



The Young Fabian Jobs Plan

Launching a major new project for 2012



RAYHAN HAQUE

A jobs deficit lies at the heart of our nation's economic woes. The rampantly high level of unemployment

and lack of job growth is holding back the UK economy and debilitating any recovery. This year, output has been depressed, with only 0.6% growth in the past 12 months. And while several reasons can be cited for this, none is more central than the crisis currently afflicting our jobs market.

According to the latest data, unemployment is at its highest since 1994, with youth unemployment registering over a million young people out of work and soaring to a record high. Over 20% of 16-24 year olds available for work are unemployed and over 200,000 of these individuals have been languishing in such a state for over 12 months. There is also a significant degree of slack in the labour market, with over 1.2 million working part-time involuntarily, meaning if they could work full-time, they would.

Making matters worse, is the ferocious competition they face in the jobs market. Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures estimate 5.7 people are chasing each vacancy. But this fails to fully appreciate the reality confronting many young people, as they are widely shunned by employers for older and more experienced workers. It also neglects the fact that jobs are very often contested by individuals in work as well as those out of work.

Perhaps somewhat more reflective, and worrying, is the state of the jobs market captured by Totaljobs.com. They have found the average number of applications submitted per job is 23, with jobs in less technical professions like retail,

secretarial, and customer service work fought over by more than 40 applicants.

And for graduates the situation is even harsher, with recorded unemployment at a ten-year high and competition for each opening often

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numbering in the hundreds. The latest survey of the top 144 employers by the Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR), found a staggering 83 graduates tussling with one another for each position; that figure has almost trebled in three years.

The Government's slash and burn approach on the economy, which has sucked out demand and precipitated a meltdown in business and consumer confidence, means the situation is only set to get worse. Growth has

recently been downgraded by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) for 2011 and the following two years, and they have predicted unemployment to continue rising until it peaks in 2012 at 2.84 million. It has also grossly revised upwards its estimates of public sector job losses, which will now total a massive 710,000.

There would be less anxiety and more optimism about the future, if we were enjoying an economic recovery that was churning out jobs and creating new opportunities. Instead, the jobs deficit is only getting worse, particularly in the past few months, which have seen more jobs lost in the public sector than created in the private sector at a ratio of 13:1. And the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has warned this deteriorating situation will continue into 2012.

Tackling youth unemployment and the jobs deficit will form a central part of the Young Fabians' policy and campaigning work over the next year, which we've called the Young Fabian Jobs Plan. As part of this big project, the society will be hosting a major event in the run-up to the next budget. The Young Fabians Jobs Summit will be a high profile event dedicated to addressing the current economic and jobs crisis facing this country and its young people. It will focus on three themes: youth unemployment; growth and jobs; and prospects facing the next generation.

We are delighted to announce our keynote speaker will be the former Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon David Miliband MP. David will follow his address by leading a seminar debate and discussion with the audience. After this, there will be a networking reception for all attendees, corporate sponsors and invited guests. The event

will take place in the evening of March 13th and will be open to members and non-members alike. This is going to be a fantastic event and we want as many of you to be a part of it.



BRIAN DUGGAN

As well as crisis, the position of young people in today's Britain is defined by a stark contradiction. That contradiction is between the talents, abilities and skills of our young people and the opportunities placed before them. Put simply, our young people are better educated than ever, achieving more than ever and yet university applications are falling and youth unemployment is at a record high. This is a tragic waste of talent and should form the core of the Young Fabians' work and campaigns in 2012.

2011 saw Britain's young people record their best GCSE and A level results and yet at the time of writing UCAS applications for university places for 2012 were down by 15% and youth unemployment hit the one million mark at the start of December. This year Young Fabians will look closely at how, when our young people are achieving so much, can we be failing them so badly? From education and training, to jobs skills and to housing and living standards, our young people are being failed and more than ever we need to campaign to fight against the prospect of a lost generation.

This year, the Young Fabians Jobs Plan will focus on this dissonance between what people achieve and the opportunities made available to them. We aim to look at and learn from previous

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experiences of young people in tough times, and the actions government could take to alleviate the situation.

In 1998 the Labour government introduced the New Deal as a gateway for young people out of work back into the labour market, and between that year and the onset of the financial

crisis youth unemployment fell by 40%. It took almost ten years for urgent action to be needed six months or more and we ended the year with one in five of our young people out of work. Not only does this result in higher costs in welfare bills and lower tax revenue for the exchequer but it also has a huge economic and psychological impact on young people.

Throughout our time in education we are told almost daily to defer gratification, to knuckle down, crunch out the exams and the rewards will be forthcoming. But for many young people, with a huge variety of skills, talents and ability, the prospect of that apprenticeship, degree or graduate level job is being taken away from them. Too often, when we should be celebrating the achievements of our young people with a sense of pride, we are instead making excuses for the fact that many will not succeed as they should.

A financial crisis that hit while this generation was studying for school exams is leaving a generation out of work, under-paid and under-valued. This generation of Young Fabians is committed to looking at the causes and consequences of youth unemployment and to taking on the government on this issue of national importance. Please get in touch if you think you can help us.

Rayhan Haque and Brian Duggan are jointly coordinating the Young Fabian Jobs Plan. Brian is a member of the Young Fabian Exec; Rayhan is a Young Fabian member

