Young People in Work, 2012

Coverage: UK
Date: 29 February 2012
Geographical Area: UK
Theme: Labour Market

Animated YouTube video

Employment falls for young people as more choose education and some cannot find work

In October to December 2011 the number of young people aged 16 to 24 who had a job stood at 3.6 million, or one in every two young people. However, for those who had left full-time education around two-thirds (66 per cent) were in work and for those studying full-time, 27 per cent had a job to go alongside their study.
Concentrating on young people not in full-time education their employment rate was similar to those aged 25 to 64 between 1992 and early 2004. With employment rates decreasing faster since 2004 for young people compared to those aged 25 to 64, there was a gap of 8.9 percentage points by the final quarter of 2011, compared to a gap of just 0.2 percentage points in early 2004.

There are a few factors that have impacted on employment for young people such as:

- Between 2004 and 2008 there was a rise in the proportion of young people in mainstream education and a decline in those in work-based training. Those in work-based training would have been classed as employed and also some of those choosing to remain in mainstream education when aged 16-17 would have then stayed on in education beyond these years.

- At the onset of the recession in 2008 there were further increases in young people choosing to remain in mainstream education, as the labour market started to weaken and limit job opportunities. This pattern has continued through to 2012.
The increase in young people staying on in mainstream education impacts on the employment rate of those not in full-time education, as the shift is mainly at the expense of employment.

Also throughout the recession, unemployment increased faster for young people compared to the older age group as those who are young were starting off in the labour market and looking to enter at a relatively weak time. More information on unemployment for young people is available in the story on the Characteristics of young unemployed people.

Students more likely to have low skilled jobs

The types of jobs that young people have differ depending on whether they are studying full-time or not. In the final quarter of 2011, full-time students were twice as likely to work in elementary occupations compared with those who have left full-time education, 38 per cent and 19 per cent respectively. This occupation group has the lowest skilled jobs in the economy such as waiters and waitresses, bar staff, kitchen assistants and cleaners. A further 38 per cent of full-time students work in sales and customer service occupations, compared to just 18 per cent for those who have left full-time education, with the majority of them sales assistants or cashiers. The types of jobs for young people still in education reflect that they are unlikely to be starting a career but supporting their education with some income and the majority of students work part-time hours.

Young workers who have left education are spread more evenly across occupations and skill levels as they begin a career and only a quarter work part-time. While the two main occupation groups are the same there are also a number who work in marketing, finance, construction, or jobs in teaching and health.

Occupations of young people aged 16-24, October to December 2011

Not seasonally adjusted

Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Download chart

XLS XLS format
(28.5 Kb)

Women in education more likely to work than men
For all young people employment rates were similar for men and women, but this differs depending on whether they are in study or not.

- Women in full time education were more likely to work than men, 31 per cent and 23 per cent respectively.
- Men not in full-time education were more likely to work than women, 68 per cent and 64 per cent respectively. This is because some young women in their early twenties start to have a family and stay at home rather than go to work.

Employment rates of young men and women, October-December 2011
UK, seasonally adjusted

Source: Labour Force Survey - Office for National Statistics

Download chart

There are significant differences between the occupations that young men and women have:

- 22 per cent of women but only 4 per cent of men work in personal service occupations, which are caring and leisure related professions
- 21 per cent of men but only 1 per cent of women work in skilled trades, including electrical, construction and agriculture
- Around 25 per cent of women work in sales and customer service occupations compared to 19 per cent for men.

Young people earn around 42% less
In April 2011 the average rate of pay for young people was £7.01 per hour, 42 per cent lower than the rest of the workforce aged 25 and above whose average pay was £12.00 per hour. This is partly explained by pay tending to increase quickly for young people up to around the age of 30, some young people are paid lower because of different national minimum wage rates and also those aged 25 and over have more experience.

Young people earn less across all occupation groups with the largest difference for managers and senior officials, where they take home less than half their older counterparts pay. Young people in this occupation tend to be retail managers, whereas the older are managers across all industries such as financial, health, manufacturing, transport and leisure and have more experience and responsibility. Note that only around 3 per cent of all young people work as managers compared to 11 per cent of those aged 25 and over.

The occupation group with the smallest difference in pay was sales and customer service, where young people earned 11 per cent less than those aged 25 and over, or a difference of 76 pence per hour. Around 22 per cent of all young people work in sales and customer service jobs while just 6 per cent of people aged 25 and over work in the same occupational group.

**Median pay (excluding overtime) by occupation group, April 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Group</th>
<th>16-24</th>
<th>25+</th>
<th>Percentage difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managers and senior officials</td>
<td>8.88</td>
<td>19.12</td>
<td>-54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Occupations</td>
<td>13.39</td>
<td>20.64</td>
<td>-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate professional and technical occupations</td>
<td>9.93</td>
<td>14.91</td>
<td>-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and secretarial occupations</td>
<td>8.07</td>
<td>9.95</td>
<td>-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled trades occupations</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal service occupations</td>
<td>6.95</td>
<td>8.52</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and customer service occupations</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process, plant and machine operatives</td>
<td>7.21</td>
<td>9.35</td>
<td>-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary occupations</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.01</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>-42</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table source: Office for National Statistics

Download table

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Background notes

1. The youth employment rate is the number of 16-24 year olds employed divided by total population aged 16 to 24.

2. A previous publication by ONS contains more information on young unemployed people.

3. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html or from the Media Relations Office email: media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk

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