

2013/5

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Pocket Watch – Developing Traineeships

Introduction

How best to provide for young people who are not yet ready to take up an apprenticeship or work has been a subject that has dogged the education and skills system for some time and has been highlighted as a big priority for 2013. Last week the Government came up with the latest set of [proposals](#) in this area in the form of Traineeships. The aim is to have at least some programmes up and running this September

Who would these programmes be aimed at?

The target group is 16-24 yr olds, not the most disaffected who may require specialist support but those who might need a tailored pre-work or pre-apprenticeship programme or perhaps additional training to enable them to get a job. Many were characterised in the Wolf Report as churning in and out of work and training and needing a dedicated support programme

How big a problem is this?

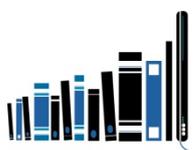
A lot depends on definition but the most recent figures point to just over 200,000 16-18 yr olds and 820,000 19-24 yr olds who would fall into this broad NEET category. Interestingly the figures haven't changed a great deal over the last decade suggesting that while the recession may have had some impact, longer-term structural issues such as how we prepare young people for work, are at stake here. Beyond the numbers, however, the personal, social and economic costs can be enormous. The extent may vary by region but for many 19+ yr olds where there is a noticeable cliff edge, it is a real concern

So what's being proposed?

Essentially a 6-month 'support' programme built around three elements: English and maths; work placement; preparation for work. Providers would have considerable flexibility over whether to include particular forms of training or qualification and over how long or short a programme should be with the essence very much on what works for the individual. For 16-19 yr olds, the programmes would fall under the new Programme of Study mode being adopted this September. For 19+ yr olds, they would come under the new funding matrix being applied to adult skills also from this September

Current issues

At present the Government has just sketched out initial ideas and is looking for feedback to help it work up a more detailed set of proposals. Some may want to see a bit more beef in the programme, an opportunity to gain a recognised qualification that could help with progression for instance. Another issue is likely to be targeting and outreach work particularly given the decommissioning of the careers service but the biggest problem is likely to be that of currency. Both the Richard Review and the AELP have been clear that apprenticeships must be about real jobs which would leave this sort of programme outside the apprenticeship framework. Nor is it clear where it would sit with regard to other programmes such as Foundation Learning. Yet if it is to be a preferred route, as the Minister hopes, it must create a bridge to somewhere



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