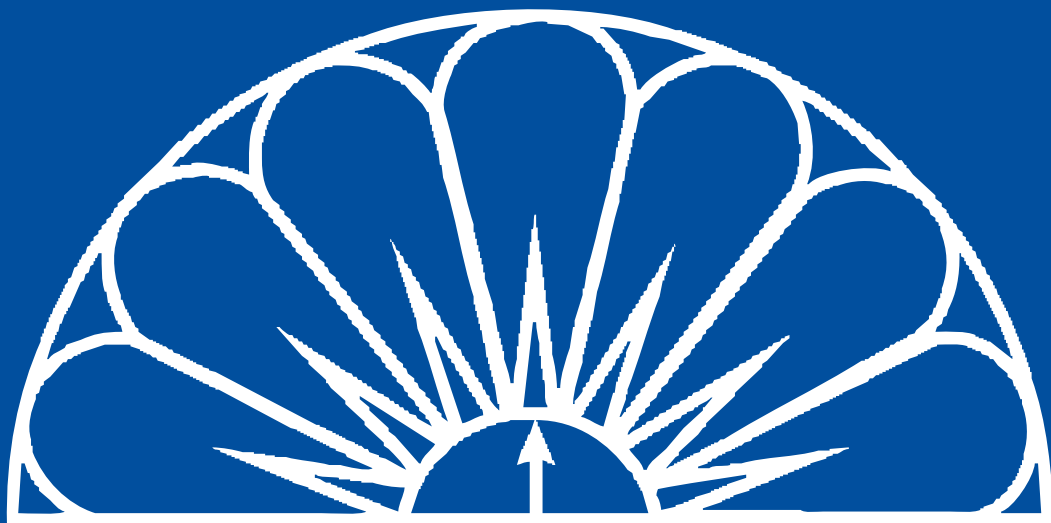


# TEN POLICIES FOR TEN PEOPLE

Practical changes to improve  
opportunity in the first 100 days  
of a new Government

Policy Solutions Number 3  
April 2015



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## → NIACE & INCLUSION

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The policies we set out in this document show why we have formed a strategic alliance - they demonstrate the importance of joining up the employment and skills agendas for millions of people and for the economy. Between NIACE and Inclusion we have expertise in learning, skills and employment underpinned by a shared focus on economic growth and social inclusion.

The next Government must address the needs of the groups of people we highlight if we are to have a fairer society and a strong economy. We urge policy makers to implement our proposals and unlock the talents of millions of people.

**David Hughes,**  
**Chief Executive**  
**NIACE**

**Dave Simmonds OBE,**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Inclusion**

## → TEN POLICIES FOR TEN PEOPLE: 100 DAYS

**Ten Policies for Ten People** outlines changes that NIACE and Inclusion would like the next Government to put in place in its first hundred days – changes that can make a real difference quickly to people's lives and opportunities. Changes that will build a stronger economy. We know that money will be tight for whoever is in power; further cuts in public spending will need to be made. So our proposals are all cost-neutral, and likely to save money in the longer-run.

Our policies are designed to tackle two major challenges facing the UK.

The first is a **productivity crisis**, with the average British worker taking five days to produce what it takes the average French worker four days to produce. In the long run it is productivity that drives economic success and living standards, so this is the most pressing economic challenge of our generation.

The second is to deliver **high quality full employment**. Despite a successful record of job creation since 2008, too many people, particularly those with multiple disadvantages, remain locked out of the labour market or in part-time insecure work, their talents untapped. Employment and skills policy has a critical role to play in meeting these challenges. They are long-term challenges that require long-term solutions, but there are immediate steps a new Government can take to make things better.

There is a growing consensus across the political spectrum on the urgent need to up-skill our working age population. But we remain concerned that rhetoric fails to match reality with continuing falls in both public and private skills investment, leading to a reduction in the number of learners. Ultimately this holds back prosperity and opportunity skills are crucial to our future success in the global economy.

**We have not lost sight of our long term ambition for a truly lifelong learning society. We believe every adult should have opportunities to learn throughout their lives in order to realise their ambitions and**

**talents. This is not the case now.** We therefore need a new settlement for employment, learning and skills policy that at its heart is about empowering people to have much greater control over their own learning and development. This is central to building a new economic model of inclusive growth making Britain both fairer and more prosperous.

### Ten Policies

We set out here pragmatic and realistic changes which will make a big difference. To urgently tackle this challenge we need to bring together learning, skills and employment at both national and local levels, to break down existing silos. Our policy proposals are set out below.

#### Ten Policies

- 1 Helping low paid workers progress and earn more money:** a new Career Advancement Service
- 2 Better support for disabled people and those with health conditions:** a new employment support programme
- 3 Putting people in charge of their own learning and careers support:** Personal Career Accounts
- 4 Making migration work:** new rights and responsibilities to learn English
- 5 Ensuring everyone has the skills they need:** a Citizens' Curriculum programme
- 6 High quality Apprenticeships:** an Apprentice Charter quality mark
- 7 Learning and earning routes for young people:** a new Youth Allowance
- 8 Unlocking the talents of our Young Adult Carers:** Fairer support
- 9 Helping older people gain digital skills for the 21st century:** Digital skills as the 3rd basic skill
- 10 Work and career support for the long-term unemployed:** a better Work Programme

## → TEN PEOPLE

The purpose of any policy is to improve people's lives, so we have started with groups that often miss out, and propose policies to support them. Too often it the other way round with people having to fit around services that have been designed along Departmental lines. Our proposals are not the full answer for these groups, or for the economy or society as a whole. But they show that it is possible to make a real difference to people's lives quickly and without additional public expenditure.

### Our policies focus on providing better Government support to help:

- all workers to get the skills they need for life and work;
- 5.2 million low paid workers, those who earn less than two-thirds of median hourly pay, to progress in their careers;
- 2.51 million disabled people and those with health conditions, who claim ESA and incapacity benefits, to secure employment and training;
- 850,000 migrants with insufficient English language skills to fully participate in our society and economy;
- 1.86 million unemployed people to secure sustained employment;
- 638,000 long-term unemployed people to find and keep work;
- 2.3 million apprentices, to gain expansive, high quality training;
- 1.13 million young people (16-24) Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) to secure meaningful employment;
- 310,000 young Adult Carers to fulfil their potential; and
- 4.78 million older people who lack the digital skills to access the services they need.

### Delivery at appropriate level to maximise impact

Since the publication of our Manifesto in June 2014, where we called for a ***new localism for Skills and Employment policy***, the pace of devolution has certainly quickened. Government has commenced with devolving much greater powers to Cities, Combined Authorities and LEPs, with a plethora of announcements over the past seven months very much in the spirit of the new localism we called for. In London more powers have been given to the Mayor of London on planning and "recommissioning" of skills. We have also seen enhanced devolution proposals announced for Greater Manchester and the West Yorkshire Combined Authorities giving them power to re-shape and re-structure further education provision in their area and powers to co-commission the next phase of the Work Programme with DWP.

In addition, local partnerships have been given additional powers through City Deals, a role in managing skills capital budgets, an enhanced advisory role in the European Structural Funds, and powers from Skills Funding Agency to renegotiate skills provision. We are supportive of this direction of travel and against each of our policy proposals we clearly identify the level at which these policies should be delivered to maximise impact.

Whilst our key policies apply mainly to England, the principles behind each of them could be applied to the rest of the UK. We will be working across the devolved nations to identify appropriate mechanisms to deliver these in advance of the 2016 elections.

# 1. HELPING LOW PAID WORKERS PROGRESS AND EARN MORE MONEY:

## a new Career Advancement Service

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### Case Study 1:

Too many low paid workers never have the chance to progress in their careers and are stuck in a system which doesn't provide the support or advice they need to take the next step. People like Lee have moved from insecure job to insecure job but feel they are getting nowhere. This is an alarming reality for almost 5 million people in the UK, like Lee, a 34 year-old dad of two from Bradford. Lee left school at 16 with very few qualifications and found himself working in a number of casual low paid call centre and service centre jobs which provided no training and no career ladder for him. He has spent the last decade earning not much more than the minimum wage and is desperate to provide a better life for his family.

Our proposals for a Career Advancement Service will help people like Lee get the support and training they need to take that critical next step towards building a meaningful career.

## → 1) HELPING LOW PAID WORKERS PROGRESS AND EARN MORE MONEY: A NEW CAREER ADVANCEMENT SERVICE

- Britain has 5.2 million low paid workers<sup>1</sup>, 1 million more than the OECD average. For most, it will be 2020 or beyond before their living standards are back at pre-recession levels<sup>2</sup>. The result is that today there are more people in in-work poverty than out-of-work poverty.
- People also often become stuck in low paid work: of every four people in low pay ten years ago, three are still low paid today<sup>3</sup>. This is not just a short-term after-effect of recession – the very real risk is that stagnant living standards become the ‘new normal’ for the majority.
- Policy does not effectively support low paid workers: we have a ‘missing middle’ of people who have worked hard and want to get on. They find an employment system that is only there for people who are out of work, and focuses just on getting them off benefits – not into a lasting career. And a skills system where funding is focused on the young and success measured by qualifications – not whether this leads to work and progression.

### 100 Day Action:

- **Establish trials of a new Career Advancement Service for people working in retail and hospitality, where low pay is concentrated, ahead of full national rollout by 2020. NIACE’s recent publication, [No Limits](#), sets out how this would provide greater progression routes for Britain’s 5.2 million low paid workers and boost productivity. This would also help cut the deficit by increasing earnings and therefore income tax receipts**

The Career Advancement Service would:

- be open to everyone in low paid work in receipt of tax credits or Universal Credit;
- provide a free Career Check and online support, alongside personalised support from a Career Coach and Personal Career Account;
- work with employers to boost their business and create more opportunities for people to progress;
- be delivered locally - managed by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and cities in order to support local labour markets; and
- The universal service would be funded by refocusing £100m of existing budgets from the National Careers Service and Adult Skills Budget.

**For every 4 people in low paid work in 2001, only one had permanently escaped low pay by 2011**



## 2. BETTER SUPPORT FOR DISABLED PEOPLE AND THOSE WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS:

### a new employment support programme

#### Case Study 2:

Mark is 30 years old and has experienced mental health issues since he was a teenager. He has struggled to find and keep work for much of his adult life. This has had a huge impact on his education and training but he is keen to build his skills and experience and return to work.

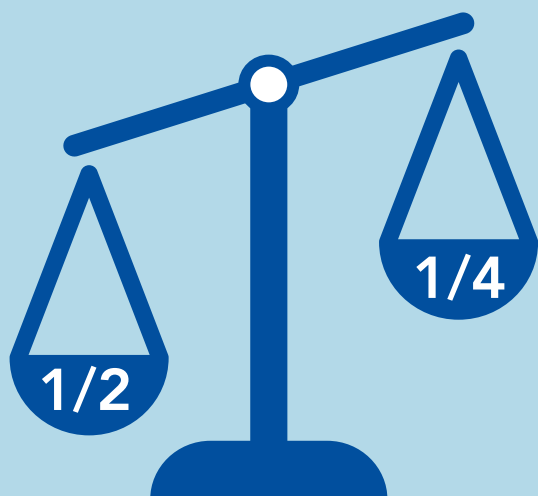
Mark has several barriers to work other than his health condition. His literacy difficulties mean that he is not able to read basic health and safety instructions, complete order sheets and read from order request forms. His key aim is to find a local employer to provide a work placement whilst he undertakes his numeracy, literacy and IT qualifications.

Our multiple proposals for an improved and refocused employment support programme – which joins up local partners, e.g. Jobcentre Plus and local Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs) would help Mark obtain the help he needs.

## → 2) BETTER SUPPORT FOR DISABLED PEOPLE AND THOSE WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS: A NEW EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME

→ Nearly eight million adults of working age are disabled or have a work-limiting health condition<sup>4</sup>. Those affected by a health problem or disability are far more likely to be in low pay, live in deprived areas, and to be out of work. Overall, half of all disabled people are out of work, compared with one quarter of those who are not disabled<sup>5</sup>.

**1/2 of all disabled people are out of work, compared with 1/4 of those who are not disabled.**



→ Of the 3.6 million people who are out of work and have a work-limiting health condition, just one in ten are receiving support through DWP employment programmes<sup>6</sup> – Work Choice and Work Programme. Furthermore only 7 per cent of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) claimants on the Work Programme achieve sustained employment<sup>7</sup>.

→ Despite more than a decade of near-constant reforms to disability benefits and employment support, progress on closing the health and disability employment deficit has stalled in recent years. This is why there needs to be renewed efforts to improve qualifications and jobs for disabled people – especially those on ESA.

### 100 Day Actions:

- Start work to **re-structure future employment and skills support** around three levels:
  1. ‘Into work’ support – for those closest to returning to work;
  2. Health and disability employment support – for those needing more intensive and joined up support; and
  3. Supported Employment and rehabilitation – for those with the most significant support needs.
- **Local and national commissioners should work together** to ensure that the three levels of support are in place – within a clear national framework but with approaches to devolution, joint commissioning, pooling or alignment that are appropriate to local areas.
- **Commission a distinct employment programme for disabled people, merging ESA support currently within the Work Programme and Work Choice.** This should be jointly commissioned with local areas where they can show plans and investment in boosting support.
- **An urgent review of the Work Capability Assessment and Access to Work schemes.** Both are hugely important, but neither are working to their potential.
- **Local partners, Jobcentre Plus and local Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBs)** should work together to develop protocols on joint working, including information sharing covering employment and skills.
- **A ‘What Works Unit’ should be established** with a remit to collect, review and disseminate best practices; facilitate knowledge exchange between providers; and encourage innovation in service design and delivery. This should help to identify the different forms of employment support that respond to the distinctive circumstances of different groups of ESA claimants.



# 3. PUTTING PEOPLE IN CHARGE OF THEIR OWN LEARNING AND CAREERS SUPPORT:

## Personal Career Accounts

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### Case Study 3:

Jo is a 24 year-old English graduate, excited about building a career in Marketing. After an internship with a local charity, she was delighted to get a permanent role. Now, three years on, she's ready to take the next step in her career. But all the vacancies she's seen have asked for a professional qualification.

Even though she still lives with her parents, with £40,000 of student debts to pay off, and saving for a deposit for a home with her boyfriend, Jo would struggle to pay her tuition and exam fees on her current salary. She feels trapped – she would like to develop her skills, her employer needs those skills, but she can't pay for them on her own and her employer has only a tiny training budget.

Our proposals for a Personal Career Account would help Jo and her employer: if they both make a contribution, the government will top it up and she could gain the qualifications she needs.

## → 3) PUTTING PEOPLE IN CHARGE OF THEIR OWN LEARNING AND CAREERS SUPPORT: PERSONAL CAREER ACCOUNTS

- Almost two thirds (£36billion) of total Government spending on education and training is committed to schools, whilst the Further Education budget has been reduced by one-third over this Parliament. As a result, the number of adults participating in learning has dropped by almost 11 per cent<sup>8</sup> - that's over 350,000 fewer adults in education and training.
- Government has earmarked £498million for 2015-16 for 24+ loans<sup>9</sup> for levels 3 and 4. However, we would need almost 200,000 24+ learners to utilise this. We do not believe this is credible - only 59,000<sup>10</sup> learners took up loans in 13/14 and the provisional figures for 14/15 are showing similarly low take up.
- Employer investment in training has also fallen<sup>11</sup>, meaning that total investment in skills does not match the scale of the UK's learning challenge. So we need to urgently rethink how we resource the training of working age adults in this country, if we are to provide the skills our businesses and economy need to prosper and grow.
- Our 2014 Manifesto called for people to have access to a **Personal Career Account**. Mirroring the recently announced Help to Buy ISA (where the Government will top up people's savings for a house deposit), this could be equivalent to a Help to Train ISA with the Government topping up individual's and employers' contributions. Over time, this could be supplemented by routing other public services through this account, such as employment support.

### 100 Day Actions:

- **Government should work with the Combined Authorities in our largest cities (London, Manchester and Birmingham) to help establish local pilots to give individuals a Personal Career Account to help fill existing skills gaps in key growth sectors.** This would focus on supporting them to obtain signature qualifications so that they can fill those skills gaps that are holding back local businesses. This will be funded by the unallocated 24+ loans budget for levels 3 & 4.
- **Make the current Learning Loan system more flexible** allowing people to access financial support for bite-size learning and modules, rather than just full qualifications.
- **Explore the ways employers can be encouraged to support their staff to gain new skills at intermediate and higher levels.** This might include, for example, National Insurance Relief.

**1 million fewer learners since 2010: Personal Career Accounts would help pay for more people to learn and earn.**



# 4. MAKING MIGRATION WORK:

## new rights and responsibilities to learn English

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### Case Study 4:

Imagine being worried about how your children are doing at school but not having the language skills to talk confidently to their teachers. Or understanding what your doctor is telling you. And having skills, but unable to get work because you don't have the necessary English Language skills.

This is a sad reality for Hazra, a 34 year old mother of four, originally a nurse from Bangladesh and but now living in East Ham. Unable to access adequate ESOL learning, Hazra has struggled to find a job and being unable to have even basic discussions with mothers at the school gates has compounded her feeling of isolation.

Access to effective ESOL provision would have alleviated these problems, enabling Hazra to play a more active role in her community, support her children with their learning and find a secure job where she can use the skills our Health Service needs.

## → 4) MAKING MIGRATION WORK: NEW RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO LEARN ENGLISH

- Over the next 10 years it is anticipated that there will be 13.5 million job vacancies in the UK labour market, but only 7 million new labour market entrants to fill them<sup>12</sup>. It is increasingly becoming clear that we need to look beyond our existing workforce if we are to fill these gaps and migration is one of a number of sources which can provide a positive contribution.
- Overall, around 850,000 people in England and Wales are considered 'non-proficient' in English<sup>13</sup>. This is a major barrier to integration and inclusion. However, reductions in funding and increased eligibility restrictions have resulted in a dramatic drop in participation in ESOL learning. This has fallen from an estimated 500,000 learners in 2006/07 to 139,000 in 13/14<sup>14</sup>.



**850,000 migrants – equivalent to the population of one of our large cities - are 'non-proficient' in English. We're not benefiting from their talents.**

- This is further compounded by poor utilisation of migrants' existing skills due to poor advice and guidance and a lack of recognition of their qualifications. We also have an immigration cap in place that prevents our businesses capitalising on the skills of students from overseas and high skilled migrants.

### 100 Day Actions:

- **Everyone in a household in receipt of any benefit should be required to learn English if they need to.** This would extend the current requirement for Jobseeker's Allowance claimants to other benefits, such as Housing Benefit. This requirement should also be built into Universal Credit as it is rolled out.
- **Expand the number of English classes.** The existing £130m English for Speakers of Other Languages budget should be refocused to expand entry level classes. People should be encouraged to contribute to the costs of learning above this level, including by giving access to income-contingent Learning Loans, already in use for Level 3 and 4 learning among those aged over 24. We estimate this new market will be valued at between £150-200m.
- **Government should lead the way, establishing a pilot to improve English language proficiency of workers in the publicly-funded Social Care Sector** inspiring and informing similar activity in those sectors with a higher representation of migrant workers.

# 5. ENSURING EVERYONE HAS THE SKILLS THEY WANT AND NEED:

## Citizens' Curriculum programme

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### Case Study 5:

At 52 years old, Rosemary found herself ready to re-enter the labour market after being the sole carer for her terminally ill husband for nearly 20 years. Before, she had worked in the care sector which, over the time she wasn't working, had evolved enormously. After attending a job interview at a local residential care home, Rosemary was told she wasn't qualified for the role she had applied for - which was a similar role she used to do - because she didn't have the maths, English and IT qualifications which are now essential for the role.

Rosemary had not done any formal learning since school, so trying to navigate around the courses that were available for her, and how much they cost, was a complicated and daunting task. This proposal, would allow Rosemary to access a package of learning that is relevant to her life and what she needs to learn for her future career.

## → 5) ENSURING EVERYONE HAS THE SKILLS THEY NEED: A CITIZENS' CURRICULUM PROGRAMME

- Eight million British adults lack the functional numeracy skills and five million lack the functional literacy skills they need for life and work in 21st Century Britain. This is linked to shortfalls in other capabilities, such as managing money, accessing digital services and health that have a significant impact on people's opportunities and quality of life.
- The importance of these capabilities is increasing. More and more jobs require at least the basics of maths, English and digital skills. More and more public services are 'digital by default'. And the evidence shows people are more likely to be active in their communities if they have these core capabilities.



**1 in 5 adults lack the basic skills they need for everyday life.**

- However policy is not sufficiently tackling the UK's shortfall. Too much public funding to tackle these interlinked challenges is organised in silos and linked to formal qualifications. Yet many such adults may not see learning as relevant to their lives or they did not do well at school.
- NIACE has developed an innovative approach to provide people with the basic skills they need for life and work. Our Citizens' Curriculum helps develop core capabilities in language, literacy, numeracy, digital, financial and health, using a 'programme of study' approach, which is shaped by learners and their needs. It has recently been successfully tested in 16 community pilots and found to make learning more relevant and engaging, tapping into what motivates people and their ambitions for the future.

### 100 Day Actions:

- **Building on the success of NIACE's Citizen's Curriculum, Government should reform the Adult Skills Budget to allow for greater flexibility and a similar study programme approach to be established from September 2015 onwards.** This would allow more flexible, innovative learning to be designed to motivate people into learning and would mirror the support that young people currently receive through the Education Funding Agency.
- **Government has already agreed to a pilot of a contextualised Citizens' Curriculum to support people claiming ESA into employment.** Current employment programmes are not working well for disabled people, in part because skills and other support is not integrated sufficiently. A Citizens' Curriculum programme could better engage ESA claimants and give them the skills they need for the jobs market. **We would like to secure a commitment that this will be rolled out nationally if evaluation findings support our compelling analysis.**

# 6. HIGH QUALITY APPRENTICESHIPS:

## an Apprentice Charter quality mark

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### Case Study 6:

Francesca could not wait to finish school. She did not want to follow her friends into the sixth form or college. Her parents run a small business and Francesca works there when she can. Wanting to run her own business one day, Francesca successfully applied for a Level 2 Apprenticeship in Business Administration.

However, ten months in to her 12 month Apprenticeship, Francesca is worried about the future. Her employers have told her that they do not offer a Level 3 for her to do next and will be letting her go when her Apprenticeship finishes. She feels that she has been taught to be good at her current role, but knows she still has not got the skills to help her progress.

Every apprentice deserves a high standard, high quality working and learning experience. The Apprentice Charter will offer Francesca and millions of other apprentices a guarantee that of real-life challenging work experience, quality on and off- the-job training and a solid foundation for their whole careers.

## → 6) HIGH QUALITY APPRENTICESHIPS: AN APPRENTICE CHARTER QUALITY MARK

- All major political parties are committed to increasing the number of Apprenticeships. In the race to achieve greater numbers, three core concerns remain: increasing the number of employers who offer Apprenticeships; boosting the quality of Apprenticeships for individuals and employers; and ensuring access to Apprenticeships is open regardless of background or circumstance.
- Apprenticeships have increased by 75 per cent since 2010<sup>15</sup>. Whilst a large majority of apprentices are satisfied with their experience; their pay, career and learning progression beyond an Apprenticeship remain low<sup>16</sup>.
- Two-thirds (64%) of all apprentices were already employed by their employer when they started their Apprenticeship<sup>17</sup>.
- We must widen participation to increase the number of disabled people and minority ethnic people on Apprenticeships. Current participation is shockingly low – only 9% of apprentices are from Black and Minority Ethnic groups<sup>18</sup>. There should be the same investment in widening participation for Apprenticeships as there is for Higher Education.

### 100 Day Actions:

- **With immediate effect the Government should introduce a new measure on whether apprentices gain sustained employment** (with the same or a different employer) within 12 months of them completing their Apprenticeship. We propose that a proportion of the funding which is currently given to providers for placing apprentices is contingent on high performance against this new measure.
- **Government should introduce an Apprentice Charter across trailblazer sectors. This new quality mark would be awarded to employers that demonstrate a commitment to giving their apprentices a high quality learning experience that sets them up for a career.**

The new Apprentice Charter would set a new standard for what the best employers do in addition to the formal training and the employment contract. This includes the informal learning, the soft skills, the mentoring, the support, advice about future careers and opportunities to understand the business and not just the job. It will help the Government to be confident in the quality of the programme and allow them to target support to those employers who want to aspire to achieving the quality mark.



**Only 1 in 3 apprentices receive a pay increase after completing their training and only 1 in 5 are promoted**



# 7. LEARNING AND EARNING ROUTES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE:

## a new Youth Allowance

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### Case Study 7:

Leaving school with only three GCSEs did not concern Darrell, because a friend of his dad had offered him a job in his construction firm. For two years, Darrell was earning a good wage doing a job he enjoyed, but contracts soon become scarce and Darrell was laid off. Now 18, without a job and with few qualifications, he was desperately applying for jobs. He had to sign on to make ends meet. Darrell has the experience and the focus, but not the English and maths qualifications, to get an Apprenticeship. He can not do a Traineeship, as he has worked full time for a number of years. There were no other opportunities available that would enable Darrell to gain valuable skills and qualifications and get back into work.

The time is right to level the playing field for young people. Decentralisation of employment and skills policy should give local areas the power to guarantee work and training to unemployed young people in sectors where real jobs will be available.

## → 7) LEARNING AND EARNING ROUTES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: A NEW YOUTH ALLOWANCE

- Too many young people do not get support on a career pathway from a school system focused on university as the end goal, and an employment system focused on any job. The result is what some have described as the ‘forgotten 50 %’.
- This has major consequences for social mobility – locking in low earnings and lack of opportunity – and for the economy, contributing to our national shortage of technician level jobs and workers.
- It is the consequence of shortcomings in our benefit system (focusing on any job to get young people off benefits, rather than long-term career prospects) and our skills system (which focuses on qualifications).
- Part of the drive to increase the quality of Apprenticeships (such as minimum durations and a greater focus on Level 3 as the baseline standard) also risk the unintended consequence of lifting the ladder out of reach of many young people – lacking a pathway to get to the standard needed for an Apprenticeship.
- Traineeships are intended to help provide this pathway, but are underused and many employers are unaware of their existence. Recently NIACE worked with employers in the Humber and Dorset LEP areas to raise their awareness and build links with local training providers.

### 100 Day Actions:

- **Develop plans for a new Learning & Earning route for young people.** This should consider the case for creating a new Youth Allowance for 18-24 year olds, replacing Jobseeker’s Allowance, requiring accredited learning to Level 3 alongside job search and work.
- **Focus on building Traineeships as a gold standard route for those unable to immediately access Apprenticeships.** This should include: routing more existing funding into this programme; incentives for employment programmes to refer to them and for progression to Apprenticeships; and high quality standards co-designed with employers.
- **Support Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Authorities to provide more integrated services for young people.** For example, through City Deals a number of areas have committed to ensuring all young people have access to a training place or job with training. The Government should offer to align national investment and policy with other areas that wish to do this.
- **Drawing on lessons learnt from our work with LEPs on STEM Traineeships, all LEPs should provide clear pathways to STEM job roles for young people that meet the needs of local employers and the local economy.**



**1.13 million young people are not in education, employment or training (NEETs)**

# 8. UNLOCKING THE TALENTS OF OUR YOUNG ADULT CARERS:

## Fairer support

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### Case Study 8:

Jenna is 16, but since 11, she has been the sole carer for her mum, who has multiple sclerosis. Like many Young Adult Carers she's unable to do the simple things in life that other teenagers take for granted – doing homework, attending after schools clubs, going on school trips, socialising with friends. Her lack of a life beyond her caring and poor attainment has led to very low confidence and self-esteem. She is leaving school this summer with an uncertain future, unable to take a Catering course at her local college due to the 21 Hour rule – which would mean she will lose her Carer's Allowance if she took the course.

It is time we did the right thing by our Young Adult Careers, like Jenna. We are calling for three simple changes to the rules which will enable Jenna and other Young Adult Carers fulfil their potential.

## → 8) UNLOCKING THE TALENTS OF OUR YOUNG ADULT CARERS: FAIRER SUPPORT

→ There are more than 310,000 young adult carers in England and Wales, aged 16-25 who care for parents, siblings and other relations<sup>19</sup>. In doing so, they save the taxpayer around £1bn per year.



→ These caring responsibilities impact on the wellbeing and life chances of Young Adult Carers. They are twice as likely to be NEET (not in education, employment or training)<sup>20</sup>, and often experience a range of difficulties and disadvantage, including poverty, isolation, physical and mental health difficulties which have consequences for them throughout their lives. **Young Adult Carers deserve better - we want Government to implement three simple changes in their first 100 Days.**

### 100 Day Actions:

- **Young Adult Carers should be formally identified as a 'vulnerable group'** giving them full entitlement to the 16-19 bursary. Currently they miss out on this vital support that could help them with the additional financial costs of learning and as a result many either don't take up learning or drop out.
- **Young Adult Carers should be exempt from the 21 hour rule in the benefit system.** Currently, they lose Carer's Allowance if they participate in learning for longer than this each week. Most Further Education courses require longer participation, leaving Young Adult Carers in a catch-22 position. Given many Young Adult Carers have lost out on several years of education as a result of their caring responsibilities, they deserve greater flexibility to gain the skills they need for successful careers.
- **Young Adult Carers should be able to access flexible hours Traineeships and Apprenticeships** to boost their skills and careers. Currently Skills Funding Agency guidance states that Apprenticeships should be at least 30 hours work per week, except in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are not defined and no data is collected. Traineeships do not have this limited flexibility. As a result, many Young Adult Carers are locked out of these opportunities to improve their skills and progress their careers.

# 9. HELPING OLDER PEOPLE GAIN DIGITAL SKILLS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY:

## Digital skills as the 3rd basic skill

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### Case Study 9:

Barry is a 73 year-old retired motor mechanic. His wife Carol has dementia and has just been admitted to a care home. After a lifetime of being “handy” (he’s a dab hand at plumbing, electrics and building), the digital age has crept up on him and he now feels increasingly out of his depth. Simple things, like finding the right phone number for the council social care team, or what benefits he may be entitled to, are becoming harder and harder without access to the Internet. And daily tasks like shopping and banking would be so much easier if he could do them online, at a time that fits around his daily visits to see his wife. His son and daughter are happy to help, but both have busy jobs and families of their own to look after. Having been self-reliant his whole life, he can see his independence drifting away.

Our proposal for a new government training fund for older people to gain digital skills would help Barry – giving him the access to services and information he needs, without relying on others. It would also help him to make small improvements to his life and give him more time to spend with his wife.

## → 9) HELPING OLDER PEOPLE GAIN DIGITAL SKILLS FOR THE 21 CENTURY: DIGITAL SKILLS AS THE 3RD BASIC SKILL

- Digital skills are critical for life in the 21st Century. Everyday activities—such as shopping, using a telephone and banking—increasingly require interaction with technology. Digital skills (the skills needed to interact with digital technologies) are now necessary life skills. It is not acceptable for any group to be excluded from access to digital technologies.
- 6.4 million adults - over 13 per cent of the adult population in the UK - have never used the Internet. The over 65s make up over 75 per cent of this excluded group – a total of 4.78 million people<sup>21</sup>.



- With Government services increasingly being 'Digital by Default' it is increasingly imperative that older people and their carers (professional and non-professional) are supported to obtain basic digital skills so they can access these critical services - either directly or through proxy users.

### 100 Day Actions:

- **Government should urgently establish a new £40m fund for an appropriate programme of Training to support Older People and their carers to rapidly gain the skills they need to access online services**, funded by the proposed cut in winter fuel payments for the UK's richest older people (estimated to be £100m). This would initially deliver through sheltered and residential housing providers and via public libraries and would be targeted to meet those with the greatest need. **This commitment would send out an important message of intent at the beginning of the Parliament which would ensure that Government achieves the target set out in the [2014 Digital Inclusion Strategy](#) - that by 2020 everyone who can be digitally capable, will be.**

# 10. WORK AND CAREER SUPPORT FOR THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED: A better Work Programme

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## Case Study 10:

For three-quarters of long term unemployed people who find themselves on the Work Programme but are unable to get a sustainable job there is a hand-to-mouth existence with no way out. This is how Rahul, a 24 year old dad, who left school at 16 with no qualifications, feels. Apart from a few short stints of casual labouring work in his late teens, Rahul has never been able to hold down a job. Since joining the Work Programme, Rahul has attended a number of short courses but none of the support he has received has helped him find what he most wants in life – a job so he can provide for his child.

Cases like Rahul demonstrate that the Work Programme is not working for many of our long-term unemployed. It needs to be urgently rebalanced so that provision can be targeted at improving the job and skills outcomes for the most disadvantaged.

## → 10) WORK AND CAREER SUPPORT FOR THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED: A BETTER WORK PROGRAMME

- The Work Programme has been the Coalition Government's flagship programme for the long-term unemployed. It has had a mixed success for the 1.7 million people joining in the last four years<sup>22</sup>.
- Overall, one in four participants achieved sustained employment. Young people on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) have been the most successful at 32 per cent, with adults on JSA at 26 per cent. However, only 10 per cent of Employment and Support Allowance claimants found and kept work<sup>23</sup>. There are also signs that the more disadvantaged claimants have lost out – older people, prison leavers, all disabled participants have lower than average job outcomes.



- The Work Programme is funded through 'payments by results'<sup>24</sup> which has had a significant impact on the nature of provision, who delivers it and how it integrates locally with other support for the unemployed. There are examples of 'prime contractors' helping participants gain qualifications and Apprenticeships but few have benefited. Overall, investment for disadvantaged groups is lower than planned, not higher. As JSA numbers decline the Work Programme's successor needs to work better for disadvantaged people – both JSA and ESA claimants.

### 100 Day Actions:

- **Government should ensure the replacement of the Work Programme is fit for purpose** for the most disadvantaged claimants. The level of funding and the nature of payments should reflect the priority to improve job and skill outcomes for the most disadvantaged.
- **Government should involve local areas in the commissioning of provision** either through co-commissioning or by fully devolving, so that local provision can be integrated and deliver more sustainable job outcomes. **LEPs should take on an oversight role to ensure that local skills providers prioritise long-term unemployed adults such that adequate volumes of skills provision are made available to them.**
- **Providers should be paid according to the earnings of customers and take-up of Apprenticeships, not just sustained employment.** This would ensure support not just to get into work, but also to get on at work.
- **A new offer should be made to all claimants** so that they receive the right support at the right time to help find work and improve their employability, according to need rather than the welfare benefit they are claiming. These new service standards should be at the heart of all services.



# CONCLUSION

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## → CONCLUSION

- Sustaining the UK's economic recovery and building long-term prosperity depend on having a skills base that matches the needs of a modern economy. One-fifth of our economic growth in the last 20 years has been driven by skills.
- Despite improvements in recent years, the UK still lags behind many other countries. Out of 34 countries in the OECD the UK is:
  - 15th for literacy and 17th for numeracy with nearly one in five adults lacking these skills;
  - 19th for low skills, with one in five adults lacking GCSE equivalent qualifications;
  - 24th for intermediate skills, equivalent to A Levels; and
  - 1st for high skills (degree level).
- Despite a clear consensus on the need to tackle this challenge, investment in skills remains heavily focused on young people, and prioritises higher education over other types of learning.
- This is further compounded by a reduction in investment in adult education, which has contributed to 1 million lost learning opportunities for adults since 2010, failing to meet the skills needs of our businesses and economy.
- Our proposals show practical steps the next government can take in its first 100 days to move in the right direction. But beyond this we urgently need to develop a coherent and sustainable policy and funding system for skills after the age of 18.

### 100 Day Action:

- We propose that Government rapidly establishes a cross-party Commission, immediately after the election, to develop an historic long-term settlement for skills and learning in England which supports occupational up-skilling, re-skilling and lifelong learning.
- This should have an expansive remit (including workplace learning, skills in employment programmes (including the work programme), Apprenticeships, Traineeships, higher, as well as further education and community learning, to produce recommendations by 2018.
- It would combine the interests of an inclusive economy with those of a tolerant, fair, healthy and vibrant society. Critically, it would support people to invest in themselves alongside employers investing in their workers and would target state investment on overcoming the inequalities in access to and achievement in education.

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