

Youth Employment Support Measures Equality Impact Assessment

Completed by Youth Policy Team – Young People and Employment
Division

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Equality impact assessment for Youth Employment Support

Introduction

1. The Prime Minister announced a package of enhanced support for 16 and 17 year olds on the 12 May 2011.
2. The Equality Impact Assessment will help to ensure:
 - the Department's strategies, policies and services are free from discrimination;
 - due regard is given to equality in decision making and subsequent processes; and
 - opportunities for promoting equality are identified.
3. The equality impact assessment considers the impact of the enhanced support package for 16/17 year olds in terms of; race, disability, gender, age, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships (in terms of eliminating unlawful discrimination only).

Background

4. The Secretary of State is determined that we will get Britain working through welfare reform and ensure no young person is left behind. The Secretary of State for the Department of Work and Pensions considers support for young people a priority and has asked the Department to prioritise innovative investment working in partnership with the Department for Education, private and voluntary sectors to leverage more help for young people.
5. These measures make up a wider cross-departmental strategy that was announced by the Office of Number 10 in the publication "Supporting Youth Employment". Together, these measures extend existing Jobcentre Plus services and provision and will:
 - Provide job search support for 16-17 year olds on Jobseekers Allowance by making Jobcentre Plus adviser support available to these claimants
 - Additional adviser contact will ensure that a young person claiming Jobseekers Allowance will now have access to adviser support, better quality regular interventions focused on getting back into work or training and access to departmental contracted provision. Support for

16-17 year olds will focus on supporting them to make the correct choices about education, training or work with training. We will work in partnership with local authorities who have the statutory responsibility for these young people. This will also include the Young People's learning agency and its successor, the Education Funding Agency from 2012.

- Advisers will have an additional hour of adviser's time to be used at the front end of the claim and the equivalent to an extra five minutes adviser time for each week on benefit.
- Current adviser support is limited for 16/17 year olds who claim Jobseekers Allowance. The new approach will give flexible and personalised approach to Adviser interviews for the first time. This includes spending more time at the start of the claim to enable the adviser to make an in-depth diagnosis of the young person's background /needs. It will give the adviser time to consider the increased options of provision that will be available for this group (e.g. work experience, work clubs and local provision via Innovation Fund) to help them into education, training or work with training.
- The extra time may also be used to help signpost the young person to other organisations - for example, following the phasing-out of connexions; the young person may need help in identifying the local careers advice provider.
- The additional one hour interview time should be seen as time bank that advisers can use flexibly towards the start of a new claim. The additional five minutes is intended to be used to support the aims outlined above and to enable the adviser to review how the young person is progressing, to review any provision the young person attended, to see if any further support is required etc.
- Fortnightly Reviews remain a key feature, but more frequent attendance can be required where this is deemed appropriate for example, where more regular follow-up of activity is required. We expect this new approach to be both more challenging and supportive of individuals' activity.
- In the same way that Fortnightly Reviews are mandatory, additional flexible interviews will be mandatory and, subject to regulations, sanctions may be applied if the customer does not attend – subject to good cause. These measures only relate to 16 and 17 year olds on Jobseekers Allowance and therefore it is not likely to have an impact on young people with childcare responsibilities as they are unlikely to have children. If there are small numbers of young people in this position then as the policy states restrictions can be made on the Job Seekers Agreement thus it is unlikely that they would be discriminated against. Any disabled young person on Jobseekers Allowance would be treated

the same as any adult -18 plus restrictions on their Jobseekers Agreement would be taken into account and reasonable adjustments could be made.

- Currently, Jobcentre Plus has a responsibility to refer any 16-17 year olds who make a claim to benefit to the Local Authority Youth Service. The main focus for advisers dealing with 16/17 year old benefit claimants has been to establish benefit payment to avoid severe hardship and to refer the customer to the careers service or Connexions.
- From Autumn 2011, Jobcentre Plus' specialist Advisers who deal with 16-17 year olds claiming Jobseekers Allowance will, in liaison with the local authorities, offer work-related advice and guidance to 16 and 17 year old NEETS. The service offered by local authorities will vary; therefore Advisers will require a good knowledge of what is on offer in their local area.
- Jobcentre Plus will require extra resource for external relationship managers to build partnerships with local services for 16-17 year old young people NEET to enable Jobcentre Plus to map and support local arrangements.
- There is early access to Work Programme places for vulnerable 18-year-old people. Young people aged between 18 and 24 years already have priority access to the Work Programme after nine months. The most disadvantaged young people will enter the Work Programme earlier after three months of unemployment. The Government has expanded early entry to include any young people who are 18 years old and who made a claim for Jobseeker's Allowance while they were 16 or 17 years old.

Consultation and involvement

6. The Department decided that it was not necessary to undertake a full formal consultation for these proposals because they do not involve a major shift in policy.
7. The Department did hold informal discussions with several Employers such as Wilkinson, XTRA VERT, Fifteen and Steins restaurants who supported the enhanced package of support for 16/17 year olds together with the Work Experience extension of 4 weeks where an apprenticeship is offered for 16/17 year olds.

Rationale for enhanced support for 16-17 year olds

8. We have seen a positive trend of young people staying on longer in full-time education to around 80% of all 16-17 year olds. However for those 16-17s not in FTE the employment rate has been falling for more than a decade - it is currently 34%, compared to over 60% in 1997.

Graph 1 – Under-18s employment rate if not in full time education



9. More effective and ongoing engagement with 16-17 year old school leavers and more support to find a job or appropriate training, could prevent them drifting into a damaging period of inactivity before they reach 18 and qualify for Jobcentre Plus support. Some support in finding a job may be necessary to prevent them from becoming long-term unemployed or withdrawing from the labour market.
10. Unemployment rates are highest for young people and decline with age. There are a number of explanations for perpetually higher youth unemployment rates, and not all of them are negative. For example, a young person might have a number of short spells of unemployment after leaving education whilst they gain experience and 'shop around' for an appropriate job. However for some young people a lack of skills and work experience can make them less marketable to employers. This group can be particularly vulnerable where there is strong competition for jobs. The relatively high level of unemployment caused by the recent recession has led to increased competition in the labour market, particularly in areas with weaker labour demand.

How many young people will benefit?

11. There are around 5,000 16-17 year olds who are in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance – claiming due to being vulnerable and disadvantaged, for example estranged from their parents or guardians; ex-offenders; living away from home due to a mental or physical disability or illness.
12. There are 168,000 16-17 year olds who have are not in full time education and are workless, 69,000 of these are unemployed and 99,000 are inactive.

Impact on different groups

Age

13. The employment rate for 16-17 year olds, as discussed above, has been falling for the last decade. The recession has contributed to a significant rise in youth unemployment across Great Britain. With current levels of unemployment still relatively high, there is increased competition for jobs and young people may find it harder to compete in the labour market.
14. The latest claimant count data (for June 2011) shows that there are 5,045 under 18s claiming JSA, 615 are aged 16 and 4,430 are aged 17.

Gender

15. The proportion of JSA claimants aged under-18 is very close to half and half men and women.
16. Of the wider group who are not in full time education and are workless 56% are men, of these around half are unemployed and half inactive. However, as can be seen in Table 1, workless women who are under 18 and not in full time education are more likely to be inactive than unemployed.

Table 1: Under-18s not in full time education who are workless by gender

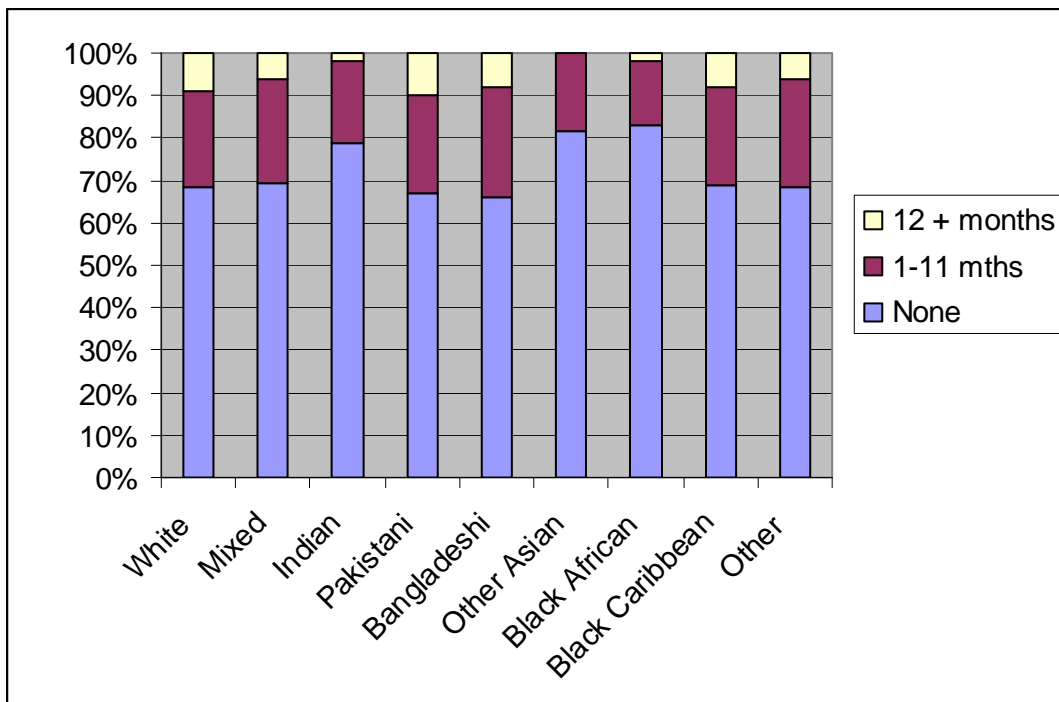
	Unemployed	Inactive	Total
Men	46,000	48,000	94,000
Women	22,000	51,000	73,000

17. The support offered to the wider group of under 18s not in education or work will be offered to a similar number of men and women. However, as it may be more likely to be taken up by those actively seeking work, it may disproportionately be taken up by men.

Race

18. Over the past year ethnic minorities have accounted for 10 per cent of all youth claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance, and a similar proportion of the number of young people claiming Jobseekers Allowance (although due to the low numbers involved we do not have data for under-18 claiming JSA by ethnicity).
19. On the wider group of under-18s not in education or employment, differences between ethnic groups are relatively small. Those of Indian or Black African descent are less likely to be long-term NEET, while those of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin are more likely.

Figure 2 – Time spent NEET by age 18 (%)



Source: LSYPE

Disability

20. No data is available on the proportion of under-18 JSA claimants who are disabled. Of the wider group not in education or employment 8 per cent of 16-17 years stats that they are NEET due to ill health or disability.

Religion or Belief

21. No data is available on the religion or faith of claimants who will be impacted by these proposals

Gender Reassignment

22. The Department does not collect data on claimants who have undergone gender reassignment.

Sexual Orientation

23. The Department does not collect data on the sexual orientation of claimants.

Does the proposal provide the same outcome for all?

24. Outcomes will be varied as some young people will choose to return to full time education, others will move into vocational training or employment such as an apprenticeship.

Monitoring and evaluation

25. The policy will be evaluated as part of the wider Get Britain Working Measures. We are working to ensure management information includes destinations of young people so that off flows can be monitored and the options available flexed as necessary.

Conclusion

26. These options offer improved service currently not available through the Department for Work and Pensions. This adds additional help for 16 and 17 year olds, opening programmes and access to advisers.

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