



**YMCA**  
a world of good

# Pathways into employment

**MANIFESTO, 2015**

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## OUR MANIFESTO

Central YMCA's manifesto outlines what we believe the next government should do **to help create, provide and improve pathways into employment for young people.** We offer our ideas, through YMCA Training, for how society can best support and nurture our young talent in their defining post-school years.

# WHO WE ARE

Founded in London, in 1844, by a young apprentice named George Williams, YMCA is the world's oldest and largest charity for young people. We help make lives happier, healthier and more fulfilled, through a unique blend of education, training, advocacy and support, reaching 60 million people in 120 countries every year.

YMCA Training was born out of the recession of the 1970s specifically to help young people find new opportunities for employment – vital work that continues today.

# OUR AMBITION

**We will:**

## **Share knowledge and build confidence:**

Our qualifications, training courses and Apprenticeships help learners develop the knowledge, skills and motivation to be at their best as they begin their working life.

## **Be there for young people:**

Our Apprenticeship schemes, funded projects and programmes turn opportunity into reality.

## **Be a partner:**

We work closely with businesses to create achievable and purposeful careers and routes into employment that meet the needs of employers and young people.

# WHAT WE'RE CALLING FOR

**A review into** how Ofsted grades training providers who run programmes for hard-to-reach groups with lower attainment levels.

**Greater workplace engagement** between schools and local businesses to help young people prepare for work and training.

**Expansion of** full recovery of training costs to those aged 19 and older in certain sectors where it's not possible to employ younger apprentices.

**A review of** careers guidance policy in schools to better help young people make crucial decisions about their futures.

**Removal of** the 16-hour rule for young people in full-time skills study programmes that improve their employability.

**An end to** the negative impact on housing benefit of non-dependent apprentices' earnings, which is causing young people to abandon their training.

**Prompt conclusion of and reporting** on Trailblazer pilot phases, to ensure related funding models provide greater flexibility.

**An inquiry into** the effectiveness of Jobcentre Plus in getting young people into work, to improve service and increase partnerships with training providers and local businesses.

# HOW GOVERNMENT CAN SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH YMCA TRAINING

## OFSTED

We recommend a review of how Ofsted grades NEET training programmes, to reflect greater understanding and representation of the challenges of engaging hard-to-reach groups. Young people often begin their training with us from a lower starting point and although they achieve great things, it is difficult to reflect their success using the current Ofsted framework. More emphasis should be placed on the context of training and the learner's journey than on final grades.



## Under 18s

With the advent of the revising of the participation age, it is essential to ensure 16-18 year-olds are aware of their options and not simply encouraged to remain in school, or follow an academic route to which they may not be best suited. We welcome the announcement of a new careers and enterprise company for schools and look forward to seeing how it will improve careers guidance and broker improved relationships between schools and local business. Good quality careers advice and regular access to industry prepares young people for training and work and helps them make decisions for themselves at critical junctures in their lives.

Vocational training and Apprenticeships should be promoted effectively, to challenge the A-Level route to university remaining the 'gold-standard' for students, teachers and parents. We recommend that the new careers company reviews careers guidance provision in schools, in order to end this imbalance and provide the best possible service for young people.

## 19+

We believe full cost recovery of training for 19+ would be highly beneficial in those sectors that are unwilling or unable to employ under-18s. Where employers fall into this category such as in healthcare or personal training, they lack the flexibility others have in their employment options, and may miss out on incentives currently reserved for employing younger apprentices.

16-hour rule regulations can negatively impact upon the ability of young people on benefits to gain adequate training. We welcome the decision to remove this limitation on traineeships but short, full-time skills programmes remain difficult for young people to access without risk to their benefit payments. We recommend that the removal of the 16-hour rule also be extended to short, full-time skills training and study courses.

In some instances, non-dependent apprentices struggle to remain in programmes when their earnings lead to a reduction to their housing benefit. The removal of this rule for young people in Apprenticeships would ensure they're secure in their homes and increase the likelihood of them completing programmes and finding long-term employment.

# HOW YMCA TRAINING WILL SUPPORT GOVERNMENT

## **Ensuring that no young person is left behind:**

This is central to our work; we're committed to significantly reducing the number of NEETs in the UK. We offer a wide range of study programmes, courses and Apprenticeships designed to develop skills, build confidence, and increase employability. We know how to help the most challenged young people in the country.



### **Rebuilding the economy and tackling youth unemployment:**

With 370 staff in 22 locations, YMCA Training provides more than 4,000 Apprenticeships per year.

### **Trailblazer programmes:**

We support these and will continue to do so. We urge Government to conclude and report on the pilot phases promptly, in order to ensure provision remains consistent and providers are able to adapt their delivery appropriately. We're encouraged by the announcement that proposed funding models for these programmes are under review and believe there should be greater flexibility in directing funding.



### **Partnerships with Jobcentre Plus:**

We're seeking to partner with Jobcentre Plus and recommend:

- Jobcentre Plus advisors receive training to help them better understand the difficulties faced by young people and provide more tailored support.
- Young people should, in the first instance, be able to source their own training schemes.
- Jobcentre Plus should expand its list of preferred training providers to include voluntary sector organisations within the local community.
- Whilst welcoming the Jobcentre Plus initiative to provide work coaches to assist under-18s in securing work experience, pre-Apprenticeship courses and meetings with employers, we echo the Association of Employment and Learning Providers' call for greater effort to be made to partner with training providers, in order to make this programme truly beneficial.

# HOW YMCA TRAINING SUPPORTS YOUNG PEOPLE

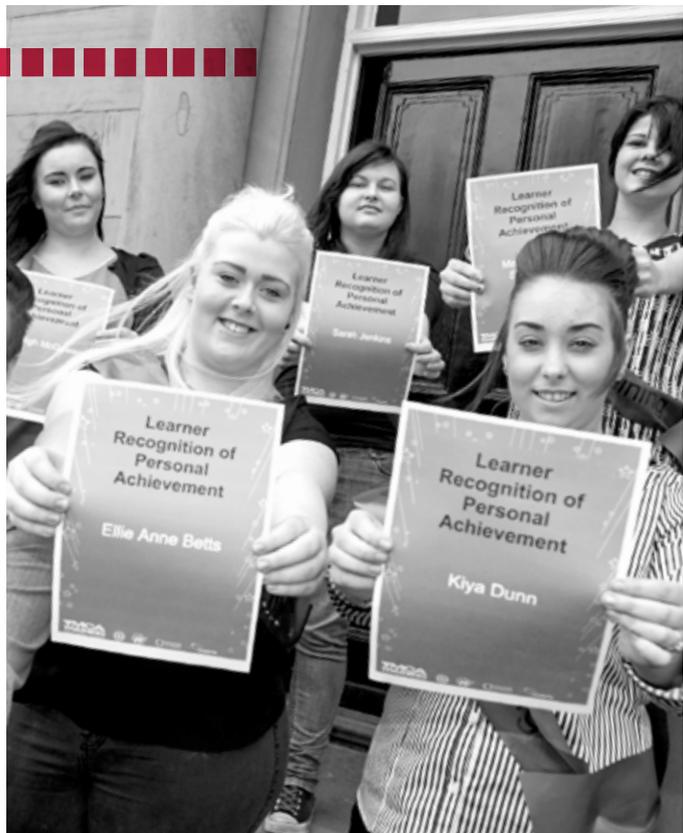


**We deliver** a diverse range of programmes, from employability skills to advanced, higher level Apprenticeships, each tailored to learners' needs.

**We provide** additional learning support where it's needed, to ensure every young person in our care achieves their full potential, whatever their background or ability.

**We create** structured, challenging and motivating learning opportunities.

**We find** work placements, at all levels of training and qualifications, to ensure readiness for employment.



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