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Policy paper

2010 to 2015 government policy: young people

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This is a copy of a document that stated a policy of the 2010 to 2015 Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government. The previous URL of this page was <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/increasing-opportunities-for-young-people-and-helping-them-to-achieve-their-potential>. Current policies can be found at the GOV.UK [policies list](#).

Issue

We want to increase the quality of education for young people so that they are well prepared for further education, higher education and work. We want to make sure that there are high quality options for young people to undertake both academic and vocational education, including apprenticeships and traineeships.

More broadly, we want to ensure all young people have the tools and opportunities they need to fulfil their potential, regardless of background or life circumstances. We believe that all young people should have access to local and national opportunities to develop skills for life and work and to create a more responsible, engaged and cohesive society. We also want to encourage young people to have their say on issues which matter to them; and decision-makers at local and national levels to listen to them.

Together, this will help to ensure that:

- more young people go on to study and gain the skills and qualifications that lead to sustainable jobs
- fewer young people are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- more young people are involved in social action and feel they can make

positive changes in society and in their own lives

Actions

Improving education

To improve the quality of education available to young people at school, we will:

- increase the quality of state-funded schools, by [increasing the number of academies and free schools](#) and [improving the quality of teaching](#)
- [reform the qualifications and curriculum](#) for young people
- [raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils](#)
- [improve the support available for young people with special educational needs](#)
- [hold schools more closely to account for the outcomes they achieve for their pupils](#)

This will help more young people to reach the age of 16 well qualified and prepared for further and higher education and for work.

We also want to improve the quality of what young people study after the age of 16. For 16- to 19-year-olds, we will:

- [reform A level qualifications](#)
- continue to [increase the quality of apprenticeships and introduce new traineeships](#) to help young people prepare for these opportunities
- continue to reform [vocational education](#), creating new [16 to 19 study programmes](#) concentrating on English and maths, substantial qualifications and work experience

- [hold education and training providers closely to account](#) for the outcomes they achieve for young people
- introduce a clearer and [more transparent funding system](#) for 16- to 19-year-old education

Supporting more young people to study beyond the age of 16

Improving the quality of education will help to make study more attractive to young people. We will:

- [raise the participation age](#) so that young people are required to remain in some form of education or training for longer. Those pupils who left year 11 in summer 2014 are the first cohort required to continue until their 18th birthday
- make sure that young people receive [careers advice](#) that opens their eyes to the world of work
- offer all 16 and 17 year olds a place in education or training under the September Guarantee
- provide targeted financial support to young people who need it through the £180 million [16 to 19 bursary fund](#). Young parents will be helped to return to education by providing support with childcare costs through the [Care to Learn](#) scheme
- support 16- to 17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and have few qualifications to move into education or training through the [Youth Contract](#)

Providing wider opportunities

To increase opportunities for young people, we will:

- continue working towards the goals set out in [‘Positive for Youth: a new approach to government policy for young people aged 13 to 19’](#)
- involve young people in national and local decision making through the [Youth Voice](#) programme, which includes the UK Youth Parliament, Youth Select Committee, National Scrutiny Group, focus groups and support for local youth councils and young mayors
- [protect vulnerable young people from harm](#)
- [improve the quality of care for looked-after young people](#)
- [reduce youth crime and increase support for young offenders](#)
- [improve the health and wellbeing of young people](#)
- fund interventions with 14- to 15-year-olds who are disadvantaged or at risk of disadvantage
- support the expansion of [National Citizen Service \(NCS\)](#), a voluntary programme for 16- and 17-year-olds across England
- help local authorities and the youth sector to provide high quality services that respond to the needs of young people; and help them measure and improve these services through the [Centre for Youth Impact](#)
- support organisations that encourage young people to take part in democratic processes
- work with [Step Up To Serve](#) to increase the number of young people aged from 10 to 20 taking part in social action

Background

Supporting more young people to study

The September Guarantee is an offer to 16 and 17 year olds a suitable place in education or training by the end of September. To be deemed as suitable, the provision must meet the needs of the young person in terms of its

geographical location, type and level of learning, and occupational sector. All young people are entitled to an offer regardless of what qualifications they achieved in school.

[Local authorities](#) are responsible for having arrangements in place to track offers made to young people, and to support those who have still to find a suitable place.

In November 2011, we [announced the Youth Contract](#), which included a new programme of support in England in 2012 to 2015 to help 16- to 17-year-olds who are NEET.

The programme aims to help 16- to 17-year-olds who:

- have one or no GCSEs at A* to C
- are or have been in care
- are young offenders and have been released from custody

Successful providers across the country are offering support to young people who meet these criteria to move into education, an apprenticeship or work with training. The government will pay them on the basis of the results they achieve to ensure good value for money.

Providing wider opportunities

On 9 March 2011, the Department for Education and the [National Council for Voluntary Youth Services](#) hosted a [Positive for Youth summit](#) to discuss the issues facing young people. The summit brought together government ministers, representatives from the voluntary youth sector, local authority officials, the private sector and young people themselves.

In December 2011, we published ['Positive for Youth: a new approach to](#)

[cross-government policy for young people aged 13 to 19](#), aimed at providers and funders of services for young people. It contains details of all the government's policies for 13- to 19-year-olds. In July 2013, as part of the [transition of youth policy](#) from the Department for Education to Cabinet Office, we published the [progress government has made to place young people at the heart of decisions making since December 2011](#).

National Citizen Service has tripled in size since its first full year in 2011 and already has over 70,000 graduates. Funding is in place so that NCS can continue to grow rapidly and meet its aim that every young person should have the opportunity to take part.

There is European Social Fund (ESF) provision for young people through the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) programme. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) determine the priorities for its use.

The Youth Engagement Fund aims to improve educational achievement and employability, helping to prevent young people aged 14 to 17 from becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training). The funding will be provided through social impact bonds (SIBs): investors fund innovative initiatives and government only pays if the initiatives are successful and achieve positive outcomes. Find out about [4 Youth Engagement Fund SIBs](#).

Cabinet Office has provided 5 organisations with £4.2 million of [funding for new ways to encourage voter registration](#), particularly by young people.

We also awarded [£11 million to 41 organisations to encourage young people to help others through social action](#) through the Cabinet Office Centre for Social Action in support of Step Up To Serve. A further £10 million will support the Uniformed Youth Social Action Fund to help create more social action opportunities for young people.

Who we've consulted

The [Positive for Youth](#) consultation sought the views of young people, businesses, representatives from the voluntary youth sector and local authorities. The consultation ran from June to September 2011.

We ran a [consultation on raising the participation age regulations](#) from 20 January to 13 April 2012. We invited the views of schools, employers, local authorities, work-based learning providers and others and we received 176 responses.

In October 2013, we commissioned a survey of local authorities to find out about local youth services, understand any problems and identify strong practice. The findings of this work will continue to inform policy development.

Through the National Scrutiny Group and other elements of the [Youth Voice](#) programme we have consulted young people on a range of policy areas and initiatives across government.



Bills and legislation

The duties for raising the participation age are included in the [Education and Skills Act 2008](#).

Who we're working with

The [British Youth Council](#) is delivering the [Youth Voice](#) programme.

The following charities and businesses are delivering the Youth Contract 

programme in England:

- [Groundwork](#) (Manchester and Cheshire, east Midlands and Merseyside, Lancashire and Cumbria)
- [The Consultancy Home Counties Limited[(http://www.tchc.net/)] (east of England)
- [Pertemps People Development Group Limited](#) (north-east)
- [Skills Training UK](#) (south-east)
- [Prospects Training Services \(Gloucester\) Limited](#) (south-west)
- [Prospects Limited](#) (west Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber)
- [Prevista](#) (north and south London)

The [Youth Action Group](#) brings together chief executives from the largest voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations working with disadvantaged young people, and advises ministers and officials on policy.



We are working with [Youth United Foundation](#) to jointly run the bidding process for the [Uniformed Youth Social Action Fund](#).



Appendix 1: Youth Voice



This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

The [Youth Voice](#) programme, run by the British Youth Council, aims to empower the voice of young people through national and local initiatives. It offers young people the chance to represent their views to government and the general public through various organisations and groups.



UK Youth Parliament (UKYP)

The [UKYP](#) is a youth organisation made up of democratically elected members aged between 11 and 18 years. Members are elected to represent the views of young people in their area both to government and to youth service providers nationally and locally.

National Scrutiny Group

The [National Scrutiny Group](#) allows young people aged between 11 and 19 to work with government departments and ministers to make sure that young people's views and needs are taken into account when developing and reviewing policies that affect them.



Youth Select Committee

The Youth Select Committee enables young people aged between 15 and 18 years to hold an annual inquiry into a key issue that young people care about to influence policies and legislation. The committee's current mandate comes from issues prioritised by young people across the UK through the [Make Your Mark ballot](#) and then narrowed down at the UK Youth Parliament House of Commons sitting.

Local youth councils

Local youth councils are forums that represent the views of young people at a local level, enabling them to make their views heard in local decision-making processes. They give young people the chance to discuss relevant issues,

engage with decision makers and contribute to improving the lives of young people within their communities.

There are currently more than 620 [youth councils](#) active across the UK, working with parish and community councils as well as unitary authorities, borough and county councils.

Appendix 2: Positive for Youth

This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

[Positive for Youth](#) is a cross-government initiative for young people. It covers a wide range of issues, including education, youth services, health, crime and housing. It brings together the policies of 9 different government departments and has received input from businesses, the voluntary sector and young people themselves.



The initiative aims to:

- give young people a local and national voice on issues that matter to them
- help make sure that young people get the positive recognition that they deserve

Appendix 3: Raising the participation age

This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

We have increased the age to which all young people in England are required to continue in education or training.

We have introduced this change in 2 stages:

- pupils who left year 11 in summer 2013 had to continue in education or training for at least another year until June 2014
- pupils who left year 11 in summer 2014 or later have to continue until at least their 18th birthday

This does not mean young people must stay in school. They will be able to choose from:

- full-time education (eg at a school or college)
- an apprenticeship or traineeship
- part-time education or training combined with one of the following:
 - employment or self-employment for 20 hours or more a week
 - volunteering for 20 hours or more a week

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