



Communications

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Youth Contract opens for business

The Youth Contract has opened for business and nearly half a million young people are set to benefit as £1 billion becomes available to get them into new jobs or training. The Youth Contract supports businesses to get young people earning or learning. Those out of work aged between 16 and 24 are being urged to go to their Jobcentre Plus offices to ask about the opportunities available to them.

Under the Youth Contract:

Businesses can now take on under 25s, with 160,000 wage incentives worth up to £2,275 each to recruit young people aged 18 to 24 on the Government's Work Programme. This process has been made simple for businesses and the amount is enough to cover an employer's National Insurance contributions for employing a young person for a year.

An extra 250,000 work experience places will be provided over the next three years. Every 18 to 24 year old Jobseekers Allowance claimant who wants one will now be able to take up a placement before receiving more intensive support offered through the Work Programme.

An extra 20,000 incentive payments, or Apprenticeship Grants, worth £1,500 each will become available to encourage smaller businesses to recruit their first apprentices.

From the summer, there will be extra support worth £126m to help the most disengaged 16 and 17 year olds in England participate and stay in education, apprenticeships or a full-time job with training.

Extra resource will also allow advisers based in each of the Jobcentre Plus offices to spend more time working with young people and provide a National Careers Service interview.

A group of Britain's biggest companies are signing up to the Youth Contract to get 50,000 unskilled young people into work over the next three years. The 16-24 Alliance has the ambition of dramatically bringing down youth unemployment. One way that companies from the 16-24 Alliance can help is by taking on unemployed young people through the Youth Contract wage incentive. However, instead of banking the money, the funding will

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allow the Alliance to invest in specialist charities to train up and support young people who lack the skills for the world of work.

Employers wanting to get involved can find out more by visiting the Youth Contract website at www.dwp.gov.uk/youth-contract/

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