

Economic Growth Board

Date	<i>25 January 2024</i>
Report title	<i>Tackling Rising Youth Unemployment in the WMCA area together</i>
Portfolio Lead	<i>Councillor George Duggins</i>
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Report has been considered by	<i>Directors of Economic Development, 11 January 2024 LA Skills Officers, 10 January 2024</i>

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

Economic Growth Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the update on youth unemployment in WMCA area.
- (2) Consider the proposals in this paper (and at Appendix A) to tackle rising youth unemployment and note that these will be shaped in context by each LA for their local areas.
- (3) Approve the recommended actions in the Action Plan (Appendix A).

1. Purpose

- 1.1 At the last meeting of the Economic Growth Board (EGB), members discussed the key findings from our 'deep dive' evidence review into what works in tackling youth unemployment and the ambition to be developed as priorities for further collaborative action. The deep dive showed that whilst skills training is an important intervention in equipping young people for work, it is but one aspect of the youth unemployment challenge and requires wider systemic interventions, including working with employers to enable employment opportunities.
- 1.2 EGB tasked officials to bring a costed action plan for recommendations in tackling youth unemployment, and to explore what more can be done now to build on the significant

work that LAs are currently leading. Specifically this should include where the CA can leverage employer support, involvement and commitment.

2. Background

- 2.1 Whilst rising youth unemployment is a national issue, in the West Midlands region it is especially stark. In 2000, 13.7% of young people aged 18-24 were not in education, employment or training in England. In 2023, that figure still stands at 13.8%. This phenomenon is not without consequences with strong evidence that being not in education, employment or training while young has a scarring effect on young people's outcomes – increasing their likelihood of unemployment or low wages later on in life, of developing poor physical or mental health, and of potentially gaining a criminal record. Spending time unemployed under the age of 23 has been linked to lower wages even twenty years on, and those who are not in education, employment or training between the ages of 18-19 are 20% more likely to be unemployed even ten years later. This indicates that the effects of time spent neither learning nor earning are a prospective restraint on an individual's potential across the span of their working life. Troublingly, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are significantly more likely than their better-off peers to be not in education, employment or training. This means the negative effects of time spent neither learning nor earning are disproportionately borne by this group, with clear consequences for social mobility.
- 2.2 Across the WMCA latest figures show in December 2023 there were 24,110 young people aged 18-24 claiming unemployment-related benefits, an increase of 1.5% on the previous month, in contrast to a decrease of 0.8% nationally. Our youth claimant rate (8.5%) is much higher than the UK average (4.9%), with particularly high rates in Wolverhampton (10.8%), Birmingham (9.4%), Walsall (9.3%) and Sandwell (9.3%) reflected in Table One. More worrying still are trends that indicate it has increased by 10.7% since this time last year and by 25.9% since March 2020 (pre-pandemic), both in excess of UK-wide increases. In addition, recent increases in economic inactivity have been driven largely by young people, many of whom are inactive because of health-related reasons. Underneath these headline figures, we know that the picture is even more stark for young people in our most deprived wards, and for those with particular characteristics, including care leavers, young people with disabilities and some ethnic minorities.

Table one: youth claimant count in the WMCA area

	Youth Claimant count (Dec23)	Youth claimant rate (Dec23)	% change since pre-pandemic (Mar20)	% change since Dec22	% change since Nov23
UK	275,375	4.9%	15.7%	6.8%	-0.8%
WM 7 Met	24,110	8.5%	25.9%	10.7%	1.5%
Birmingham	12,155	9.4%	33.5%	12.8%	0.0%
Coventry	2,245	5.2%	46.3%	11.7%	1.4%
Dudley	1,845	7.8%	5.4%	5.4%	0.3%
Sandwell	2,670	9.3%	26.2%	6.8%	-2.6%
Solihull	810	5.4%	-1.8%	8.0%	-3.6%
Walsall	2,085	9.3%	8.9%	12.7%	1.2%
Wolverhampton	2,305	10.8%	20.7%	8.2%	-1.1%

- 2.3 Poor health/mental health among young people is becoming of increasing concern, both regionally and nationally. Between 2012 and 2021, the proportion of NEET young people reporting a mental health issue tripled from 7.7% to 21.3% nationally. NEET prevention teams across the region are also increasingly citing mental health as a major barrier to young people's engagement in education and work.
- 2.4 The key findings of the [deep dive evidence review](#) has also identified the challenges for people and place, highlighting the types of interventions that are found to be effective from What Work's research. For example to help young people transition to the labour market, work experience is an effective way to boost young people confidence and provide insight into workplace behaviours and the world of work. Other What Work's examples include:
- Ensuring young people leave education with at least the minimum level 2 qualifications, and where this is not feasible, to provide proactive and timely interventions through managed transitions between education providers to catch them before they fall into risk of becoming NEET.
 - Providing access to high quality education and vocational training that enables a clear pathway into good jobs, and support with the costs associated with looking for work and starting a job, can be effective tools in improving access to sustainable employment. This includes increasing the availability and uptake of apprenticeships, providing young people with a structured path when transitioning from education to fulfilling careers.
 - Timely, targeted good quality careers advice and meaningful work experience opportunities is a critical success factor when tackling youth unemployment. While many employers are keen in principle they often struggle with the practicalities. Working with and supporting employers to offer more work experience, apprenticeships, and employment opportunities for young people is a significant part of the solution.
 - Clear accountability for the locus of youth unemployment in government, coupled with coherent and long term intervention focused on place-based need, is considered a more effective medium to secure return on public investment. This should address the current fragmented employment support approach which is burdensome, confusing to navigate for young people, and off putting for employers.
- 2.5 Taken together, we face a 'wicked' problem; complex, intertwined and with no 'silver bullet'. No 'scheme' or single focus will address this. It will take a co-ordinated, prolonged and intensive effort from all partners to make the systemic change needed to do better for our young people and realise the economic benefit of a youthful region.

3. Tackling Youth Unemployment

What we are already doing

- 3.1 At its last meeting, the Board considered a table outlining what we are already doing to mitigate for the issues identified around 5 key themes, alongside whom else has levers to help, and the suggested priorities for further collaborative action (which we have re-appended for ease, see **Appendix B**). This demonstrated that there is already a wide range of support available through the CA such as the extended study programmes for 19-23 years olds providing enhanced wraparound support for the whole learner rather than solely qualification success, or our new Thrive at College programme designed to boost mental health and wellbeing care to counter the rising mental health challenges

young people are experiencing and which may prevent (re)engagement in learning or progression. Since the devolution of AEB we have supported 25,778 young people aged 19-24 years, however through the proposed action plan, we want to extend the reach and impact of our works considerably.

- 3.2 There are further many good examples across the region of where evidence-based policies and programmes are helping us address this issue, such as centering services in localities outside of JCP e.g. Walsall Works, Coventry Job Shop. The deep dive has shown young people struggle to access support, in part because of anxieties associated with past experiences, lack of trust and poor mental health but also because they may lack the basic skills to navigate the employment support/skills system. Co-located services and 'One Stop Shop' models are considered highly effective strategies.

Enhancing our response through a shared regional action plan

- 3.3 At the Board's last meeting consideration was given to a number of actions informed by evidence. These have been narrowed down following discussions to those that are viewed to add value to the current work and will make the most difference. They have been incorporated into a proposed Action Plan which should form the basis of a best practice offering to support young people. There is strong feeling from LAs that this is an issue that needs to be led and tackled locally within a local context. **We propose that a commitment is made to systematise these actions in a local context by each LA to secure a consistent and uniform collaboration across the WMCA area, in partnership with central government, as part of a long term response to tackling our youth unemployment challenge.** To set out how this will happen, each LA will set out their plan on a page against the key areas identified for region wide action.
- 3.4 The aim of the action plan is to enhance and boost what we are doing across the region including where the WMCA can lead and convene additive action. To reflect the lessons from the What Work's deep dive, the Action Plan is grouped into three spheres of activity to illustrate how a shared strategic approach will deliver an effective response (set out in Table Two). Respective activities are grouped in accordance, identifying the intervention (or action), the action owners, and cost/source of funding (where applicable). Through the Action Plan, we seek to form the basis for monitoring progress and impact at a local/regional/national level, incorporating insights and evidence from local delivery to inform our ongoing policy response. The Action Plan is set out in **Appendix A**.

Table two: Intended purpose of the proposed spheres of activity

	<i>Aim</i>	<i>Level of operation</i>
Partnering with Government and National Agencies	To achieve system level improvements and enable delivery of long term sustainable positive change for young people, utilising What Work's evidence and data.	National / Regional
Working with Employers	To increase the number of employers in the region, specifically SMEs, to employ and offer apprenticeships to young people for those who are ready to work.	Regional / Local
Supporting Young People	To help our young unemployed people prepare for the world of work where they are not yet ready to enter the workforce in a sustainable way.	Local / Regional

Proposal to widen sustainable employment opportunities

- 3.5 The What Work's evidence review shows there is a correlation between where a young person lives and level of opportunity. Coupled with the intersectionality of deprivation and its impact, financial support is a critical success factor when securing wider engagement/progression. We know from the evidence that apprenticeships are an effective medium for sustainable employment yet we have seen a year-on-year fall in the number of starts in the region. Whilst we do not have direct levers in this space, we are creating pathways that will boost opportunities, through our work with employers in the Levy Transfer Scheme and our Pre-Apprenticeship Programme.
- 3.6 Evidence suggests that a bursary or wage subsidy can, not only support transition to work but may be even more effective than training in tackling labour market shortages. We have secured in principle support to implement a new Youth Unemployment Pilot Programme: Transition to Work Bursary Fund, utilising £500k underspend from UKSPF Business Support. This Fund will provide training bursaries for our disadvantaged young people, as part of the Pre-Apprenticeship Programme. Prior to submission, we presented the bursary outline for initial discussion with Directors of Economic Development and LA Skills Officers in December 2023 with feedback informing the delivery. We anticipate supporting bursaries to support attendance, subsistence, and work attire/equipment with the aim being to ensure young people are best placed to secure positive apprenticeship outcomes. The bursary should help to minimise SME concerns as it de-risks the process of recruitment, and in-turn incentivise opportunities for new untapped talent (success of Kickstart model).
- 3.7 This will be a regional programme and will target, through colleges and providers young people in the youth unemployment group. LAs are asked to consider boosting the fund for bursaries from their UKSPF and CWGLF to increase the volumes of young people and businesses we can support. For most, this is not currently possible but some LAs are looking at how they may do this and are indicating any local emerging underspend could be prioritised to this.

- 3.8 There is still more work to be done with businesses, the jobs on offer and recruitment practices. Whilst there are many great examples of inclusive employers we need a larger pool of businesses, particularly SMEs recruiting, supporting and developing young people especially those without maths and English qualifications.

Immediate action with employers

- 3.9 The Board asked for immediate work to commence with employers. There have been three aspects to this early work:
- i. Cluster leadership – Working with the medtech cluster leadership we have discussed what the businesses could be doing and how the cluster can convene this activity for a B2B advocacy conversation. The medtech cluster will be working with its businesses to ask that all start to ring fence employment opportunities for young people. Discussions are progressing with Tech WM on a hiring consortium model.
 - ii. 5% Club – A dynamic movement of employers who aspire to achieve 5% of their workforce in earn and learn positions (including apprentices, sponsored students and graduates on formalised training schemes) within five years of joining. We have reached an agreement with the 5% Club to work with us across the WM to bring their support to our businesses thereby increasing the number of opportunities for our young people.
 - iii. Path 2 Apprenticeships – We have tendered and are awarding up to £2m of pre-apprenticeship training that will support the connection of young people and employers.
- 3.10 BGWM are developing their marketing approach to SMEs across the region across these and wider programmes. There will be a set of messages that locally, LAs will determine targeting and sectors.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The Action Plan brings together a locus for the regional opportunities to enhance the impact of interventions aimed at supporting young people. It outlines where priorities in the next 6-12 months will boost activity in tackling our rising youth unemployment challenge, and draws on the What Work's evidence from the recent deep dive. Recognising that this is a complex challenge, where no one solution will address the problem, the proposals set out in the Action Plan are aimed at improving access to employment opportunities, raising young people aspirations and career insights, and most critically, utilising all our levers to engage with employers and SMEs locally/regionally to improve outcomes. With the Board's approval of the Action Plan, we will work with partners to secure progress, and through LAs respective local plans against key areas, reflect common opportunities for enhancement.

5. Strategic Aims and Objectives

- 5.1 The aims and objectives set out in this paper align with the strategic intents set out in the WMCA [AEB 2022-25 Strategy](#), West Midlands [Plan for Growth](#), and the West Midlands [Local Skills Report](#) which seek to secure stronger and more inclusive regional growth, reflecting the potential of our region and including its higher than national average young population.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 This paper outlines a proposed action plan focussed on the areas discussed at previous meetings. This includes investment of £500k on a Youth Unemployment Pilot Programme: Transition to Work Bursary Fund, from UKSPF underspend.
- 6.2 The approval of this funding will follow the WMCA governance routes; ensuring robust costing, assessment of resources and value for money.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 This report is in accordance with WMCA governance, and purposes to secure an Officer Ordinary Decision which is not exempt from publication.
- 7.2 The appropriate Corporate Director(s) as represented at the EGB are empowered by WMCA Constitution to duly authorise the proposal herein and is therefore approved by WMCA Legal, subject to resolution of the matters set out below at 7.3 and compliance with the recommendations at 7.4 and 7.5.
- 7.3 The disposal of the UKSPF underspend in the manner herein proposed must follow satisfactory enquiry by WMCA Finance, that the underspend has not arisen because of budget transfer in the relevant period and thereby is compliant with the overarching relevant funding rules.
- 7.4 Any underpinning Grant Agreement must meet the requirements of the UKSPF and the author is advised to revert to WMCA Legal for support with the development of appropriate terms and conditions.
- 7.5 It is strongly recommended that no transfer, payment or promise of payments are made to any potential recipients prior to the execution of and appropriate Form of agreement.
- 7.6 The Report Author's application is to secure approval to deliver projects aligned with corporate strategy that are exclusively for the benefit of the public. Therefore, in lieu of a full Subsidy Control Assessment, preliminary review indicate that the proposal falls in an exempt category and should therefore be approved.

8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1 Effective transition into the labour market is particularly challenging for young people in our most deprived wards, and for those with particular characteristics, including care leavers, young people with disabilities and some ethnic minorities. Any agreed actions would seek to improve employment opportunities for young people currently disadvantaged in the labour market, including those with poorer levels of educational attainment.

9. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 9.1 The ambition outlined in this paper align closely with, and support, our inclusive growth agenda, particularly in relation to the following metrics:
 - **education and learning:** raising educational attainment of young people and reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

- **Inclusive economy:** Youth claimant rates as a % proportion of 16-24-year-olds in the WMCA area.

10. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

10.1 The proposed priority actions are focused on the 7 Met area.

11. Other Implications

11.1 None.

12. Schedule of Background Papers

12.1 The following documents are relevant to this paper:

- WMCA Youth Unemployment Deep Dive discuss at the November 2023 meeting of EGB: [PowerPoint Presentation \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](https://modern.gov.co.uk).
- UKSPF Youth Unemployment Pilot Programme: Transition to Work Bursary Fund submission.
- Impetus Blueprint for the Library of Birmingham Youth Hub available at: [Impetus-YouthHubs-Blueprint.pdf \(niceandserious.com\)](https://niceandserious.com).

Appendix A – Youth Employment Action Plan

Name of Intervention	What is the nature of the intervention	Owner – who will lead this action	Cost and source of funding
Supporting Young People			
<p>To get more young unemployed people into apprenticeships we will scale up the pre-apprenticeship offer for 18 to 29 year olds.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver approximately 900 pre-apprenticeship training places between January 2024 and December 2025. 2. Utilise UKSPF to introduce a training allowance / wage subsidy to de-risk SME commitment and support young person via the Youth Unemployment Pilot Programme: Transition to Work Bursary Fund. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide upwards of 150 training allowances January 2024 – December 2025. 3. Commission 5 new bootcamps with a focus on supporting young unemployed residents supporting a minimum of 200 people in first year. 	<p>WMCA</p>	<p>(Secured) £2.4m from AEB to deliver training</p> <p>(Secured) £500k from UKSPF business support regional fund</p> <p>(Secured) £26.7m Bootcamp funding</p> <p>LA partners will be invited to top up bursary using UKSPF allocations – not yet committed</p>
<p>Bringing together respective digital places into a single Youth Employment Platform as a single ‘front door’ for young people’s services across the region.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All LAs to consider how they deliver their young people facing digital content into their pages of the region wide platform by April 2024. 	<p>LA Partners</p>	<p>Officer time to develop</p>
<p>Develop a ‘virtual offer’ for young people unable to attend mainstream provision across the region.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building on the Solihull LA approach, develop a model to extend across the region to enable young people who are reluctant to engage outside of their home to be able to access an initial support service. 	<p>WMCA</p>	<p>Officer time</p>
<p>Systemising jobs and careers fairs for young people across the region</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set out 12 month rolling plan of careers and jobs fairs for young people across the region. 2. Deliver a programme of cluster related careers fairs linked to plan for Growth 	<p>WMCA</p>	<p>(Secured) £100k WMCA</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Working with the Race Equalities Taskforce, introduce additional careers fairs aimed at increasing engagement from racialised communities during 2024. 4. Leverage employer support / attendance through Regional Business Council and Careers Enterprise Company network etc. 		
Establish Youth Hubs as the physical hub to support young people in each LA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each LA to agree locally leadership for the Youth Hub offer in their area by April 2024. 2. Establish the hub and spoke model to have sufficient coverage of unemployment hot spots by June 2024. 3. Agree the service specification and design i.e. what services will be deployed. 4. JCP to commit to all youth claimants commencing their journey in a hub setting from April 2024. 	LAs	Officer time to develop
Further develop a Transition and Support model for SEN young people	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring together regional best practice and national research and evaluation to develop a costed model for SEN support and transition that can be included within the next round of local growth funding through the single settlement. 	City of Wolverhampton Council to lead with Birmingham City Council	Officer time to develop
Develop investment plan and regional offer to support youth unemployment for the next local growth funding round	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work collectively to develop the regional offer for 2025 to 2028 with associated investment plan. 	WMCA	Officer time
Working with Employers			
Increase the number of SMEs offering jobs and apprenticeships to young people	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through Business Growth WM – lead a campaign to communicate the support that can be offered, including Youth Friendly Employer toolkits, Bursary support to SMEs. 2. Work with Chambers and JCP to amplify messaging through their networks. 3. LAs to shaped, prioritise and promote through networks and groups. 	BGWM	BGWM operating funds (marketing)
Increase number of apprenticeship places and jobs being offered to young	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leverage employer led initiatives - 5% Club activity, Severn Trent, Hatch, Movement to Work to enhance awareness. 2. WMCA to promote to large employers including levy donors. 	WMCA	Through Officer time

people through large employers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. WMCA and each LA to set out the number of placements, apprenticeships and jobs it will offer to young people to September 2025. 4. Anchor network to set out number of places and jobs it will provide. 		
Partnering with Central Government and National Agents for Change			
Work with DWP, DfE and IfATE to enhance national/regional policy cohesion.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop regional all age careers strategy under guidance of Skills Advisory Board. 2. Work with Awarding Organisations and DfE to pilot English and Maths for work accreditation and curriculum. 3. Work with DWP to establish a longer-term training allowance / wage subsidy employment support offer, building on Kickstart and current Pre-Apprenticeships Programme. 4. Pilot job rotation employment support model for young people. 	WMCA	Through Officer time as part of official to official engagements.
Working with Thinktanks and Specialist Groups i.e. Youth Employment UK, Youth Futures Foundation, Youth Employment Group	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with specialist organisations with research/technical expertise to identify, utilise and develop evidence-led best practice models to strengthen regional policy impact and return on public investment. 	WMCA	Through Officer time as part of official to official engagements.

Appendix B – Youth employment deep dive summary

	Education & Skills	Personal and financial support	Work readiness & careers guidance	Employers & Job opportunities	Wider structural & system issues
Key challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low prior attainment, leaving school without any (or few) quals, limiting options. • There is not the necessary volume and quality of provision and opportunities for YP post-16. • Our post-16 offer for YP – particularly those who are not work ready, have low levels of experience and qualification, or face barriers – is not broad enough or of a high enough quality. • Post-16 transitions can also be complicated for YP. • No L2 English and/or maths become gatekeepers to apprenticeships/better jobs. • Narrowing of offer to T levels and A levels. Removal of L2/3 vocational quals. Removal of Level 2 apprenticeship standards. • Apprenticeship participation declining for younger age groups. • Fixed point entrance to programmes (Sept/Jan). • Negative educational experiences, often due to undiagnosed learning difficulties, create distrust in system or fuel fear of learning / low self-belief. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaffected and disconnected, deep desire for belonging (Youth Census). • Often difficult personal circumstances and poor support structures leading to rising poor mental health/anxiety and economic inactivity. • Chaotic life circumstances. • Usually from low-income households, limiting financial capacity to train post 18 or digital deficit. • Have caring responsibilities or are young parents requiring flexibility. • Housing benefit ‘traps’ people on benefits as risk of work is too high. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We lack targeted, national employment support for YP who are long-term NEET. • YP who are NEET for an extended period accrue scarring that can negatively impact important long-term outcomes, incl salary and chances of progression. • These YP can be affected by numerous factors, such from low confidence to CV gaps, that act to further pull them away from the labour market. They are also more likely to struggle upon entering the workforce and so are at a heightened risk of leaving a job soon after securing it • Not enough, if any, workplace experience to develop knowledge, skills and behaviours employers want. • Poor employability/transferable skills due to teaching/assessing only to qualification. Limited holistic curricular. • Lack of timely or ongoing careers guidance to adequately prepare for labour market. • Lack of social capital/time/funds to undertake volunteering, clubs etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA/LAs cannot create jobs. • Private sector could be more fully engaged. There are pockets of employers that want to support the agenda but not at the necessary scale to make a difference and all too often are the same ones supporting multiple agendas. • Perception YP lack soft and technical skills employers want to address high vacancy demands. • Poor recruitment experiences or leadership and management to support YP. Mutual needs are getting lost in translation. • Limited/negligible employer investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Double disadvantage’, where you live correlates to level of opportunity. Intersections (low attainment, poverty, socio-economic, disabilities, poor health) compounding effect. • Short term funding or fragmented approach to support and employment services limits policy coherence. • Lack of quality data on 18-24 at local level limits timeliness of intervention. • No-one ‘owns’ NEETs.

	Education & Skills	Personal and financial support	Work readiness & careers guidance	Employers & Job opportunities	Wider structural & system issues
<i>What works</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes that offer vocational training, apprenticeships, and skill development opportunities to prepare young people for the job market – that provide practical skills and improve employability. • Lots of second chances to (re)engage with study. • Vocational training with work experience • Apprentice incentives to employers (offset wages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outreach efforts aimed at informing young people about available job opportunities, training programmes, and resources can help reduce youth unemployment by connecting them to existing services. • Individualised one to one support is vital. • Personalised wraparound and financial support. • Mentoring/coaching champions to help YP feel agency over their lives. • Good quality information - know the person so they feel included. • Targeted support for at risk YP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing dedicated centres or hubs that offer job placement services, career counselling, and assistance with resume building and interview skills have proven effective in connecting young job seekers with opportunities. • Public employment services that can offer tailored support to different groups of young people and effectively signpost or refer young people to other services or opportunities are key. • Early intervention raises effectiveness and reduces cost long term. • Work experience placements. • Extracurricular and volunteering opportunities for social skills. • Access to career information, advice and guidance & career coaches. • Embedded employability in curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wage-subsidy programmes where employers are incentivized to hire young people. These programs can help create job opportunities for youth who might otherwise struggle to find employment • Financial incentives/wage subsidy for an initial period (de-risk) • Employer designed and led programmes – Movement to Work • Job rotation schemes • Anchor networks – inclusive recruitment within public sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared policy objectives/targets for coherent & consistent implementation & evaluation of impact. • Long term funding to enact sustainable interventions. • Holistic local approaches targeting severely impacted groups, utilising local collaborations as safety net for at risk. • regularly assessment of the effectiveness of interventions through shared data collection and analysis to make informed adjustments to programmes and services.

	Education & Skills	Personal and financial support	Work readiness & careers guidance	Employers & Job opportunities	Wider structural & system issues
<i>What are we already doing?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devolved skills funding for 19+, • Extending study programmes for 19-23-year-olds • Thrive at College to support mental health • Pre-apprenticeships (19+) • SWAP/gateway programmes and skills Bootcamps (19+) • Piloting of a virtual post 16 offer, particularly for individuals who are struggling to leave the house (Smart Futures Programme Kickstart Your Career (smarttar.co.uk)) • LA Supported internships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thrive at College • Discretionary Learner Support Funds • Move to funding programmes rather than just quals, to meet broader needs • Youth Employment Platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing all age career service • Youth Hubs / jobs shops / jobs fairs <p>Programme funding to provide IAG, coaching, mentoring, work experience and embed employability – only when on programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better alignment of skills provision to employer need – LSIPs/LSIF, sector taskforces & training plans • Pre-apprenticeships as pathway to a good apprenticeship for YP. • More apprenticeships in SMEs for young people through Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Fund. • Anchor network establishment ICAN with ICB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of post-16 data hub. • Move to single pot and longer-term funding through single skills settlement.
<i>Who else has levers?</i>	LA support for SEND 16-18 offer (with DfE) Youth Offer (with DWP)	Flexible Support Funds (DWP)	DWP Youth Hubs DWP Work Coaches National Careers Service (DfE)	Tax incentives Employers (including public sector)	Schools know who is at risk of NEET

	Education & Skills	Personal and financial support	Work readiness & careers guidance	Employers & Job opportunities	Wider structural & system issues
<i>What else should we prioritise?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale up pre-apprenticeship offer for 18+ – but need a bursary/wage subsidy. LAs to commit UKSPF and CA pay for training. • WMCA/LAs commit to deep dive on support for labour market transition for SEND learners, including through supported internships to build out best practice model for the region (Wolverhampton to lead) • Extend the virtual offer across the region (Solihull to lead) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region wide youth mentoring/ coaching offer. Need to identify funds – £5m autumn statement ask • Youth Employment Platform to become single digital front door for all LAs/CA • Travel costs – Adopt DWP approach on frontloading support for childcare to also include travel to work. • All housing schemes supported by WMCA grant to have more explicit social housing targets. • Each LA to work with housing organisations to increase live and work schemes. • Piot LHA scheme with St Basils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAs to take local ownership of Youth Hubs and commit to flowing all youth-related services through them. Develop hub and spoke model in each area. Widen participation to all non-economically active young people. • CA/LAs to continue to develop NEET prevention approaches through careers hub. • CA/LAs to develop an alternative provision model for the region (LA to lead) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA in each area to write to local employers packaging together all asks of businesses (i.e. WEX, Careers Hub related, jobs for unemployed/care leavers/Learning Disabilities, etc.) - starting a more strategic conversation with them re. how we can support the development of their workforce through a range of initiatives • BGWM to provide support for youth friendly employers, based on YEUK Good Youth Employment Charter. • BGWM to consider where conditions can be leveraged against the issue of grants. • WMCA/LAs to develop youth employment programme (based on Kickstart model), using LA UKSPF as wage subsidy/bursary. • Leverage employer led initiatives - 5% club activity, Severn Trent, Hatch, Movement to Work • LAs to seek commitments from anchor network employers. 	