

Youth Employment Group reflect on declining economic outlook

Members of the Youth Employment Group (YEG) reflected on the youth labour market outlook amidst the rising cost-of-living crisis at the latest YEG meeting in October.

The October meeting of the YEG included an update from our chairs, reflections on the latest labour market stats and the recent mini-budget, a policy landscape overview, a presentation on EDSK's Apprenticeship Levy report, an update from the Youth Voice Forum followed by member updates.

Labour market outlook

Christoffer Soderberg, Economic Researcher at Learning & Work Institute, began with a discussion on the macro situation the economy is in following the reversal of the mini-budget. He described how, according to the data, the UK is facing a decades-long decline in living standards, fuelled by low economic growth and high inequality. The last year has been made worse by increases in costs such as energy. Key points:

- Unemployment has come down since the pandemic, while vacancies have gone up and are staying up.
- The youth labour market outlook is positive overall, with long-term unemployment and numbers of those not in education, employment or training (NEET) down.
- There is still more to be done. There has been a huge increase in mental ill health among young people and increases in economic inactivity due to sickness and long-term health conditions.
- The unemployment rate for young people is still higher than for other age groups.

Policy overview

Richard Rigby, Head of Policy and Public Affairs at The Prince's Trust, gave an overview of the current youth policy landscape and highlighted key points made at recent party conferences:

- At the Labour Party Conference, a significant announcement outlined the party's plan to reform the Apprenticeship Levy into a Growth and Skills Levy.
- The Government launched a new £122 million service to enable those already seeking mental health support to speak with employment advisors.

Youth Voice Forum

The October [Youth Voice Forum](#) focused on skills for the future and young people's perceptions of these skills.

- The session was chaired by Eilish Peters, Policy and Youth Voice Coordinator at Youth Employment UK, and aimed to explore young people's understanding of skills for future jobs such as green skills and digital skills.

- Katherine Emms, Senior Education and Policy Researcher at Edge Foundation, provided an overview of current skills shortages and the variety of skills that are needed for different jobs.

EDSK

Eleanor Regan, Researcher at education and skills think tank EDSK, presented key findings from EDSK's [Changing course\(s\) A new vision for employer investment in skills and the apprenticeship levy](#). Recommendations included:

- **A new funding infrastructure:** Existing Apprenticeship Levy should be broadened in scope into a new 'Apprenticeship and Skills Levy' (ASL)
- **Clearer objectives and responsibilities:** National apprenticeship fund – apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship provision. The National Skills Fund – devolved fund for non-apprenticeship provision to meet skills needs and shortages.

Finally, members of the YEG shared their updates, opportunities, and activities within the youth employment sector.

The next YEG meeting will be held on **Tuesday 22 November, 2-3pm**.

Read the full Youth Employment Group minutes [here](#).

If you do not have the YEG meetings in your diary, please contact [Angel](#).