

Cabinet Meeting: Monday, 30 June 2025

Question from: Councillor Hunt

Question to: Councillor Wilkinson, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children and Young People's Services

QUESTION

The Annual Corporate Performance Report 2024/25 highlights that youth unemployment in Calderdale was at 1,250 (8.7%) in March 2025 and this figure hasn't changed since December 2024.

However, the Report doesn't acknowledge the increase in youth unemployment of 180 from 1,070 (7.5%) in June 2024. Given this alarming trend, which represents an increase of 16.82%, what specific actions are being taken to address the rising level of youth unemployment in Calderdale?

Response

Thank you for raising this important issue. We acknowledge that youth unemployment in Calderdale increased from 1,070 (7.5%) in June 2024 to 1,250 (8.7%) in March 2025—a rise of 180 young people or 16.8%. While this figure has reduced slightly to 1220 8.6% in May 2025, we recognise the upward trend is concerning and are taking targeted action.

The Calderdale Employment Hub continues to provide tailored support for young people through job search assistance, access to training, and close links with local employers and education providers. It plays a central role in helping young people move into employment, apprenticeships, or further learning. Calderdale Employment Hub activity has been extended to March 2026 with funding through the West Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority.

Alongside this, the Council has launched a refreshed Post-16 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy, which places a strong focus on reducing youth unemployment. The strategy prioritises targeting youth unemployment through the funded programmes announced in the Government's Get Britain Working White Paper alongside actions to; improve employer engagement, enhance careers guidance for unemployed young people, create clearer progression and employment pathways for all young people.

The Calderdale Youth Hub has just launched in May 2025. The Youth Hub is a partnership between JobCentre Plus, Newground Together and C+K Careers and will focus specifically on supporting unemployed young people into work. Jobcentre Plus have referred over 30 young people to the provision in the first month of operation.

Calderdale is also set to roll out the Accelerator and Trailblazer pilots which are part of the national Get Britain Working initiative. This includes new interventions to ensure that young people receive timely and effective support into work, training, or education. The pilot will focus on removing local barriers to employment, such as lack of experience, mental health challenges, or digital exclusion. The work will also support the role of employers in providing employment to young people with additional challenges. Ensuring that employers and the young people receive the ongoing support necessary to produce sustained employment.

The Council continues to monitor youth unemployment closely through performance reporting, including the Annual Corporate Performance Report and via the Employment and Skills Partnership. This allows us to respond quickly to trends and adapt our approach where necessary.

Specifically for our care leavers, we have a employment and skills coach embedded in the team on Wednesday who works with specific young people and pathways advisors to support young people into education, training and employment.

There is a multiagency panel called ASPIRE, that meets bi monthly to consider the needs of care leavers and children in care that offend. This has representation from DWP, college, virtual school, employment and skills hub and young people.

Through this combination of local delivery, refreshed strategy, and national support, we are working to reverse the rise in youth unemployment and improve long-term outcomes for young people in Calderdale