



NEET: Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training

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In the third quarter of 2013, 1.1 million 16-24 year olds in the UK were not in education, employment or training (NEET), 15% of people in this age group.

Not all unemployed 16-24 year olds are NEET and not all people who are NEET are unemployed. 62% of unemployed 16-24 year olds are NEET, the rest are in education or training. 55% of people who are NEET are unemployed, the rest are economically inactive: not seeking work and/or not available to start work.

In England, the North East, the West Midlands, the North West have the highest proportion of 16-24 year olds who are NEET.

Those eligible for free school meals, those who have been excluded or suspended from school, those with their own child and those who have a disability are more likely to be NEET.

From the first quarter of 2007 to the first quarter of 2011, the NEET rate increased in all OECD countries except Austria, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Sweden and Turkey.

Current Government schemes with elements aimed at reducing the number of young people who are NEET include: raising the participation age, the Youth Contract and the Work Programme.

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1 UK NEET Statistics

ONS published harmonised estimates of the number of *Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)*, for the whole of the UK, for the first time in May 2013. Other NEET statistics for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are non-comparable.

The *NEET Statistics Quarterly Brief* includes NEET statistics based on the Labour Force Survey for England. The Department for Education also provides *data on 16-18 year olds NEET*.

The Statistical First Release *Participation of young people in education and the labour market* is the definitive source for NEET estimates in Wales.

The official measure of NEET in Scotland is based on those aged 16-19. Scottish NEET estimates are published as part of the *Annual Local Area Labour Markets* publication.

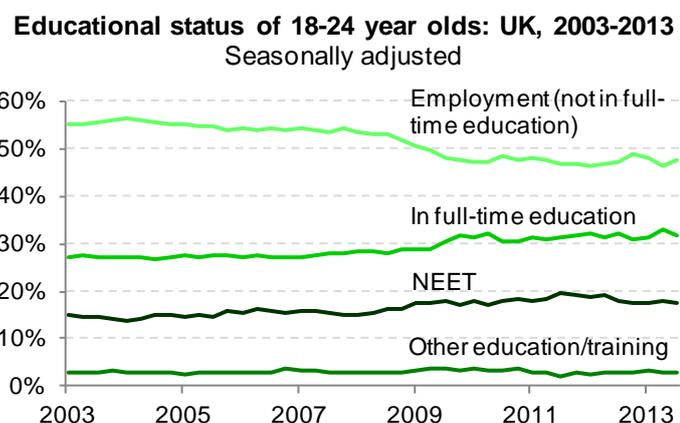
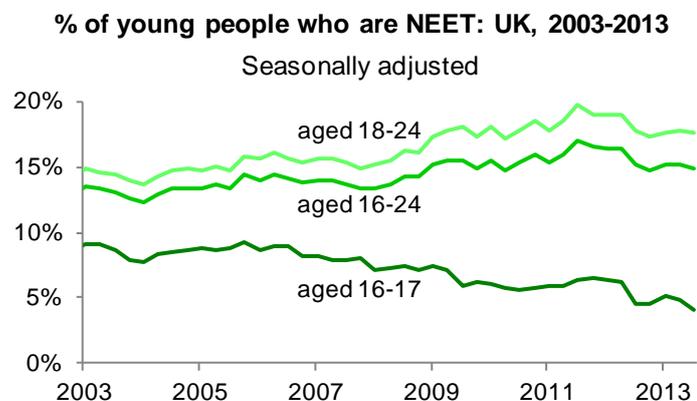
When given, Northern Ireland NEET figures are based on the Labour Force Survey.

1.1 Age and Educational Status of people who are NEET

1.07 million 16-24 year olds were NEET in the third quarter of 2013, 14.9% of people in this age group. The number of young people who are NEET is slightly higher than it was prior to the recession (1.04 million in the third quarter of 2008), but has declined from a peak of 1.24 million in Jul-Sep 2011.¹

1.01 million 18-24 year olds are NEET compared to 59,000 people aged 16-17. The number of 16-17 year olds who are NEET has declined since the mid-2000s as more young people stayed in full-time education; 86% of 16-17 year olds were in full-time education in the third quarter of 2013 compared to 72% in the first quarter of 2005.

Over the past decade, there has been an increase in participation in full-time education among 18-24 year olds. However the proportion employed young people not in full-time education has decreased, with a particularly sharp decline over 2008 and 2009 following the economic downturn. The number of 18-24 year olds who are NEET has risen as growth in participation in education/training has not kept pace with the employment decline.

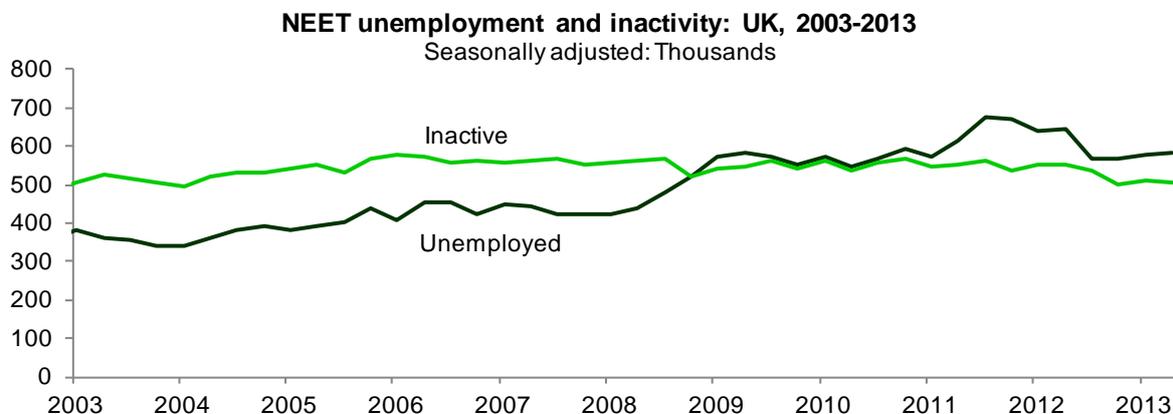


¹ Data in this section are from ONS, *Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)*, August 2013, and ONS, *Labour Market Statistics*, August 2013, and are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise stated.

1.2 NEET unemployment and inactivity

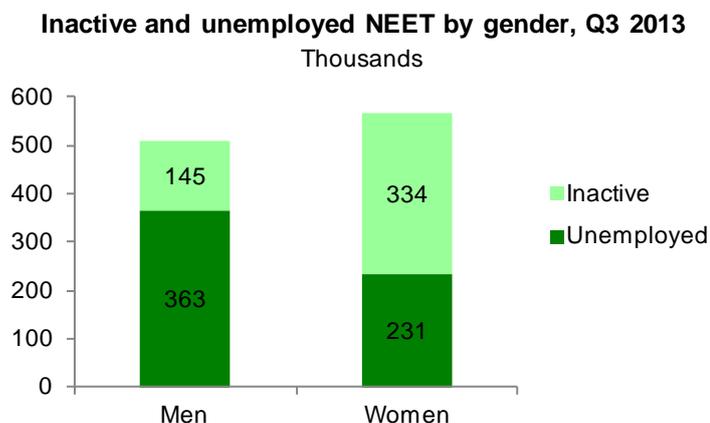
Not all unemployed young people are NEET. Out of 965,000 unemployed 16-24 year olds, 301,000 are in full-time education, 69,000 are in some other form of education or training and 594,000 (61.6%) are NEET.

Similarly only around a half (55.4%) of young people who are NEET are unemployed. The remaining 479,000 are economically inactive; not working and/or seeking work. The number who are economically inactive fell in the past year but has remained fairly steady since 2005.



1.3 Gender

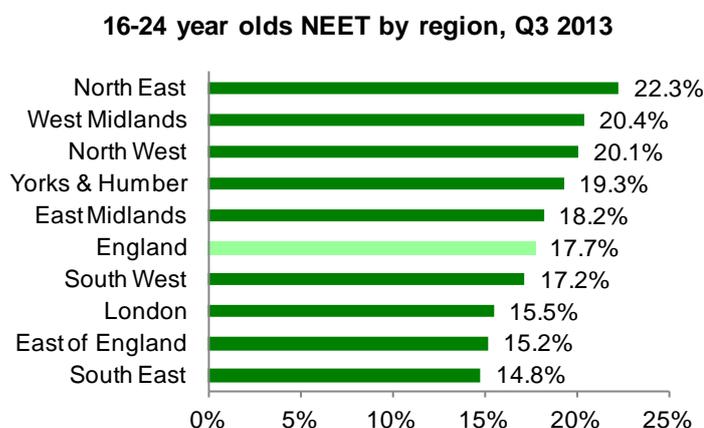
Women made up 52.6% of 16-24 year olds classified as NEET, in Q3 2013. 565,000 women aged 16-24 were NEET compared to 508,000 men. Most women who are NEET are inactive, but most men who are NEET are looking for and available to start work. Around 70% of women who are NEET and inactive reported that they are not looking for or available for work because they are looking after family or home.²



1.4 NEET by Region

The [NEET statistics quarterly brief](#) contains regional NEET data covering England.

In Q3 2013, 17.7% of 16-24 year olds in England were NEET. The North East has the highest proportion of young people NEET. At 14.8%, South East had the lowest proportion of 16-24 year olds NEET.



² ONS, *Labour Force Survey*, January - March 2013 (not seasonally adjusted)

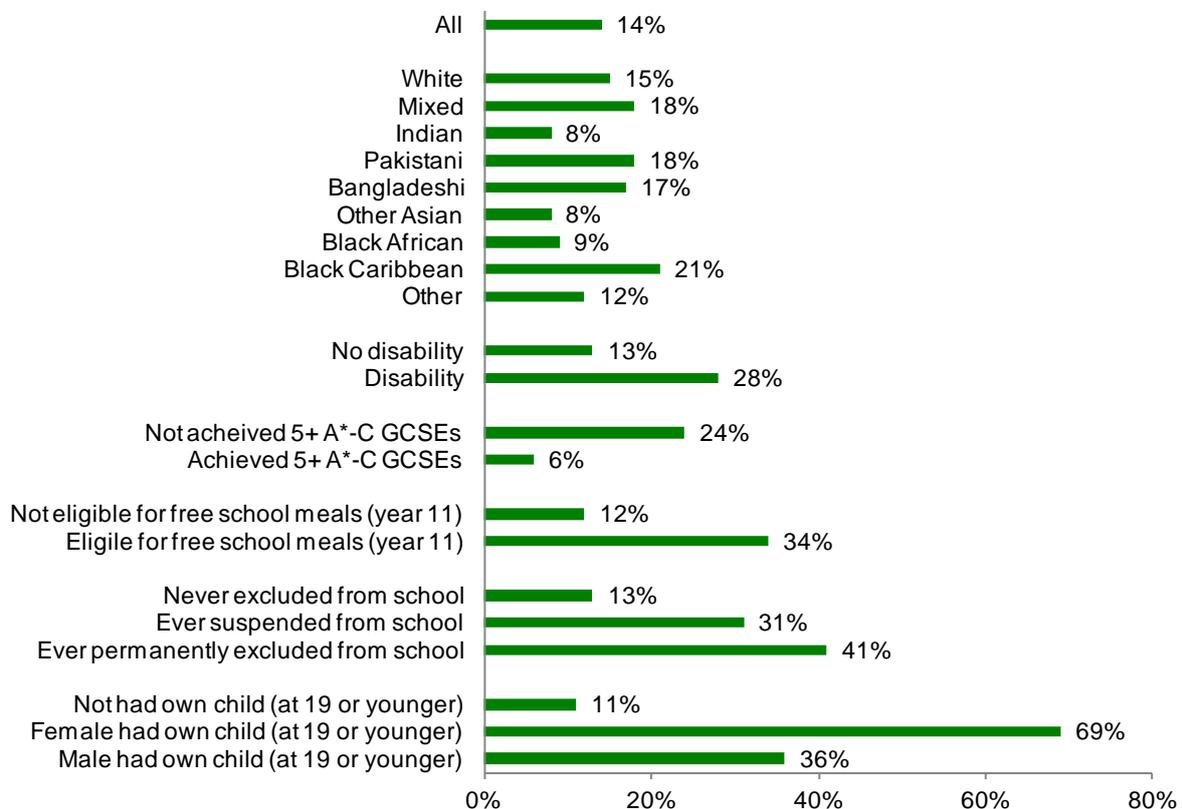
2 Characteristics of people who are NEET

2.1 Key characteristics of people who are NEET

The Longitudinal Study of Young People in England³ highlights some characteristics of young people who were NEET and aged 19 in 2010.⁴

- Young people who have achieved five or more GCSEs grade A to 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.

Percentage of people aged 19 NEET: England, 2010



³ Department for Education, *Longitudinal Study of Young People in England*, July 2011

⁴ 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.

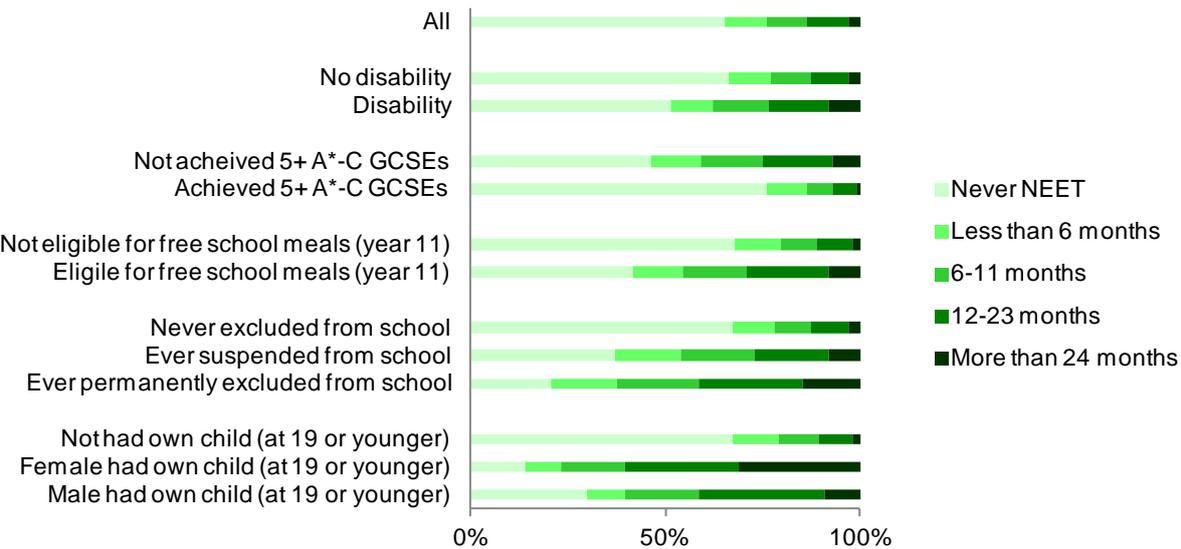
2.2 Characteristics of people who are long-term NEET

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.

Longest spell NEET for people aged 19: England, 2010



2.3 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.⁵ 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

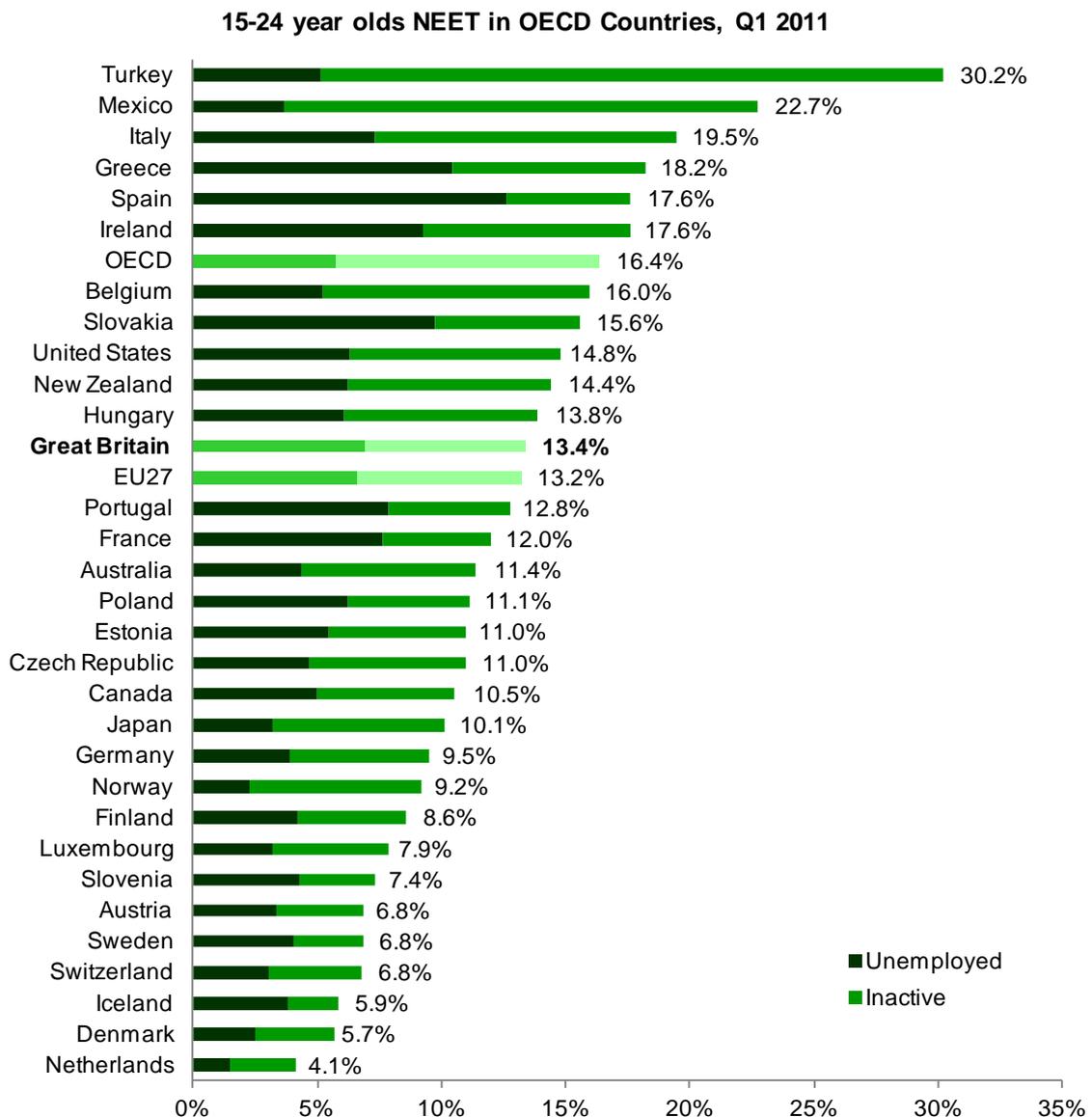
Source: Audit Commission, analysis of Connexions data from fieldwork areas (approximately 24,000 young people), 2010

⁵ Audit Commission, *Against the odds*, July 2010

3 International NEET Statistics

The OECD Employment Outlook records NEET data for 15-24 year olds. These are not directly comparable with UK national estimates. From the first quarter of 2007 to the first quarter of 2011, the NEET rate increased in all OECD countries except Austria, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Sweden and Turkey.

Of the OECD countries where data is provided,⁶ Turkey, Mexico and Italy had the greatest proportion of 15-24 year olds NEET. In each of these cases the majority of NEET young people were inactive not unemployed. Spain, Greece and Slovakia had the greatest proportion of NEET 15-24 year olds who were unemployed. In each of these cases unemployed young people who were NEET counted for over half the total.



⁶ OECD, *NEET rates among youth in OECD countries*, July 2012

4 Policies to reduce the number of people who are NEET

4.1 Raising the Participation Age

The age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training is being increased by the Government. From 2013, young people will be required to continue in education or training until they turn 17 and from 2015 they will be required to continue in education or training until they turn 18.⁷ Post-16 options include:

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

4.2 Youth Contract

The Youth Contract is a package of schemes aimed at helping young people into sustained employment, launched in April 2012 combining existing schemes with new ones.

- **Wage incentives:** Payments of up to £2,275 are available to employers who take on young people (aged 18-24) who have been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for more than six months. By May 2013, payments had been made for 2,070 individuals for completing 26 weeks on the wage incentive scheme.
- **Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16-24 year olds (AGE 16-24):** Payments of £1,500 are available to employers with less than 1,000 employees that take on young apprentices.
- **Support for 16 and 17 year old NEETs:** Payments of £2,200 are made to providers who take on 16 and 17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training and who have low or no qualifications, and those from other disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Work experience:** Placements are available for 16-24 year olds, through Jobcentre Plus who have been claiming JSA for at least 13 weeks.
- **Sector-based work academies:** Some 18-24 year old JSA claimants will be offered a mixture of training, work experience and a job interview through Jobcentre Plus.
- **Extra support at Jobcentre Plus:** 18-24 year old JSA claimants will be offered weekly rather fortnightly signing on meetings at the Jobcentre Plus.
- **Money for new local policies:** Eight 'core' English cities will be able to bid for a share of £50 million to help young people into work.

Further information is available in the Library Standard Note, [Youth Contract](#).

⁷ Department for Education, [Raising the participation age \(RPA\)](#), Accessed July 2013

4.3 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. Those who are NEET for six months or more are referred early to the Work Programme.

Further information is available in the Library Standard Note, [Work Programme](#).

4.4 Apprenticeships

In the 2012/13 academic year, 510,200 people started apprenticeships, 10,400 less than in the 2011/12 academic year, but 230,500 more than in 2009/10. Apprenticeships are paid jobs that incorporate on and off the job training. A successful apprentice will 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. The apprentice's employer will normally cover any remaining training costs.

Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16 to 24 year olds (AGE 16 to 24)

The AGE 16 to 24⁸ is aimed at helping eligible employers in England offer employment through the Apprenticeship programme, by providing wage grants to assist employers in recruiting their first apprentice. The National Apprenticeship Service is providing up to 40,000 grants worth £1,500 to small to medium sized business recruiting 16 to 24 year olds. The £1,500 grant is in addition to the training costs of the Apprenticeship frameworks which allow people with limited skills to study for level 2, 3 or 4 qualifications. The cost of this training is met in full for young people aged 16 to 18 by the Department for Education.

Access to Apprenticeships

In 2012/13, 5,500 Apprenticeships started through the Access to Apprenticeship pathway in England, of which 1,400 converted to paid employment to complete their Apprenticeship.⁹

People on the Access to Apprenticeship pathway do not count as apprentices because they are not employed. Rather, they work towards elements of an apprenticeship framework, mainly focusing on workplace-based learning. To be eligible for the Access to Apprenticeships pathway, the individual must be 16-24 years old and assessed as able to participate in a full apprenticeship to at least Intermediate Level and must have been NEET for the whole of the preceding 13 weeks prior to joining the scheme.

Further information is available in the Library Standard Note, [Apprenticeship Policy](#).

⁸ NAS, [Employer Incentive \(AGE 16 to 24\)](#), July 2013

⁹ Skills Funding Agency, [Quarterly Statistical First Release, Further Education & Skills: Learner Participation, Outcomes and Level of Highest Qualification held](#), June 2013

4.5 Mandatory Work Activity

Mandatory Work Activity¹⁰ allows Jobcentre Plus advisers the authority to place JSA claimants on to “mandatory work activities” that will last four consecutive weeks for 30 hours per week. Benefit sanctions could be imposed on those who fail to participate. Referrals would not normally be made for claimants who have been claiming JSA for less than 13 weeks. However, Jobcentre Plus advisers have the flexibility to refer these claimants where they judge it to be appropriate.¹¹ It is intended for use prior to individuals joining the Government’s main welfare-to-work scheme, the Work Programme.

5 Further Reading

Further House of Commons Library Standard Notes that may be of interest include:

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

¹⁰ Department for Work and Pensions, [*Extra push for jobseekers as mandatory work activity placements come on-stream for those who need more focus*](#), May 2011

¹¹ Department for Work and Pensions, [*Early impacts of Mandatory Work Activity*](#), June 2012