



BRIEFING PAPER

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Traineeships

By Andrew Powell

1. What are they?

A traineeship is an education and training programme with work experience whose focus is on helping young people become ready for work or for an apprenticeship. They can last from 6 weeks up to 6 months.¹

The Government has announced that funding will be provided to triple the number of traineeships in response to the coronavirus pandemic.²

Traineeships are aimed at young people aged 16 to 24 who:

- Are unemployed and have little or no work experience, in particular those who have been unsuccessful when applying for an apprenticeship or job due to a lack of skills.³
- Qualified below level three (A-Level equivalent).
- Providers and employers believe have a reasonable chance of being ready for employment or an apprenticeship within six months of starting a traineeship.⁴

Trainees will receive training to prepare them for work and if needed support to improve English and maths.

Traineeships are free, but trainees do not get paid. Some expenses may be paid.

2. Expansion of traineeship scheme

The traineeship scheme will be expanded in response to the coronavirus pandemic, and the expected increase in youth unemployment.⁵

The Government has announced that it will pay employers £1,000 for every new trainee they take on, and eligibility is going to be expanded to also include those with level three qualifications.

An additional £111 million will be provided to fund this, which will provide funding to triple the number of trainees.

¹ Gov.uk, [Find a traineeship](#)

² HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p9

³ DfE/BIS, [Traineeships: Supporting young people to develop the skills for Apprenticeships and other sustained jobs](#), January 2013, p3

⁴ Department for Education, [Traineeships. Supporting young people to develop the skills for apprenticeships and sustainable employment. Framework for delivery 2015 to 2016](#), March 2015, p.6

⁵ HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p9

3. Content

Introduced in August 2013, traineeships are not the same as apprenticeships.⁶

The aim of a traineeship is to take young people to a positive outcome in the form of employment or an apprenticeship.

Traineeships will include the following:⁷

- A work experience placement of at least 100 hours.
- An interview for an apprenticeship or job if available, or an exit interview with written feedback.
- Work preparation training covering areas like CV-writing, interview preparation, job search and inter-personal skills.
- English and mathematics courses, unless the trainee has achieved a GCSE grade 9 to 4 or A*-C in those subjects.⁸

In addition to these core elements, providers and employers can add other training elements depending on the needs of young people and the labour market.⁹

4. Funding

Funding

Funding is provided for traineeships by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

For trainees aged 16 to 18, traineeships are funded by the [young people's funding methodology](#). For 19 to 24 year olds, traineeships are funded by the [adult education budget](#).¹⁰

In the July 2020 Plan for Jobs document, the Government pledged an additional £111 million for traineeships.¹¹

The Skills Funding Agency report in 2015/16 (year ended 31 March 2016) shows that the total budget for 16 to 18 traineeships was £20.4 million. This report does not provide a figures for 19 to 24 traineeships, and subsequent reports from the SFA and the ESFA did nor provide separate figures for traineeships.¹²

The Government has subsequently reported that £52 million is "held nationally for traineeships and continuing learners".¹³

FE Week had reported that the 19 to 24 traineeship budget will be reduced from £20 million to £8.55 million from August 2020.¹⁴

⁶ House of Commons Library, [Apprenticeships and skills policy in England](#), 26 June 2020

⁷ ESFA, [Traineeships](#)

⁸ ESFA, [ESFA funded 16 to 18 traineeships](#), 18 June 2020

⁹ DfE/BIS, [Traineeships: Framework for Delivery](#), May 2013, p16

¹⁰ ESFA, [ESFA funding for traineeships](#), 13 May 2019

¹¹ HM Treasury, [Plan for Jobs](#), 8 July 2020, p9

¹² Skills Funding Agency, [Skills Funding Agency annual report and accounts, 2015 to 2016](#), p68

¹³ [PQ 278476](#), 17 July 2019

¹⁴ FE Week, [Government slashes £11m from £20m adult traineeship budget](#), 14 February 2020

Pay and benefits

Traineeships are not jobs and are therefore exempt from the National Minimum Wage.¹⁵ Employers are not required to pay trainees. However, they are encouraged to contribute to expenses associated with traineeships.

Trainees can continue to receive work benefits, including Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit. They may also qualify for financial support such as [the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund](#), [Free School Meals](#), and [Learning and Learner Support arrangements](#) for 19 to 24 year olds.¹⁶

5. Statistics

14,900 traineeships were started in 2018/19, 2,800 less than a year previously.¹⁷

Of those that were started in 2018/19, 80% were by trainees under the age of 19.

The number of traineeships that have been started has been gradually decreasing since 2015/16, as shown in the chart below. There were over 9,000 fewer starts in 2018/19 than in 2015/16.



¹⁵ Department for Education, [Traineeships, Supporting young people to develop the skills for apprenticeships and sustainable employment, Framework for delivery 2015 to 2016](#), March 2015, p. 10

¹⁶ ESFA, [Traineeship information for trainees](#)

¹⁷ DfE, [Further education and skills: March 2020](#), 26 March 2020

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