Great Britain.⁹⁴ The Government met its target of having 150 open by the end of 2021.

Flexible Support Fund

The Flexible Support Fund gives Jobcentre Plus Districts greater freedom to tailor back-to-work support to individual and local need. Working within local guidelines and priorities, Jobcentre Plus advisers have discretion to decide how to support individuals to find work. This could include funding to cover the travel costs for a claimant to attend an interview, the costs of clothing to start employment, or the costs of childcare to enable a claimant to attend an interview or start work.^{95 96}

An increase of £150 million for this fund in Great Britain was announced in the Plan for Jobs. This funding will also increase the capacity of the [Jobcentre Plus Rapid Response Service](#) which supports people who have been made redundant to find a new job.⁹⁷

£46 million was spent from this fund in 2020/21, with £24 million spent on training and £15 million spent on “removing barriers”.⁹⁸ £36 million was spent from this fund in 2019/20.⁹⁹

Job Finding Support

A new job finding support service was announced in the Plan for Jobs.¹⁰⁰ It launched in January 2021 across Great Britain and ran for a year. Over this period the Government expected it to support up to 160,000 people.¹⁰¹

⁹¹ DWP, [Specialist job coaches to help young people onto the jobs ladder](#), 8 April 2021

⁹² [PQ 52488](#), 18 October 2021

⁹³ DWP, [Help to find work for Universal Credit claimants aged 18 to 24](#), 8 January 2021

⁹⁴ [PQ 114984](#), 8 February 2022

⁹⁵ DWP/DoH, [Improving lives: the future of work, health and disability](#), p55

⁹⁶ [DEP2022-0326](#), 5 April 2022

⁹⁷ HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p10

⁹⁸ [Letter from the Minister for Employment to the Work and Pensions Select Committee](#), 30 December 2021

⁹⁹ [PQ 163235](#), 9 March 2021

¹⁰⁰ HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p10

¹⁰¹ [Statement UIN HCWS770](#), 8 February 2021

The service provided online support to those who have been unemployed for less than three months. Support included a mock interview, a group session that provided sector-specific job advice, CV support and a “Job Finding Action Plan tailored to their needs”.¹⁰²

Work coaches from Jobcentre Plus will refer claimants to the scheme, although it will be voluntary.

People who were furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and subsequently started to claim Universal Credit when this scheme came to an end, were referred to the Job Finding Support scheme.¹⁰³

Between January 2021 and September 2021 there had been 14,250 starts to the scheme.¹⁰⁴

Work coaches

In the Plan for Jobs, the Government announced plans to double the number of Jobcentre Plus work coaches across Great Britain by the end of the 2020/21 financial year. Funding of £895 million was provided for this.¹⁰⁵

The Government reported that this target was met in March 2021 with the recruitment of 13,500 new coaches.¹⁰⁶ Some of these were recruited on permanent contracts, while others were on temporary fixed term contracts.¹⁰⁷

As part of the Levelling Up White Paper, the Government announced it would provide funding of £99 million to provide **in-work progression support** to claimants. As part of this, support from work coaches will be provided to Universal Credit claimants on low incomes in Great Britain to “address any skills or wider barriers to progression”. This will also involve the appointment of “progression champions” to support work coaches, and who will also look to “make connections between employers, local authorities and skills providers”.¹⁰⁸ A network of 37 progression champions will be put in place across Great Britain.¹⁰⁹

One of the actions put forward by the Progression Commission in their [Supporting Progression out of low pay](#) report was for the introduction of in-work progression support.¹¹⁰

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ [PQ 72422](#), 19 November 2021

¹⁰⁴ [PQ 53344](#), 18 October 2021

¹⁰⁵ HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p9

¹⁰⁶ DWP, [Government delivers 13,500 Work Coaches to boost Britain's Jobs Army](#), 29 March 2021

¹⁰⁷ PQ 13266, 14 June 2022

¹⁰⁸ DLUHC, [Levelling Up the United Kingdom](#), 2 February 2022, p199

¹⁰⁹ [PQ 150166](#), 19 April 2022

¹¹⁰ DWP, [Supporting progression out of low pay: a call to action](#), 1 July 2021

3 Skills and training

Various initiatives to improve access to training for sector-specific skills were announced in response to the pandemic.

These are mostly funded by the National Skills Fund, and the Government consulted on the offers that will be available through this fund.¹¹¹ The Government has committed to investing £1.6 billion through this fund over a three year period.¹¹²

Other measures related to skills have been introduced as part of the [Skills and Post-16 Education Act](#), while skills policies were included in the [Levelling Up white paper](#).

3.1 Lifetime skills guarantee

On the 29 September 2020, the Prime Minister announced the lifetime skills guarantee. Under this guarantee, from April 2021, adults without an A-level or equivalent qualification in England have been able to access a fully-funded college course.¹¹³

The offer was widened in April 2022 so that any adult earning under the National Living Wage annually has been able to access these qualifications for free, regardless of their prior qualification level.¹¹⁴

The courses available to study are only those considered to be “valued by employers”. This initially excluded any courses in the hospitality and catering sector, but courses in this sector were added in July 2021.¹¹⁵

The [list of qualifications](#) included are published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, and will be updated as more qualifications are added. As of April 2021, almost 400 courses were available. The table in Annex A also shows which subject areas have been included and excluded as of November 2021.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ DfE, [National Skills Fund consultation outcome](#), 1 April 2022

¹¹² DfE, [National Skills Fund](#), 4 April 2022

¹¹³ Prime Minister’s Office, [Major expansion of post-18 education and training to level up and prepare workers for post-COVID economy](#), 29 September 2020

¹¹⁴ DfE, [National Skills Fund](#), 26 November 2021

¹¹⁵ The Caterer, [Hospitality and catering qualifications added to government’s free courses for jobs offer](#), 29 July 2021

¹¹⁶ DfE, [List of free level 3 qualifications available to eligible adults](#), 6 November 2021

The guarantee will be paid for through the £2.5 billion National Skills Fund.¹¹⁷ It was announced at the November 2020 Spending Review that £375 million would be invested from this Fund in 2021-22. This included £95 million for the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.¹¹⁸

The Labour Party claimed in March 2021 that a third of jobs had been excluded from the guarantee. The largest sector that is currently not included in the list of qualifications is the retail sector, which employed 3.5 million people in England in 2019.¹¹⁹

As part of the guarantee, a lifelong loan entitlement was also announced. This means every student will be entitled to four years of loan funding to use over their lifetime, which can be used for study at both colleges and universities. This will not be introduced until 2025, and the Government has consulted on the detail and the scope of the loan entitlement.^{120 121} The Skills and Post-16 Education Act gave the Secretary of State for Education powers to introduce this entitlement.¹²²

The proposals to implement the Lifetime Skills Guarantee were set out in the January 2021 [Skills for Jobs White Paper](#), and these are summarised in the Library briefing, [FE white paper: Skills for Jobs for Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#) (January 2021).

3.2 Skills bootcamps

Alongside the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, the Government also announced it will commit £8 million for Digital Skills Bootcamps.¹²³

These bootcamps last approximately 12-16 weeks and are intended to help participants build up sector-specific skills, and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. They are available to adults aged 19 or over.^{124 125}

Between September 2020 and March 2021, 2,800 participants had started a bootcamp in England, and 2,210 (79%) completed the bootcamp. Slightly

¹¹⁷ DfE, [National Skills Fund](#), 27 September 2020

¹¹⁸ HM Treasury, [Spending Review 2020](#), November 2020, p62

¹¹⁹ TES, [Labour: 9m jobs excluded from Lifetime Skills Guarantee](#), 31 March 2021

¹²⁰ DfE, [Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#), 21 January 2021, p42

¹²¹ DfE, [Lifelong loan entitlement closed consultation](#), 24 February 2022

¹²² [Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022](#), Chapter 3 (clause 15), 28 April 2022

¹²³ Prime Minister's Office, [Major expansion of post-18 education and training to level up and prepare workers for post-COVID economy](#), 29 September 2020

¹²⁴ DfE, [National Skills Fund](#), 9 December 2020

¹²⁵ HC Written Statement, [HCWS616](#), 2 December 2020

over half of those who completed the bootcamp reported a change in their employment.^{126 127}

In the Skills for Jobs White Paper, further investment of £43 million was announced to extend these bootcamps into more areas and to expand them to other skills. The Department for Education (DfE) said:

We will start by delivering digital bootcamps in six areas: West Midlands, Greater Manchester/Lancashire, Liverpool City Region, West Yorkshire, East Midlands, and the South West. We will expand to other skills, such as those needed by the nuclear industry, from January 2021. We will use up to £43 million in 2021/22 to expand the digital bootcamps from April 2021 and introduce other in-demand technical skills such as construction, helping the country to build back better.¹²⁸

The DfE has published a [list of skills bootcamps](#) which it will update as more open for applications. As of June 2022, they are available in the following sectors: construction, digital, engineering and manufacturing, green skills, rail and HGV driving. The latter was added to the list in December 2021, with the Government intending to train more than 11,000 people.¹²⁹

The Government announced that it will “quadruple the number of places on Skills Bootcamps” in the October 2021 Budget/SR 21.¹³⁰

3.3 Skills toolkit

The [Skills toolkit](#) was launched in April 2020, with the intention of providing an online platform with free digital and numeracy courses, and to help people build their skills during the coronavirus outbreak.¹³¹

The toolkit offers 70 courses in the following areas:¹³²

- Practical maths
- Computer essentials
- Personal growth and wellbeing
- Professional development

¹²⁶ Explore Education Statistics, [Skills Bootcamps outcomes Financial Year 2020-21](#), 9 December 2021

¹²⁷ Change in employment includes a new job, new/increased responsibilities or a new role in existing job, or new opportunities for those who are self-employed

¹²⁸ DfE, [Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#), p31

¹²⁹ GOV.UK, [Training and more testing to help people become HGV drivers](#), 10 December 2021

¹³⁰ HM Treasury, [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021](#), 27 October 2021, p4

¹³¹ DfE, [New free online learning platform to boost workplace skills](#), 28 April 2020

¹³² National Careers Service, [The Skills Toolkit](#)

- Business and finance
- Digital design and marketing
- Computer science
- Coding

As of 28 November 2021, there have been an estimated 241,700 course registrations and 48,600 course completions.¹³³

3.4 Plan for Jobs measures

The Government will provide additional funding of £32 million to the **National Careers Service** to support 269,000 more people in England over the next two years.¹³⁴

The Government will provide £101 million for the 2020-21 academic year to provide **level 2 and 3 courses** to 18-and 19-year-olds “when there are not employment opportunities available to them”. The Education, Skills and Funding Agency has published a [list of qualifications](#) that are included in this offer.¹³⁵

3.5 Other measures

In October 2021 the Government announced that it will provide funding of £6.4 million to offer working adults **free courses at Institutes of Technology**. These will be short and modular courses in “sought after” STEM subjects, varying in length from 50 to 138 hours, and will include both classroom and remote online study.¹³⁶

Nine further Institutes of Technology were announced in December 2021, in addition to the twelve that were already in operation.¹³⁷

As part of the Department for Work and Pensions [Train and Progress](#) scheme, Universal Credit claimants have been able to take part in full-time training for up to 12 weeks. Prior to this, claimants could receive training for up to 8 weeks. This scheme was introduced in April 2021, and was originally going to be available for 6 months, but an extension was announced in November 2021.¹³⁸

¹³³ Explore education statistics, [Apprenticeships and traineeships](#), Additional analysis, 22 December 2021

¹³⁴ HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p9

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ DfE, [Thousands more adults set to benefit from new technical skills](#), 13 October 2021

¹³⁷ DfE, [Institutes of Technology](#), 17 December 2021

¹³⁸ DWP, [Over a million jobseekers to benefit from new training opportunities](#), 1 November 2021

As part of the October 2021 Budget/SR 21 the **Multiply** programme was announced.¹³⁹ This programme will offer free courses to adults and funding to employers to offer bespoke numeracy programmes to their workforce. Although the programme was initially due to begin in spring 2022, it will now be rolled out in autumn 2022.^{140 141}

This programme will be funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. £270 million of funding in this programme in England was announced in April 2022, although the Government has said up to £559 million will be invested in total across the UK.

£40 million has been reserved for the programme for the years 2022/23 to 2024/25. A breakdown by local area is available in the DLUHC guidance [UKSPF allocations](#).¹⁴²

¹³⁹ HM Treasury, [Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021](#), 27 October 2021, p60

¹⁴⁰ DfE, [Everything you need to know about the new Multiply programme](#), 27 October 2021

¹⁴¹ DfE, [Multiplying maths skills for adults](#), 13 April 2022

¹⁴² DLUHC, [UKSPF allocations](#), 15 June 2022

Annex A: Subject areas included in the National Skills Fund

Sector subject area	Included in the National Skills Fund?
1 - Health, Public Services and Care	
1.1 - Medicine and dentistry	Yes
1.2 - Nursing, and subjects and vocations allied to	Yes
1.3 - Health and social care	Yes
1.4 - Public services	Yes
1.5 - Child development and well being	Yes
2 - Science and Mathematics	
2.1 - Science	Yes
2.2 - Mathematics and statistics	Yes
3 - Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	
3.1 - Agriculture	Yes
3.2 - Horticulture and forestry	Yes
3.3 - Animal care and veterinary science	No
3.4 - Environmental conservation	Yes
4 - Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	
4.1 - Engineering	Yes
4.2 - Manufacturing technologies	Yes
4.3 - Transportation operations and maintenance	Yes
5 - Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	
5.1 - Architecture	No
5.2 - Building and construction	Yes
5.3 - Urban, rural and regional planning	No
6 - Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	
6.1 - ICT practitioners	Yes
6.2 - ICT for users	Yes
7 - Retail and Commercial Enterprise	
7.1 - Retailing and wholesaling	No
7.2 - Warehousing and distribution	Yes
7.3 - Service enterprises	No
7.4 - Hospitality and catering	Yes
8 - Leisure, Travel and Tourism	
8.1 - Sport, leisure and recreation	No
8.2 - Travel and tourism	No
9 - Arts, Media and Publishing	
9.1 - Performing arts	No
9.2 - Crafts, creative arts and design	No
9.3 - Media and communication	No
9.4 - Publishing and information services	No
10 - History, Philosophy and Theology	
10.1 - History	No
10.2 - Archaeology and archaeological sciences	No
10.3 - Philosophy	No
10.4 - Theology and religious studies	No
11 - Social Sciences	
11.1 - Geography	No
11.2 - Sociology and social policy	No
11.3 - Politics	No
11.4 - Economics	No
11.5 - Anthropology	No
12 - Languages, Literature and Culture	
12.1 - Languages, literature and culture of the British isles	No
12.2 - Other languages, literature and culture	No
12.3 - Linguistics	No
13 - Education and Training	
13.1 - Teaching and lecturing	Yes
13.2 - Direct learning support	No
14 - Preparation for Life and Work	
14.1 - Foundations for learning and life	No
14.2 - Preparation for work	No
15 - Business, Administration, Finance and Law	
15.1 - Accounting and finance	Yes
15.2 - Administration	No
15.3 - Business management	Yes
15.4 - Marketing and sales	No
15.5 - Law and legal services	No

Notes: Using list of qualifications published by the ESFA on the 2/8/2021

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