First Youth Guarantee jobs fair brings big employers together to unlock opportunities for young people

Datum	27.2.2026
Subjekt	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
Region	Veľká Británia
Kategorie	Priemysel, Štátna správa a samospráva, Školstvo

Thousands of young people were brought together with employers today for the first ever jobs fair for the Youth Guarantee – the government's scheme to help ensure young people are either earning or learning.

- More than 3,000 young people and local residents connected with employers, training providers and careers services at the first-ever Youth Guarantee Jobs and Careers Fair in Blackpool
- Almost 100 employers from Blackpool Pleasure Beach to the Royal Air Force offered apprenticeships, work experience, training and live vacancies
- Work and Pensions Secretary also met major players from the local manufacturing sector as Government continues drive to help young into work

Thousands of young people were brought together with employers today for the first ever jobs fair for the Youth Guarantee – the government's scheme to help ensure young people are either earning or learning.

Hosted at Blackpool Winter Gardens, the event connected more than 3,000 local residents with 94 employers across a range of sectors – from Blackpool Pleasure Beach and Haven Holidays to Northern Rail and the Royal Air Force.

Employers offered apprenticeships, traineeships, work experience placements and job opportunities across a wide range of sectors, with some employers offering on the day interviews and immediate start roles.

The government will deliver at least one Youth Guarantee Jobs Fair in every region of England, Scotland and Wales – ensuring young people can access opportunities on their doorstep.

The events are part of the Government's wider work to address the long-term rise in youth unemployment and create opportunities for the almost one million young people not in employment, education or training (NEET).

After attending the fair, Work and Pensions Secretary Pat McFadden co-chaired a discussion with 16 businesses at Leyland Trucks, where he secured support from major players from the manufacturing industry including Altimex, Make UK, Leyland Trucks and Babcock International Group to back the Youth Guarantee.

Work and Pensions Secretary Pat McFadden said:

“With almost a million young people not in education, employment or training, it’s crucial we connect our young people with the opportunities on their doorstep.

“Today’s Jobs Fair in Blackpool and my meeting with key manufacturing employers has shown what’s possible when government and employers work together.

“I’m delighted so many local employers are choosing to back our Youth Guarantee, and we will keep going further so we can ensure every young person has the chance to earn or learn.”

Leyland Trucks demonstrates a commitment to supporting young people into and on at work and has a long-standing commitment to apprenticeships. The firm is leading the way in supporting the Youth Guarantee – currently employing 77 apprentices with a further 22 apprentices due to start in September 2026.

Extensive work experience placements are also available across the business, and it has established strong links with local schools and colleges, including SEND provision. As part of its Skills Pledge reaccreditation, Leyland also offers a guaranteed work experience placement to a young person leaving the care system, organised through Lancashire County Council.

Phil Jones, Managing Director at Leyland Trucks, said:

“The visit of Pat McFadden, Secretary of State for the Department of Work and Pensions to Leyland Trucks highlights our shared commitment of developing the youth of today to ensure they have a bright future tomorrow. Creating pathways for entry, development, and progression is key, and we are supportive of the Youth Guarantee.

“Leyland’s long history of developing talent through its apprenticeship schemes, and engaging early with young people through supporting work experience placements, will be bolstered by the additional elements of the Youth Guarantee. Leyland Trucks will work closely with local youth hubs to raise awareness of the Youth Guarantee and will explore how roles under the Jobs Guarantee could be offered.”

Today’s round table was chaired by Babcock International Group, which is committed to supporting young people through their early careers. From project management to engineering and science, apprenticeships are offered for a wide range of roles. The company has invested in young people’s futures through schemes that allow them to build a portfolio of skills they can expand upon through their career.

Ben Carpenter-Merritt, Chief of Staff and External Affairs Director at Babcock International Group, said:

“At Babcock, we believe that creating opportunities for young people is one of the most important investments we can make. The Youth Guarantee aligns well with our commitment to develop the next generation of talent across the UK. We’re pleased to stand alongside other major employers today and play our part in ensuring every young person has a clear pathway into a rewarding, skilled career.”

The sector is growing in the region and currently accounts for around 13% of total employees – so securing its backing will transform the opportunities on offer for young Lancastrians. Crucially for a

sector made up 90% SMEs, smaller firms also discussed how they create more high-quality pathways into skilled work.

The Jobs Fair and manufacturing meeting strengthened local partnerships between the Department for Work and Pensions, employers, careers services and training providers and supports a seamless transition for young people into sustained employment.

The event reinforced the Government's commitment that all young people under 25 should be offered one of the following high-quality pathways:

- employment
- continued education
- an apprenticeship
- a traineeship, work experience placement or Sector-Based Work Academy Programme (SWAP)

Additional Information

- Backed by £1.5 billion, the Youth Guarantee is designed to support nearly one million young people who are not currently in education, employment or training, ensuring they have the skills, confidence and support needed to succeed.
- The jobs fair is the latest step in the Government's work to boost opportunity to support young people into employment or training. An £820 million investment in the Youth Guarantee to support almost one million young people will create 350,000 new training and workplaces, 55,000 guaranteed jobs for the long-term unemployed, over 360 youth hubs across Great Britain. We have also launched a major investigation spearheaded by Alan Milburn will investigate the barriers preventing the young from accessing work.
- The roundtable was convened by Enginuity, the engineering and manufacturing skills charity, on behalf of the National Manufacturing Skills Taskforce

Simon Smith, Business Development Director at Brookhouse Aerospace, said:

"Brookhouse Aerospace is committed to supporting young people through the Youth Guarantee, investing in future talent is a core part of our long-term strategy. As proud patrons of the Blackburn and Darwen Youth Zone, we work closely with the organisation to promote employment opportunities and engage with local young people. We currently have 24 young people progressing through our training programmes, including apprenticeships across a range of disciplines – from quality engineering to sheet metal work."

Colin Leighfield, Director, UK Metals Council, said:

"United Kingdom Metals Council welcomes the government's initiative on the Youth Guarantee. We look forward to working in partnership with DWP to develop this and achieve the best possible opportunity for all young people who are seeking a secure and productive career in the Metals Industry. "

Daniel Miller, Managing Director at Coolkit, said:

"We're proud to be backing the Government's Youth Guarantee scheme and playing our part in developing the next generation of manufacturing talent. Real careers are built on real experience,

and this scheme gives young people meaningful, hands-on opportunities while allowing us to actively shape and strengthen the future workforce through genuine collaboration."

Verity Davidge, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Make UK said:

"Make UK is pleased to join forces with government and partners to help ensure the Youth Guarantee delivers real, practical opportunities for young people across the country.

"The Government is rightly focused on tackling the NEETs challenge by supporting industry to recruit more young people and connect them to sectors where there is clear, long-term demand for skills. Manufacturing is one such sector, offering high-quality, well-paid careers — with average wages around 8% higher than the economy as a whole — alongside clear progression routes from advanced apprenticeships through to higher technical and degree qualifications.

"By working in partnership with government, we can turn the ambition of the Youth Guarantee into sustained employment, stronger skills pipelines and a more competitive UK economy."

Ann Watson, CEO at Enginuity, said:

"The Youth Guarantee is an important step towards ensuring every young person can access high-quality education, training or employment and we are proud to support its ambition. On behalf of the National Manufacturing Skills Taskforce, Enginuity was delighted to bring together industry, partners and government with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to help drive its delivery. The Youth Guarantee offers opportunity not only to support youth employment but to help address persistent skills gaps across our sector. With nearly 90% of engineering and manufacturing employers being SMEs, their engagement will be essential to delivering the volume and quality of apprenticeships, work placements and jobs that young people – and the wider economy - need.

Through programmes such as Enspiring Futures, our Women in STEM Apprenticeships Guide and outreach to learners at risk of being NEET, Enginuity is directly helping young people access STEM and technical careers. At the same time, The Policy Centre for Supply Chain and SMEs is gathering real-world insight from employers to ensure government policy reflects the needs of the 90% of businesses that are SMEs, helping inform practical solutions that work on the ground."

Alun Francis, Chief Executive, Blackpool and The Fylde College, said:

"Bringing together employers, training providers and government through the Youth Guarantee Jobs and Careers Fair – and the manufacturing roundtable – demonstrates the value of strong partnerships in supporting people into work."

"Working collaboratively in this way is vital to connecting local people with opportunities, creating clear pathways for them into sustainable employment – and ensuring training providers can respond effectively to emerging workforce needs and support the regional economy."

Stuart Thorton, Director of M. Thornton Engineering Ltd

said:

“M.Thornton Engineering limited is a small, family, manufacturing business in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, and we welcome the announcement of the Youth Guarantee initiative. As a representative of the many tens of thousands of micro, small and medium enterprises, we look forward to finding out the finer details of the programme and how the government will support the NEET group, and all micro and SME’s in offering work experience, work placements, employment and apprenticeship opportunities, directly financially, administratively and with the necessary training, to offer ethical, sustainable and continued opportunities to the NEET group and usual employment stream.”

The roundtable was attended by representatives from:

- Leyland Trucks
- Babcock International
- Make UK
- Altimex Ltd
- Safran Nacelles
- Brookhouse Aerospace Ltd
- Composites UK
- Teledyne
- UK Metals Council
- WEC Group
- M Thornton Engineering
- Coolkit
- CNC Robotics
- Husco
- Blackpool and The Fylde College
- Enginuity

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-youth-guarantee-jobs-fair-brings-big-employers-together-to-unlock-opportunities-for-young-people