

# Con-Dems: Supporting Youth Enslavement

In an attempt to demonstrate the 'unity' of the coalition after the Lib Dems' disastrous results in the local elections, Cameron and Clegg attended a series of events to launch their new plan 'Supporting Youth Employment'. This five point plan essentially claims to address the issues of education, youth services, training, welfare and the economy.

In fact from the introduction to the report, you might assume that the government has successfully identified the barriers facing young people. But reading further shows at best vague, empty promises and at worst, more brutal attacks. With one vacancy for every five jobseekers and no investment in a programme of socially useful jobs, no amount of plans and reports will help young people.

## 1. Raising attainment and ensuring that young people have the skills they need to compete in a global economy, including through quality vocational education and training.

The first section of the document assures us of the government's intention to raise the educational attainment of young people, ensuring them an easier transition from education into a job. This comes from the very same government who just months ago took the axe to EMA student payments and tripled tuition fees, the same government that has driven through swingeing cuts to school budgets.

But even what is in the document, far from outlining plans for supporting young people in education, amounts to a list of further attacks. On the basis of continued cuts to an already overstretched education system, increasing the age of compulsory participation in education will result in a greatly reduced standard of education post 16.

Many pupils, most likely those from more working class backgrounds, will be siphoned off at 14 to study vocational courses, told academic studies are 'not for them'. The introduction of the so called English Baccalaureate will introduce a two-tier system similar to that of O-Levels and CSEs. Only those pupils who've studied the 'right' subjects to be awarded the 'English Bac' will have the chance to go to university.

**Claire Laker-Mansfield**  
Socialist Students national organiser

## 2. Helping young people at risk of falling through the net, by supporting local partners to provide effective, coordinated services.

Part of the Con-Dems' '5 Steps to Seeming Like You Are Working In the Youth's Interest' is aimed at ensuring that young people don't "fall through the net" and that no young person is "written off".

Part of this is more Work Programmes for 18 year olds struggling to go from education to work, and creating more 'education and training places' for young people, particularly those from 'disadvantaged'

backgrounds. The government is also expecting Jobcentre Plus to extend its service and take in the 5,000 most disadvantaged 16-17 year olds, through 'Work Experience and Work Clubs'.

This comes at a time when funding for Connexions and other youth services has been almost universally slashed by local councils and Jobcentres are being shut and jobs cut left, right and centre. The government is condemning young people to a lifetime of insecure, alienating employment at best, whilst desperately covering their tracks with these feeble attempts at a cure.

**Tom Jusselin**  
Lewisham Youth Fight for Jobs

## 3. Encouraging employers in both the public and private sectors to help inspire young people and to offer more work experience, internships and apprenticeship opportunities to young people.

Extending work-for-your-benefit schemes to 12 weeks; Reducing the requirements of apprenticeship schemes, as requested by McDonalds among others; Hugely expanding numbers of interns, with a mere promise to 'ask' for wages or expenses.

Out of these schemes, those on apprenticeships are the only ones guaranteed a minimum wage. However, for those under 19 or in their first year of the apprenticeship, this is set at £2.50, due to rise to a whopping £2.60 in October! There will be an extra 40,000 apprenticeships available.

So for the remaining 960,000 unemployed youth, the government is proposing they work for free. This is a huge attack, primarily on those who are unemployed, but



The report shows contempt for the unemployed, even though there are almost no jobs available photo Senan

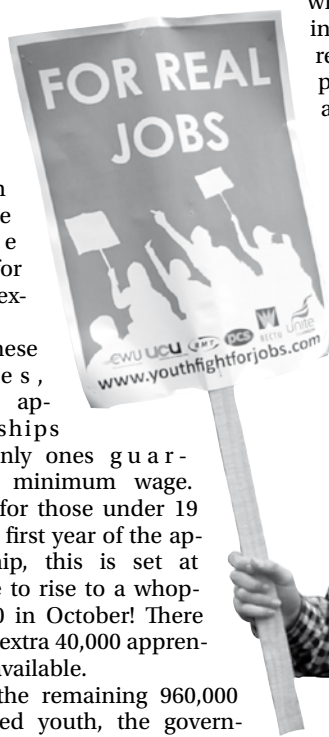
also a threat to the millions on temporary or insecure contracts. It must be recognised for what it is, an attempt to further casualise an entire generation.

**Ben Robinson**  
YFJ chair

## 4. Promoting personal responsibility by ensuring that work pays and that those on out-of-work benefits who can work prepare and search for work effectively.

The section of the proposals on benefits reads as a list of attacks. They will "ensure that work pays" by introducing the Universal Credit, reducing the number of disabled people who can claim support and forcing parents with young children to look for work - all essentially cuts in benefits.

Unemployed people will 'prepare and search for work effectively' by being forced



## Join the Jarrow march! Jarrow to London October 2011

March for a genuine solution to youth unemployment - for free, decent education and real training on trade union agreed rates of pay that leads to a guaranteed socially useful job at the end. Join Youth Fight for Jobs to fight for a future for young people! If you want to help by marching, fundraising or organising a protest as part of the march, get in touch:

[www.jarrow2london2011.wordpress.com](http://www.jarrow2london2011.wordpress.com)  
[www.youthfightforjobs.com](http://www.youthfightforjobs.com)  
[youthfightforjobs@gmail.com](mailto:youthfightforjobs@gmail.com)  
020 8558 7947

onto slave labour schemes that provide no meaningful skills - work that definitely doesn't pay! And "stronger sanctions" will be introduced for unsatisfactory performance at reviews of how hard people are looking for a job - yet another way to slash benefits.

The Con-Dems' contempt for the unemployed is obvious in every sentence. Claimants are referred to as "Jobcentre Plus customers". And all the time, no mention of the fact that there are no jobs for the unemployed to find!

**Sarah Wrack**  
YFJ press and campaigns officer

## 5. Creating the wider conditions for balanced, sustainable growth, including through protecting and extending the flexibilities of the UK labour market.

The final part of the document talks about creating the conditions for

sustainable growth. As priorities, the government is claiming that it will "identify and remove barriers to growth in key sectors in the UK economy".

But the government is the biggest barrier to growth! They want to slash and burn over 700,000 of our jobs and public services to pay for a crisis caused by the bankers and the super rich. That's going to add to the growing army of young unemployed and not help solve the problem.

They also talk about helping "employer-led innovation to raise skills" and creating a more flexible labour market. Great, just what young people have been crying out for - training for a McJob where you can get fired at the drop of a hat!

This document is rephrasing cuts to benefits and repackaging existing slave labour schemes and shows just how far out of touch this government of Bullingdon boys really is.

**Paul Callanan**  
YFJ national organiser

## Yorkshire Youth Fight for Jobs regional conference

Saturday 28 May, 12-4pm, PCS Offices, Merrion Centre, Leeds £2

For more information contact Iain on 07809 839793, [yorkshireyfj@googlemail.com](mailto:yorkshireyfj@googlemail.com)



Speakers include:

- Sam Garratt, Leeds Trinity Students Against Cuts
- Ian Pattison, Leeds occupation press rep, talking about how the student movement can continue the fight against fees and cuts
- Matt Meehan, regional young members convenor for the PCS
- Tracy Edwards, national organiser of the PCS young members network, speaking about the recent strike of call centre workers against their appalling conditions and how PCS activists are preparing to strike alongside teachers and lecturers on 30 June
- A striking young teacher at Rawmarsh Community school in Sheffield, where a victory against job cuts has been won

## Save London Met!

Lobby the Board of Governors, Dean and Executive Group.

Thursday 19 May, 11:30am  
166-220 Holloway Road,  
London N7 8DB

