



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Research and analysis

General population polling, July to August: Young people and work report

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to-august-young-people-and-work-report

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A report of research carried out by Ipsos on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions. Views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the Department for Work and Pensions or any other government department.

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Methodology

This interim report provides a summary of findings on the general population's attitudes on possible approaches to addressing the recent rise in the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

The report is based on an online survey of 2,180 UK adults (aged 16 to 75) conducted between 31 July and 5 August 2026 by Ipsos. Data is weighted to the known profile of the UK adult population by the following characteristics:

- age
- gender
- region

- work status
- social grade
- education

Results are percentages: where multiple responses were allowed, totals may not sum to 100. Subgroup findings are reported where differences are significant; all significance testing has been applied at the 95% confidence level. Figures from smaller bases should be interpreted with caution.

A final report will be published in autumn 2026.

Summary of findings

- 27% of respondents said that success depends mainly on hard work, while 22% said it depends on who someone knows or their family background. Only 5% said it was luck and 5% believed success to be based on talent. 36% said that success depends on a roughly equal mixture of these things.
- Half (50%) of respondents believed that young people today have fewer opportunities than previous generations. Parents of children aged between 12 and 18 years old were more likely to believe that young people have fewer opportunities than previous generations compared to parents of younger children (aged 5 to 11) (53% and 45% respectively).
- 16 to 24 year olds were more likely to say that their generation has fewer opportunities compared to older age group (those aged 55 to 75), 56% and 47% respectively.
- When asked what has contributed most to the rise in recent years in young people not in employment, education or training, 36% said it was limited access to apprenticeships and entry level jobs. 35% said young people lacking motivation or desire to work and 32% there being fewer opportunities for part-time or early work experience like Saturday jobs.
- Among 16 to 24 year olds, the leading explanations for this were fewer early work opportunities (48%), limited access to apprenticeships and entry-level jobs (39%) and broader economic conditions (38%), such as the cost of living or the job market.
- If the UK government was to invest more in helping young people find work, half (50%) of respondents felt that it should prioritise more apprenticeship opportunities, followed by skills training and education courses (45%), more work experience opportunities (42%) and help finding suitable jobs (35%).

- 55 to 75 year olds are most likely (62%) to suggest the UK government should invest in more apprenticeship opportunities.



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