

TOUCH
STONE

EXTRAS

The Gender Jobs Split

*How young men and women
experience the labour market*



by Ian Brinkley, Katy Jones & Neil Lee

Contents

About the authors	4
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Introduction	5
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1 Young people in employment	7
<i>Gendered occupational segmentation</i>	7
<i>Disability and young people's occupations</i>	9
<i>Ethnicity and young people's occupations</i>	10
<i>Employment in the public and private sector by gender</i>	11
<i>Underemployment by gender</i>	12

2 Young people in education	13
<i>Further/higher education</i>	13
<i>Apprenticeships</i>	14

3 Young people not in employment, education or training	17
<i>Economic activity</i>	17
<i>Youth claimant count and other benefits</i>	19
<i>Experiences with JCP</i>	20

4 Conclusions and policy recommendations	20
<i>Policy implications</i>	20

5 Bibliography	25
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Touchstone Extra

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Introduction

The UK labour market over the past five years has performed very differently from previous downturns. Policy makers are still struggling to work out how much of this difference is a one-off generated by the exceptional nature of a recession resulting from a financial crisis and how much is caused by long term changes in the nature of employment. The youth labour market is no exception.

The big structural story of the past three decades has been the rise of service based industries and occupations at both the top and bottom end of the labour market, and the decline of manual and less skilled jobs. A loss of jobs in the middle has resulted in what has been termed an “hourglass” labour market. Yet the expansion of employment has been greatest in higher level jobs that typically require higher education qualifications to enter. It might be more appropriate to call it a “cocktail glass” labour market.

The youth labour market both mirrors and bucks some of these changes and in different ways for young men and women. The recession and recovery have had an unexpected impact on the gender balance in the labour market as a whole. In previous recoveries, job growth was led by female employment, followed by a recovery in male employment. In this recovery the reverse has occurred. Male employment has grown more than female employment since 2010. Cuts in public sector employment have had some role, but the bigger explanation is that more men are moving into lower wage jobs than in the past.

It is tempting to write up these changes as a generational shift where the structure of male employment becomes more like that of women. And there is some truth in this story – the underlying change has been underway for some decades, with more women taking better paid jobs and more men taking low wage service industry employment. But the overall structure of employment remains highly polarised with men and women dominating occupations traditionally regarded as male (manual jobs) and female (caring, retail, and personal service jobs).

Where the youth labour market (excluding full time students) bucks the trend is in the structure of employment. The shift in employment for those under 25 towards top end jobs has been modest, partly because few under 25s enter managerial and professional jobs. Skilled and semi-skilled manual work still remains almost as important today as it did in 1993. But employment in administrative jobs for the young has collapsed and the share in unskilled jobs has increased significantly.

Education has been seen as one route to challenge these traditional structures. The youth labour market has been transformed with a high share of young people now entering higher education, with exceptionally rapid growth over the past five years. The share of young women holding qualifications at A-level or above is now somewhat higher than for young men and this is a trend set to accelerate as for the first time more young women enter university than young men. However, below degree level, young women typically take a much narrower range of apprenticeships than young men, concentrated in traditional areas such as customer service, retail, health and social care, and hairdressing. In an ideal world, young men who would have gone to university would now be entering high quality vocational educational and training courses as a credible alternative – but our analysis, while not conclusive, gives rise to some concern.

A feature of this recovery has been a significant increase in under-employment, with record levels and shares of those in part time work saying they would prefer to have a full time job and significant numbers wanting more hours regardless of job type. Young people are even more likely to be in this position, especially when we exclude full time students. Their lack of experience often means they are in a relatively weak position in the labour market, and they are more often concentrated in service occupations in which underemployment is a problem.

High levels of unemployment make the labour market a harsh place for young people. This follows the depressingly familiar pattern of economic downturns where the young are always disproportionately affected. But even without the crash, the labour market for young people not following the academic route has become harder because long term structural change has made young people even more dependent on lower wage and unskilled jobs than in the past. The youth labour market remains highly segmented with the opportunities available and choices being made by young men and women on apprenticeships still dominated by traditional occupational roles and by the predominant role of young women in caring responsibilities.

For young people entering the labour market the first few years of employment can be crucial. And these first few years vary significantly by gender, with young women and men experiencing different pathways into the labour market. This Touchstone Extra considers how the pathways into work for young people vary by gender. It is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 – Considers young people in employment
- Chapter 2 – Focuses on young people in education
- Chapter 3 – Considers young people not in education, employment or training and the support available for young people out of work
- Chapter 4 – Develops the implications of this work for policy.

1 Young people in employment

Like the adult labour market, the youth labour market has undergone significant structural change over recent decades. Yet these changes have been different to those for adults, and young people with different characteristics have found their experience varies even more. This section examines how young people's occupations have changed over time, and how this varies by gender, disability and ethnicity. It also considers how underemployment differs between young women and men.

Gendered occupational segmentation

Technological change, globalisation and the rise of the 'knowledge economy' have changed the nature of the UK labour market. There has been strong long-term growth in occupations at the top of the distribution alongside less pronounced growth at the bottom. However, this shift has been less pronounced for young people, fewer of whom enter the labour market in high level jobs. Table 1 shows the proportion of young men and women employed in each of the main occupational groups (ordered by average pay) and how this has changed since the early 1990s.

For young people in higher level jobs, there is little gender difference, with young men only slightly more likely than young women to work in the top two occupational categories (managers and senior officials and professional occupations). However, there are persistent gender divisions of labour at the bottom of the labour market¹. The majority of young men are employed in elementary and skilled trades occupations whereas most young women are employed in sales and customer service and caring leisure and other service occupations.

There are some signs that the labour market has become less gendered since 1993 – employment in administrative jobs has collapsed for both genders and the difference between the proportions of men and women employed in these occupations has narrowed. Young men are also increasingly competing for and taking jobs in sales and customer services and moving away from traditional masculine occupations in process, plant and machine operation – jobs which have declined as employment in manufacturing has fallen.

Growth in elementary employment, such as cleaning, has been strong for both young men and women. In 1993, twice the share of young men than young women worked in elementary occupations (14 and 7 per cent respectively); but by 2011 this had converged considerably (25 and 21 per cent respectively). However, personal service occupations have continued to be, and are increasingly, dominated by young women and for young men skilled and semi-skilled manual work still remains almost as important today as it was in 1993.

¹ McDowell, L. (2012) 'Post-crisis, post-Ford and post-gender? Youth identities in an era of austerity,' *Journal of Youth Studies* Volume 15, Issue 5, pp573–590

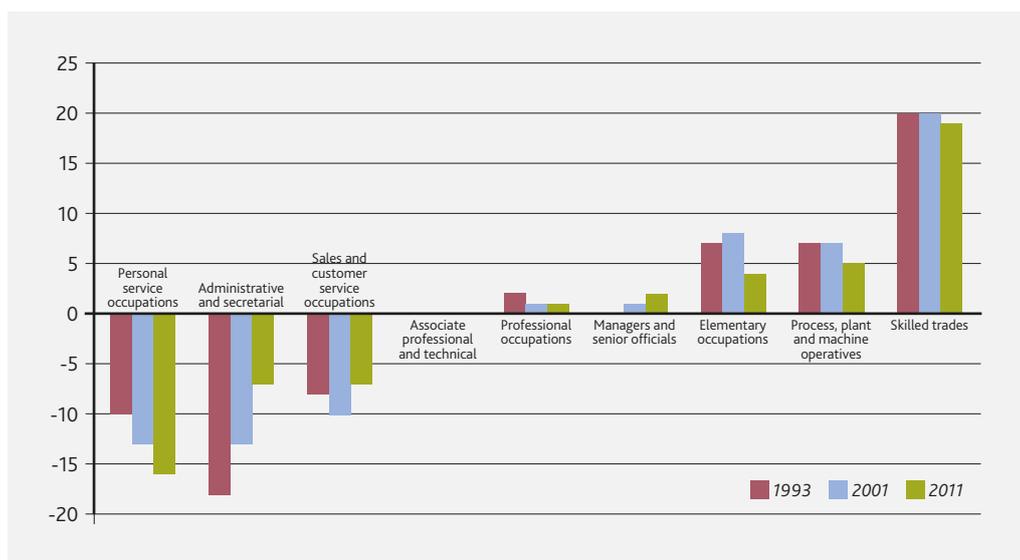
Table 1: Main job major group, 16–24-year-olds (%)

	1993		2001*		2011		% point change 1993–2011	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Managers and senior officials	6	6	4	3	6	4	0	-2
Professional occupations	5	3	5	4	5	4	0	1
Associate professional and technical	7	7	10	10	10	10	3	3
Administrative and secretarial	13	31	8	21	6	13	-7	-18
Skilled trades occupations	23	3	21	1	20	1	-3	-2
Personal service occupations	9	19	2	15	5	21	-4	2
Sales and customer service occupations	11	19	15	25	17	24	6	5
Process, plant and machine operatives	12	5	9	2	6	1	-6	-4
Elementary occupations	14	7	26	18	25	21	11	14

Source: Labour Force Survey, four-quarterly average in 1993, 2001² and 2011, weighted

These gender differences have some important implications. If young men and women enter occupations with different pay and prospects, this may entrench inequality of opportunity and the gender pay gap. Yet policies focused on youth unemployment tend to prioritise employment of any type, rather than particular occupations, neglecting to consider the impact that the changing shape of the youth jobs market may have for young women and men’s employment opportunities.

Figure 1: Occupations of men and women, 16–24-year-olds (% points difference)



Source: Labour Force Survey, four-quarterly average in 1993, 2001³ and 2011, weighted (note: occupations shown on the right are those dominated by young men and on the left are dominated by young women)

2 2001 data is based on three quarter averages – Q1 does not include occupational variables

3 2001 data is based on three quarter averages – Q1 does not include occupational variables

The reasons behind these divisions are well-documented. First, many young people do not receive adequate advice and information about different pathways into the labour market. Until recently many schools failed to promote apprenticeships at all and little is done to ensure that young women are aware of sector pay differentials when they make choices about which apprenticeship pathways to pursue.⁴

Careers advice and opportunities for work experience often fail to challenge gender stereotypes and whilst there have been some attempts to address gender stereotypes⁵ through non-traditional work experience and careers guidance, such projects are often small scale, time limited, and do not reach all pupils.⁶ The government’s decision in 2011 to transfer responsibility for careers guidance to individual schools, and the limited amount of face-to-face guidance currently on offer may further limit the opportunities for young men and women to make informed choices about their pathways into the labour market. Evidence from the Education Select Committee suggests that both the amount and quality of guidance young people are getting is in decline.⁷

Young people’s family and peer networks have also been found to impact on the decisions young people make about which career paths to pursue. And, where young men and women do enter workplaces dominated by the opposite sex, young workers can often find this an uncomfortable and intimidating experience.⁸

Disability and young people’s occupations

The occupations performed by young people vary significantly by disability status. Young disabled people are less likely to be in employment (Table 2) but this gap is larger for young men than for young women – and this is driven by greater unemployment and inactivity for young, disabled men. Rates of inactivity are relatively higher for young disabled men (relative to those without a disability) than for young disabled women.

Young disabled men are more likely to be in lower occupational categories than other young men. Compared to young men without a disability, young disabled men are overrepresented in elementary occupations; caring, leisure and other occupations; and, sales and customer services. They are less likely to work in skilled trades, process, plant and machinery, professional occupations and associate professional occupations.

Table 2: Economic activity by disability, 16–24-year-olds (%)

	Total disabled		Not disabled	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
In employment	39	45	53	51
ILO unemployed	19	13	15	11
Inactive	43	43	32	38

Source: Labour Force Survey, four-quarterly average, 2011, weighted

4 TUC/YWCA (2008) *Apprenticeships and Gender*

5 Osgood, J., Francis, B. & Archer, L. (2006) Gendered Identities and Work Placement: why don't boys care?, pp305–321 in *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(3)

6 Francis, B., Archer, L., Osgood, J., Dalgety, J. (2004) Gender equality in work experience placements for young people, Equal Opportunities Commission

7 Education Select Committee (2013) *Seventh Report Careers guidance for young people: The impact of the new duty on schools*

8 TUC/YWCA (2008) *Apprenticeships and Gender*

In contrast, young disabled women are most under-represented in professional occupations and elementary occupations. Young disabled women are more likely to work in sales and customer services, caring, leisure and administrative and secretarial occupations.

Ethnicity and young people's occupations

Young people from different ethnic groups have different experiences of the labour market, in part driven by differences in educational attainment but also by cultural factors and, in some cases, discrimination.⁹ There are large differences between different ethnic groups, but small sample sizes in the data available mean that the figures must be interpreted with caution. Table 3 outlines how economic activity differs between white and non-white groups. The online appendix¹⁰ also gives information broken down by ethnic groups, although small sample sizes mean these data should be treated as indicative rather than exact as confidence intervals may be high.

Young white men and women are more likely to be in employment than any other ethnic group. Other groups – such as both young Chinese men and women – are more likely to be inactive, with this perhaps indicating diversion into education. Several groups have very high unemployment rates. This is mostly due to higher levels of inactivity, which may indicate greater participation in education or caring, but may also suggest that many of the young people in these groups have given up on searching for work.

Table 3: Economic activity by ethnicity, 16–24-year-olds (%)

	White		Not White	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Employed	54	53	33	32
Unemployed	16	11	15	11
Inactive	30	36	52	56

Source: Labour Force Survey, four-quarterly average, 2011, weighted (note: figures include students)

Young people's occupations vary significantly across ethnic groups – but there is no simple pattern, with great diversity between groups. For example, a high proportion of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black young men are employed in sales and customer service occupations. This compares with 17 per cent of White young men, who are much more likely to be employed in skilled trades occupations compared to young men in other ethnic groups.

The highest proportion of young women employed in caring, leisure and other service occupations are of Black ethnicity. This may partially be explained by lower educational attainment amongst this group, and previous research has found poorly qualified young women from Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and Pakistani groups to be particularly disadvantaged, facing low pay, discrimination, and negative attitudes from employers.¹¹ In some cases, ethnicity may be a less important driver of occupational differences than other factors such as qualifications or social class.

9 Clark, K. and Drinkwater, S. (2007) *Ethnic minorities in the labour market: Dynamics and diversity*. York, JRF

10 www.tuc.org.uk/tucfiles/645/gender-jobs-split-appendix.pdf

11 Escott, K. (2012) Young women on the margins of the labour market *Work, Employment & Society*, Volume 26, No.3, pp412–428

Table 4: Main job major group for men and women, 16–24-year-olds, by ethnicity (%)

	Men		Women	
	White	Non-white	White	Non-White
Managers, directors and senior officials	3	4	2	1
Professional occupations	6	5	7	8
Associate professional and technical occupations	10	10	8	12
Administrative and secretarial occupations	6	6	14	15
Skilled trades occupations	22	6	2	0
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	4	10	21	20
Sales and customer service occupations	17	28	25	31
Process, plant and machine operatives	6	3	1	1
Elementary occupations	25	29	21	12

Source: Labour Force Survey, four-quarterly average, 2011, weighted (note: ethnic groups are combined due to small sample sizes)

Employment in the public and private sector by gender

In the context of government austerity programmes, it is also important whether young people work in the private or the public sector. The vast majority – 92 per cent of young men and 87 per cent of young women – work in the private sector and there has been little change since the recession.

Table 5: Public and private sector employment, 2011 (%)

	Men aged 16–24		Women aged 16–24	
	2007	2011	2007	2011
Private sector employment	93	92	87	87
Public sector employment	7	8	13	13

Source: Labour Force Survey, four-quarterly average for 2007 and 2011. NB: Public sector figures in the LFS are based on self-reporting and so deviate from the ONS estimates of public sector employment. The public sector figures in the LFS are known to over-estimate the size of the public sector because they can include university staff and agency workers. The data presented in the chart/table are adjusted down to reflect this using the method suggested in Millard, B. and Machin, A. (2007) 'Characteristics of public sector workers' Economic and Labour Market Review 1:5, pp 46–54.

The youth labour market is primarily private sector, and so its strength depends largely on the pickup in private sector employment. This raises the question of why the youth labour market is so weak, given that private sector employment growth in recent times has apparently been so strong. The likely explanation is that as unemployment remains high, and demand weak, private sector employers are still likely to recruit more experienced, older staff before finding employment for young people. Unemployed young people also face competition from those leaving education.

For those young people who are furthest from the labour market, the current pace of employment growth is unlikely to be significant enough to address this problem. Initial evidence suggests that government policies to address this – such as the wage incentives offered in the Youth Contract – do not provide a sizeable enough incentive for private sector employers to hire long-term unemployed people.¹² And as new young people leave education and enter the labour market, long-term unemployed young people will face a challenging time.

Underemployment by gender

A feature of this recovery has been a significant increase in under-employment, with record levels of those in part time work saying they would prefer to have a full time job and significant numbers wanting more hours. Research by the TUC has highlighted the rise in numbers of women who are in work but would like to work more hours, with the number of underemployed women workers rising by 40 per cent since 2008.¹³ Similarly, TUC research shows that young people are more likely to be underemployed than the working population as a whole.¹⁴ As a result young women may be expected to be at a double disadvantage in this respect.

Young men in part time work are more likely than young women to be doing so because they cannot find full time work. 30 per cent of young men in part time work do so for this reason, compared to 21 per cent of women. However, relative to adult levels, underemployment is worse for young women than young men. 21 per cent of young women in part time employment cannot find a full time job, compared to 11 per cent for adult women in part time work.

Table 6: Reason for part-time job (%)

Age group	16–24 year olds		25+ year olds	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Reason for part-time job				
Student or at school	62	61	6	2
Ill or disabled	1	1	5	2
Could not find full-time job	30	21	29	11
Did not want full-time job	7	18	61	85

Source: Labour Force Survey, four-quarterly average, 2011, weighted¹⁵

A second measure of underemployment is whether those in work would like to work more hours (at their current rate of pay). Yet the proportion of young men and young women in this category are roughly evenly split, with about a fifth of both groups saying they would like to work longer hours (see online appendix¹⁶). This result changes little if we exclude full time students from the analysis. Perhaps contrary to expectation, but in line with what has been found elsewhere, underemployment does not appear to be gendered on this measure, among young people at least.¹⁷

¹² Jordan, L., McGinigal, S., Thomas, A. and Coleman, N. (2012) Early evaluation of the Youth Contract wage incentive scheme. DWP Research Report 828

¹³ TUC (2012) Economic Report: Women and work

¹⁴ TUC (2012) One million more people have joined under-employed workforce since 2008, Press Release 3.9.2012

¹⁵ Note that repeating this table without students changes the key results little

¹⁶ www.tuc.org.uk/tucfiles/645/gender-jobs-split-appendix.pdf

¹⁷ Ruiz-Quintanilla, S., and Claes, R. (1996) Reviewed Determinants of Underemployment of Young Adults: A Multi-Country Study, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 49 (3), pp424–438

2 Young people in education

Education and qualifications are increasingly important in helping young people to navigate today's labour market. Education has also been seen as one route to challenge traditionally gendered structures of employment. In this section we investigate the qualification levels of young men and women and how these fit into a changing economy. We then focus on apprenticeships and ask what gender differences in take up mean for men and women entering the labour market via this route.

Qualifications and gender

Young women are now better qualified than young men (Table 7). The share of young women holding qualifications at A-level or above is now somewhat higher than for young men and this is a trend set to accelerate as, for the first time, more young women enter university than young men. As a result the policy debate has increasingly shifted to focus on the under achievement of boys.

Table 7: Highest qualification levels of 16–24-year-olds (%)

Detailed grouping	Men	Women
Degree or equivalent	10	12
Higher education	4	4
GCE A Level or equivalent	33	36
GCSE grades A-C or equivalent	33	32
Other qualifications	9	7
No qualification	10	9

Source: Labour Force Survey, four-quarterly average, 2011, weighted

Despite increasing educational attainment amongst young women, gendered differences continue to play out according to the field of study, with significant implications for labour market outcomes.

Gender has been found to impact strongly on the subjects studied at both upper secondary and tertiary levels¹⁸, with women, for example, tending to opt for arts and humanities, men for science. This is also the case for vocational pathways, with men and women tending to opt for gender-traditional apprenticeships.¹⁹ This has limited the labour market gains of increasing educational attainment²⁰ as typically 'female' subject areas tend to lead to occupations in lower paid sectors with fewer prospects of career progression.

18 Iannelli, C. and Smyth, E. (2008) 'Mapping gender and social background differences in education and youth transitions across Europe' *Journal of Youth Studies*, Volume 11, Issue 2

19 Osgood, J., Francis, B. & Archer, L. (2006) 'Gendered Identities and Work Placement: why don't boys care?', *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(3), pp305–321

20 Iannelli, C. and Smyth, E. (2008) 'Mapping gender and social background differences in education and youth transitions across Europe' *Journal of Youth Studies*, Volume 11, Issue 2

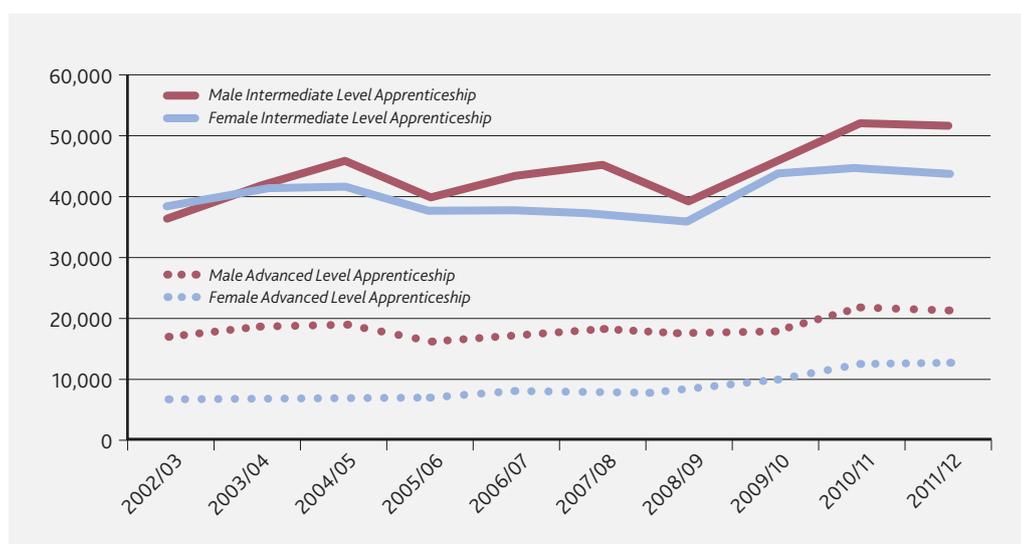
Returns to education differ by gender. For those with degrees (regardless of type) women gain on average a premium of £25k per annum. The return for men with degrees is much more variable.²¹ Yet recent research has found significant gender pay gaps for graduates despite studying the same subjects and working in the same sectors and professions.²² The wage premium to vocational qualifications is higher for men: for example, for women the wage premiums for HNC or HND qualifications is eight per cent, for men it is 12–14 per cent.²³ The most likely reason is the types of vocational qualification which men and women undertake, with women particularly likely to enter relatively poorly paid sectors such as care work. Gendered pathways such as this are important in helping to perpetuate gendered occupational segmentation and gendered wage inequality.

Apprenticeships

Following claims that young people going through vocational education are struggling to make successful transitions into the labour market, and in response to high levels of youth unemployment, there has been increasing emphasis on improving alternatives to the traditional academic route. Despite recent expansion, relatively few young people take apprenticeships – in 2011 less than six per cent of 16–18-year-olds were enrolled on an apprenticeship programme.²⁴ However they are the flagship policy in this area and the number of apprentice starts in recent years has grown considerably. The coalition government has continued to focus on increasing the number of apprenticeships available²⁵.

Yet there has been little attention to how the expansion of apprenticeships has impacted differently on young men and women. Figures 2 and 3 show apprenticeship starts for under 19s and 19–24-year-olds at each level.

Figure 2: Apprenticeship starts by gender and level, under 19s



Source: Data from The Data Service, Apprenticeship programme starts by age, gender and level (2002/03 to 2011/12), age is calculated based on age at start of the programme.

21 Birdwell, J. Grist, M. Margo, J. (2011) *Forgotten Half*. DEMOS

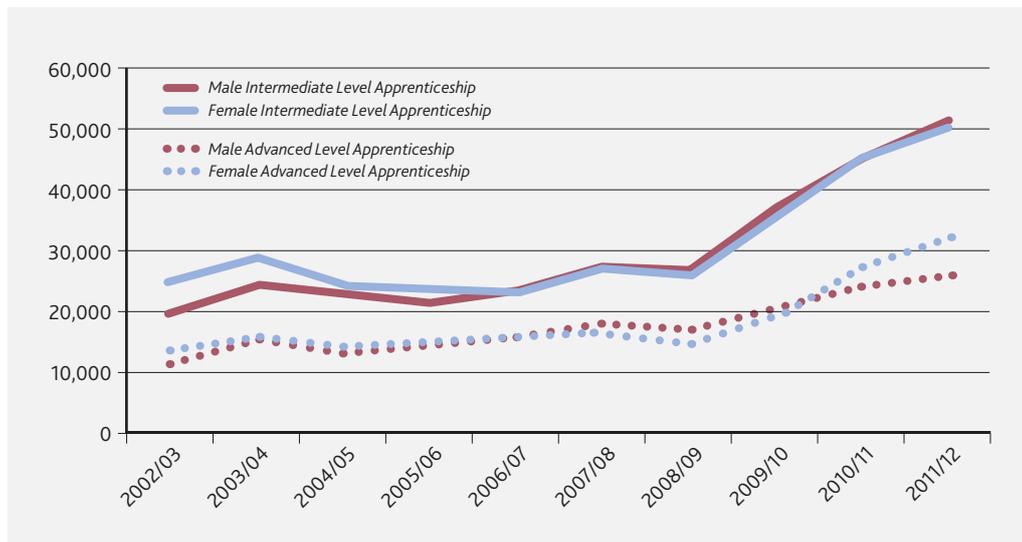
22 www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-21698522

23 Birdwell, J. Grist, M. Margo, J. (2011) *Forgotten Half*. DEMOS

24 DfE (2013) Participation in education, training and employment by 16–18-year-olds: Statistical First Release SFR 12/2012 www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/167492/sfr12-2012.pdf

25 See: Doug Richard *et al.* (2012) *The Richard Review of Apprenticeships*, HMSO, London

Figure 3: Apprenticeship starts by gender and level, 19–24-year-olds



Source: Data from The Data Service, Apprenticeship programme starts by age, gender and level (2002/03 to 2011/12), age is calculated based on age at start of the programme.

Take up of apprenticeship varies for young men and women- but for both apprenticeship starts have been increasing since 2002/03. For under 19s, fewer young women start apprenticeships than young men. This gap increased considerably between 2009/10 and 2011/12 and now stands at 13 per cent. This widening gap has largely been driven by increases in the number of young men under the age of 19 starting intermediate level (L2) apprenticeship (this is the lowest level).

For 19–24-year-olds the picture is slightly different. Here young women have overtaken young men in terms of apprenticeship starts, and this rise has been driven by substantial increases in young women taking up Advanced level apprenticeships. This level (L3) offers both higher labour market returns, and more opportunities for further progression into higher education programmes and professional qualifications²⁶ which in turn deliver higher earnings over working life.²⁷

Overall, whilst there are still gaps in take up of young men and women, recent trends suggest that young women are beginning to perform slightly better when we consider starts and levels alone. More young women are taking up apprenticeships at the advanced level.

However, starts and levels only give a partial picture and differences in the sectors in which young female and male apprentices work are striking, with important implications for their future labour market prospects.

²⁶ Beck, V., Fuller, A. and Unwin, L. (2006) 'Safety in stereotypes? The impact of gender and 'race' on young people's perceptions of their post-compulsory education and labour market opportunities,' *British Educational Research Journal*, Volume 32, No.5, pp 667–686

²⁷ Russell, L. and Darion, L. (2012) 'More than one rung on the ladder: examining barriers to the labour market for young women living in poverty,' in Waldren, J. and Kaminski, I. (eds) *Learning from the children: Childhood, culture and identity in a changing world*. Berghahn Books

Men take apprenticeships across a much wider range of sectors than women.²⁸ And whilst there is some evidence of training for a less gendered labour market, e.g. a high proportion of both men and women take apprenticeships in customer service and retail, some significant gender divisions remain. At the intermediate level, men dominate traditionally male apprenticeships in construction, vehicle maintenance, plumbing, and engineering whilst women dominate apprenticeships in hairdressing, children's care learning and development, and beauty therapy (see online appendix²⁹).

There are similar patterns for Advanced apprenticeships, where those offered in health and social care, children's care learning and development, business administration, hairdressing, teaching assistants and dental nursing are dominated by women whilst those in IT and telecommunications, engineering, electro technical, construction, vehicle maintenance and repair, plumbing and sporting excellence are dominated by men.

Such divides in access to vocational qualifications reflect those in the wider labour market – and in many respects the causes will be similar to those for occupational segmentation, as outlined in Section 2. These gender divides have serious implications for the labour market prospects of young women as they tend to be overrepresented in apprenticeship sectors with lower pay and worse career progression than those men typically take.³⁰

28 YWCA and TUC (2012) *Apprenticeships and Gender*. London, TUC. Available from: www.tuc.org.uk/extras/Apprenticeships_and_Gender.pdf

29 www.tuc.org.uk/tucfiles/645/gender-jobs-split-appendix.pdf

30 Russell, L. and Darion, L. (2012) 'More than one rung on the ladder: examining barriers to the labour market for young women living in poverty,' in Waldren, J. and Kaminski, I. (eds) *Learning from the children: Childhood, culture and identity in a changing world*. Berghahn Books

3 *Young people not in employment, education or training*

The experiences of young people not in work or in education will vary according to a range of characteristics including gender, disability and ethnicity. This section provides data and analysis of the economic activity status of young men and women and on benefits and employment support for young people out of the labour market.

Economic activity

Table 8: Economic activity of 16–24-year-olds, excluding full-time students

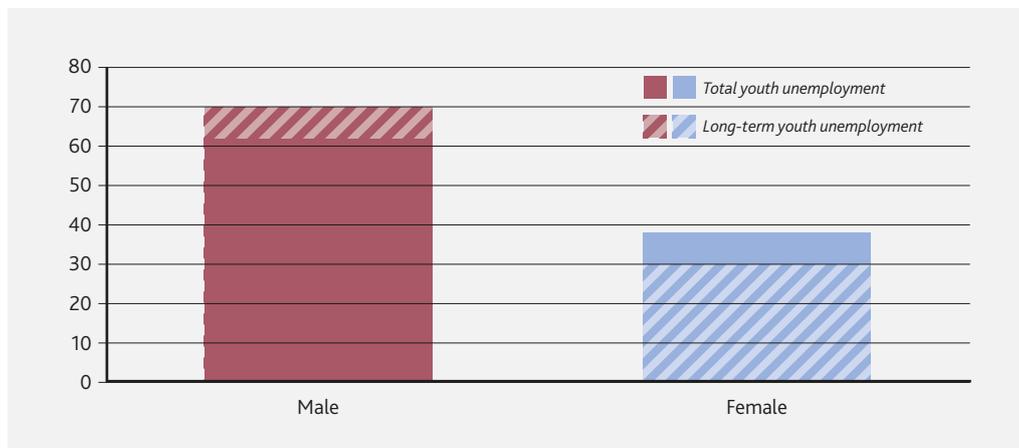
Economic activity	2007		2011	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Employed	74	67	68	63
Unemployed	15	10	21	14
Inactive, of which:	11	23	11	23
– Inactive but seeking	1	1	1	1
– Inactive, not seeking but would like	3	6	3	6
– Inactive, not seeking and would not like	7	16	8	16
– Inactive, looking after family/home	0	13	1	14

Source: Labour Force Survey, four-quarterly average, 2007 and 2011, weighted

The recession of 2008–09 led to significant reductions in employment and increases in unemployment. These trends were clear for both young men and women. Table 8 shows the economic activity of 16–24-year-olds both before and after the recession began in 2008. A higher proportion of young men are employed than young women (68 per cent and 63 per cent respectively). But this difference has narrowed slightly since before the recession in 2007 as employment has fallen more amongst young men.

Before the recession, young men were more likely to be unemployed than young women. If anything, this differential has increased: the percentage point increase in unemployment among young men is six per cent, for women it is only four per cent. This differential is more pronounced for the long-term unemployed. Figure 4 gives the share of total unemployment by gender for young men and women (excluding full time students). Sixty-two per cent of the total young unemployed people are male, and this proportion rises to 70 per cent of long-term unemployed young people.

Figure 4: Youth unemployment by gender, 16–24-year-olds, excluding full-time students, (%)



Source: Labour Force Survey, four-quarterly average, 2011³¹

Yet other than changes in unemployment and employment, the breakdown of young men and women by economic activity has changed little. The proportion of women who are inactive because they are looking after their family or home (including both those who would like and who would not like work) has increased slightly since before the recession hit (14 per cent in 2011). But it is nevertheless striking that less than one per cent of young men fall into this category, reflecting a continued divide in terms of responsibilities for unpaid care giving. Young women are more likely to do unpaid care work (including responsibilities for siblings, dependent children and relatives), and this will contribute to lower employment rates amongst young women.³² Other research suggests there are pronounced differences by ethnic group, with 'high rates of unpaid care among young Pakistani and Bangladeshi women – reflecting family expectations to undertake domestic work and care for relatives'.³³ It will also reflect the opportunity costs of caring and differences in work experience.³⁴

But these categories are not static, and between one quarter and the next there are significant flows in and out of employment, unemployment and inactivity. Table 9 presents flows data from the labour force survey showing the destinations of young men and women from unemployment from one quarter to the next.

Table 9: Destinations of young men and women from unemployment

	Men	Women
In employment	26	28
ILO unemployed	58	48
Inactive	16	24

Source: Labour Force Survey, two-quarter datasets, 5 January to 12 June, weighted

³¹ Analysis from Lee, N., Sissons, P., Balaram, B., Jones, K. and Cominetti, N. (2012) Short-Term Crisis, Long-Term Problem? Addressing the youth employment challenge

³² Escott, K. (2012) Young women on the margins of the labour market. *Work, Employment & Society*, Volume 26, NO.3, pp412–428; Armstrong, P. and Armstrong, H. (eds) In Vosko, L., MacDonald, M. and Campbell, I (2009) 'Introduction: Gender and the concept of precarious employment,' in Vosko, L., MacDonald, M. and Campbell, I. (eds) *Gender and the contours of precarious employment*. Oxon: Routledge

³³ Escott, K. (2012) Young women on the margins of the labour market. *Work, Employment & Society*, Volume 26, NO.3, pp412–428

³⁴ Russell, L. and Darion, L. (2012) 'More than one rung on the ladder: examining barriers to the labour market for young women living in poverty,' in Waldren, J. and Kaminski, I. (eds) *Learning from the children: Childhood, culture and identity in a changing world*. Berghahn Books

A slightly higher percentage of young women leave unemployment for employment than young men. Comparing the period 5 January to 8 September and 8 July to 12 June, there have been decreases in the percentage of both young men and young women leaving unemployment for employment from quarter to quarter. These decreases have been slightly higher for women.

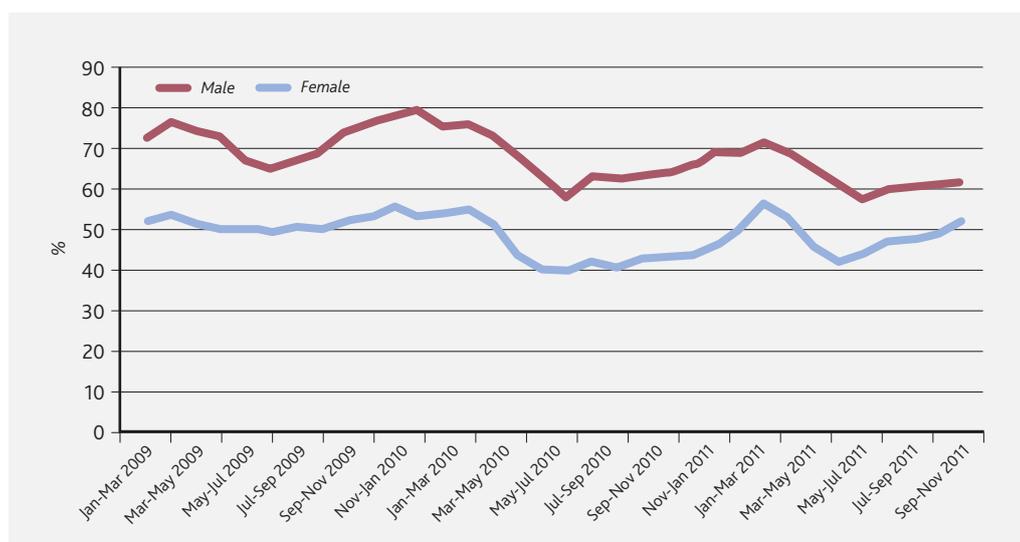
A significantly higher proportion of young unemployed men remain unemployed in the following quarter compared to young women. Comparing the two time periods, the proportion spending two consecutive quarters unemployed has increased for both young men and women, at a slightly higher rate for men.

Young women are much more likely to leave unemployment and become inactive (from quarter to quarter), perhaps because young women abandon job searching activities earlier than young men. This has remained so over the two time periods. However, the proportion of young men leaving unemployment and becoming inactive has decreased, whereas for women it has remained the same.

Youth claimant count and other benefits

The claimant count has always had a tendency to diverge from overall unemployment levels. This divergence is greater for women than men as they are more likely to be dependent on a partner who is earning, and so ineligible for income-related benefits.³⁵ Comparison of youth claimant counts shows a similar picture. Overall, roughly three quarters of unemployed young men claim Jobseekers Allowance, compared to just one half of unemployed young women. The level of unemployment amongst young women tends to fluctuate much more than that of young men, but the claimant count remains fairly constant.

Figure 5: Claimant count as a proportion of total unemployment by gender

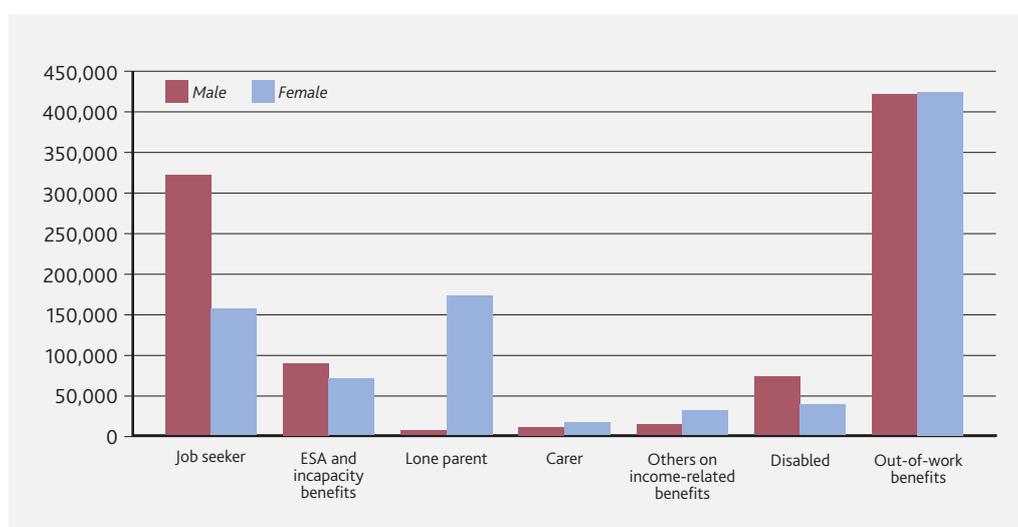


Source: NOMIS and ONS

³⁵ Machin, A (2004) Comparisons between unemployment and the claimant count. ONS

There are some marked differences in the types of benefits claimed by young men and women. Figure 6 shows the types of benefits claimed by young men and women under the age of 25. More than double the number of young men claim Jobseekers Allowance compared to young women. In contrast, almost 175,000 young women claim lone parent benefits compared to almost no young men (reflecting the fact that women are more likely to be lone parents than men). More young men claim ESA and incapacity benefits and other disability related benefits, and this is largely explained by higher numbers reporting learning difficulties and hyperkinetic syndromes (e.g. ADHD) (ONS, 2012).³⁶

Figure 6: Types of benefits claimed by under 25s



Source: NOMIS, benefit claimants – working age client group: men and women under 25

Experiences with JCP

Getting the right employment support for young jobseekers is crucial. This section reviews the programme evaluation literature available on how Jobcentre Plus provision varies by gender³⁷ to examine gender differences in the employment support available to young jobseekers.

The literature offers a mixed picture. Qualitative research has found that young women often feel ignored by agencies, including Jobcentre Plus.³⁸ And whilst there are some examples of local agencies being proactive in responding to the specific needs of young women- for example through working with local employers to develop work experience opportunities and offering other forms of tailored support- these projects are in short supply. Young women have also been seen to respond well to opportunities to undertake

36 For example, in February 2012, of those 16-24 year old men claiming disability living allowance, 59,710 reported having learning difficulties compared to 26,760 young women

37 For example; UKCES (2010) *Review of the Customer Experience in the Employment and Skills System*; SPAN (2012) *A Longitudinal Qualitative Study of the Journeys of Single Parents on Job Seekers Allowance*; Karagiannaki, E. (2009) *Benefits*, Volume 17, Number 1, pp. 15-28; Hayllar, O., Sejersen, T. and Wood, M. (2010) *Pathways to Work: The experiences of new and repeat customers in Jobcentre Plus expansion areas*. Department for Work and Pensions: Research Report No 627

38 Escott, K. (2012) Young women on the margins of the labour market *Work, Employment & Society*, Volume 26, No.3, pp412-428

periods of intensive job focused training and work experience while still being able to claim benefits alongside this, but again these projects are rare.³⁹ Overall support from job search agencies which aimed to address the labour market disadvantage of young women was found to be largely ineffective.⁴⁰

In contrast, however, the Jobcentre Plus Customer Survey also gives information on how satisfied different groups are likely to be with the service.⁴¹ They find that younger people and women were more satisfied with the service they received than other groups. Professionals and those with disabilities were less satisfied. Overall, however, characteristics such as age and gender were less important than the type of service accessed.

39 Grant and Buckner, 2006 in Escott, K. (2012) Young women on the margins of the labour market *Work, Employment & Society*, Volume 26 no 3 412-428

40 Escott, K. (2012) *ibid*

41 Howat, N. and Pickering, E. (2012) The Jobcentre Plus Customer Survey 2011. Research Report 775, Department for Work and Pensions

4 *Conclusions and policy recommendations*

Young people's early experiences in the labour market matter. The first few years of work help young people develop the skills and experience they need for a successful career. Young people today face a difficult labour market, with high levels of youth unemployment, a system of training and education which is in flux, and an economy experiencing both long-term structural change and a short-term crisis of demand. These factors will be felt very differently by different young men and women.

In this pamphlet we have shown how the early labour market experiences of young people vary according to their gender, and in some cases how this is related to other social characteristics such as disability and ethnicity. Both young men and women have been negatively impacted by the financial crisis. Young men have experienced larger increases in unemployment than young women, with young women more likely to move into inactivity. Young men also make up the bulk of the long-term unemployed.

These findings have several implications for policy- both for tackling the current youth unemployment crisis, and for breaking persistent patterns of gendered segmentation at the bottom end of the labour market.

Policy implications

- Policy efforts to address gender segmentation should be focused at the bottom end of the labour market. Gender segmentation remains an important issue at all levels of the labour market, but appears to be especially problematic towards the lower skill end. Intermediaries can have an important role in encouraging young people to consider a wider range of options including for apprenticeships in order to reduce gender segmentation. But it is clear that the problem starts in schools, some of whom are not promoting apprenticeships as an option at all, let alone challenging traditional gender barriers.
- Engagement with the private sector – where most of the jobs are – is crucial. There is a disconnect between overall robust job growth in private services and the ability of young people to access new job opportunities. It is also critical for addressing issues around gender segmentation. We identify two priorities – the role of labour market institutions and intermediaries and the encouragement of major employers to act as an intermediary with their supply chain.

- The role of intermediaries – private, public, and not for profit – is critical in connecting young people with the labour market, getting them job ready, engaging employers with hiring opportunities, and delivering more specialised support from other agencies where this is required.
- Using procurement to create opportunities for young people. The public sector has an important role to play in encouraging employers who win major public procurement contracts to provide as many hiring and training opportunities for young people as possible, either directly or through their supply chains. Public sector employment is in decline overall, but high rates of turnover in some areas mean that hiring opportunities still exist.
- Putting in place an industrial strategy for the national economy. The continued importance of skilled trades to young people reinforces the need for a robust industrial strategy linked to national and local skills strategies and the effective implementation of the Infrastructure Investment Plan. However, two important underlying issues are the significant numbers of young people in skilled trades with no qualifications and the extreme gender segmentation – more provision in this area must benefit more young women as well as young men.
- Tailoring support for different groups. Young people with disabilities, caring responsibilities, and those from ethnic minorities appear to be even more restricted in their choice of occupation and ability to take up work (note small sample sizes mean data should be taken as indicative rather than conclusive)
- Support to help young people enter and sustain work should recognise the different barriers often faced by young women and men. Support with caring responsibilities is particularly important for some young women
- Apprenticeship provision needs to match the scale of the government’s ambition. Apprenticeships are yet to have a significant impact on the youth labour market yet gendered divisions are striking. The Coalition’s support for and expansion of the apprenticeship programme is to be commended, but its impact on the youth labour market is marginal – only six per cent of under 18s are currently on an apprenticeship. It is important that efforts to expand focus on increasing the supply of high quality apprenticeships. Our work on the experience in other countries⁴² with much lower levels of youth unemployment reinforces the need to make large scale expansion of these programmes a strategic priority.
- Policy needs to reflect the fact that many young people do not claim benefits. Part of the explanation for the limited success of many of the government’s current programmes for unemployed young people may be that they only reach those who are claiming benefits and a high proportion are not claiming.

⁴² Crowley, L., Jones, K., Cominetti, N. and Gulliford, J. (2013) *International Lessons: Youth unemployment in the global context*. London: The Work Foundation

- Provide a local 'hub' service for youth employment to support young people's first steps into the labour market. A Youth Employment and Skills Service – as set out in a previous Touchstone Pamphlet by Paul Bivand⁴³ – would bring together job-related support through Jobcentre Plus with the careers services and other providers. Such a service would be designed to support young people in their first steps in the labour market, rather than focused solely on an initial employment outcome. Some areas may want to produce similar services, tailored to local circumstances, as part of their City Deal negotiations.
- Young men and women need clear and accurate information about the opportunities and returns resulting from different qualifications and employment pathways. The careers guidance offer must be improved if young men and women are to make informed choices about important first steps into the labour market. Young people need to be able to access high quality face-to-face careers guidance.
- There needs to be more investment in and support for work experience, taster days and other opportunities for young people – particularly young women – to learn about a range of career options and challenge stereotypical pathways into the world of work. In 2006, the Women and Work Commission called for the Department for Education to produce "Systemic change in the way education is delivered in order to reduce stereotypical choices, improve take up of vocational skills training, and improve employment outcomes for young women". Our evidence suggests there has been little change on this issue since then – renewed efforts are needed.

⁴³ Paul Bivand (2012) *Generation Lost? Youth unemployment and the youth labour market*. Touchstone Extra, TUC

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