



The Impetus Manifesto

Supporting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed in school, work and life



Impetus



About Impetus

Impetus transforms the lives of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, by ensuring they get the right support to succeed in school, work and life.



We find, fund and build the most promising charities working with these young people, providing core funding and working shoulder-to-shoulder with their leaders to help them become stronger organisations. In partnership with other funders, we help our charities expand, and we work to influence policy and decision makers so that young people get the support they need.

This manifesto reflects on the work we've done and the lessons we've learned over the last few years – from finding out about the Youth Jobs Gap and the exclusions grades gap; to funding great charities like Voice21 and Action Tutoring, to building coalitions like the Fair Access Coalition and the Youth Employment Group.

With thanks to the team past and present: Steve Haines, Sam Avanzo Windett, Ben Gadsby, Phoebe Arslanagić-Little, Ayesha Baloch, Dr Carlie Goldsmith, and Helena Vine.

The problem



Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, around 20% of all young people, are being let down by the system. They are 40% less likely to secure good GCSEs in English and maths. They are almost 4 times as likely to be excluded from school. They are 40% less likely to go to university. And they are about twice as likely to be neither earning nor learning in their early 20s – with only half this gap explained by lower levels of qualifications.

This is a long-standing problem, with slow progress in recent years. But we do not believe it is inevitable. From our work backing the best leaders in charities and schools, we see that with the right support all young people can succeed.

We do not claim that this manifesto will solve these problems. But we do believe these evidence backed recommendations would make a sizable dent in the problem. And we believe that as well as being the right thing to do, improving young people's life chances will boost our long term productivity and growth.

We are calling on the next government to put young people from disadvantaged backgrounds at the heart of their policy programme.

A tutoring guarantee

Invest £385m per year so that high quality tutoring is available to young people aged 5-19 from disadvantaged backgrounds who are behind in English and maths.



Tutoring is one of the most proven interventions for raising attainment, with high quality, small group tutoring leading to 3-5 months of additional progress.

Following on from the National Tutoring Programme, £385m would fund a simplified and streamlined offer for schools and colleges across the country. This tutoring guarantee should explicitly focus on the young people who need it most.

Economic modelling suggests that the National Tutoring Programme had a Benefit-Cost Ratio of 6.58 i.e for every £1 spent, it leads to £6.58 of economic gain. This represents very good value for money. By focussing more explicitly on the young people who need it most, the new tutoring guarantee could be expected to deliver even greater gains.

Oracy for all

Fund 500 Centres of Excellence for foundational speaking and listening skills (oracy), to model a world class oracy education and explicitly embed it into the curriculum, on par with literacy and numeracy.



Oracy is an impactful intervention for raising attainment. Oral language interventions lead to up to 6 months' additional progress, while students with higher language ability are more likely to achieve an A*-C grade in crucial English and Maths GCSEs. A growing body of research also suggests that the explicit teaching of oracy can have a positive effect on students' social and emotional competencies, and behaviour in both mainstream and alternative provision settings.

Currently, there is neither a consensus on what effective oracy provision looks like, nor any framework for measuring progress e.g. age related expectations. Oracy is also not explicitly included in the national curriculum and is not treated on equal footing with literacy or numeracy.

The next government should fund centres of excellence and begin to build the necessary infrastructure for oracy education for all. By finding consensus on what works, how to measure progress and what teacher CPD could look like, oracy could be effectively embedded into the wider curriculum.

Action on exclusion

Reduce exclusions with early intervention to avoid young people being suspended from school for the first time.



Young people who are suspended from secondary school end up, on average, 12 months behind their peers who aren't suspended. This suspension grade gap isn't a surprise, but it is significant. And only half this gap can be explained by the characteristics of the pupils who are suspended and the schools they are excluded from.

The next government should chart a third way between “no exclusions” and “zero tolerance”, built on the foundational aim of ensuring young people get the support they need to not get excluded in the first place. This aim should be a cornerstone of education policy reform whether on curriculum, accountability, funding or anything else.

Done well, an education system with lower exclusion levels would be a sign of a more effective education system for pupils and teachers alike.

Fair access to higher education

Enabling all young people with the ability and desire to progress into higher education to do so by providing fair maintenance funding and a sustainable system of student support before and throughout higher education.



Research shows that, on average, studying a qualification in higher education is associated with greater positive earnings and that selective universities have a higher value add for young people. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to attend the most selective universities and are twice as likely to drop out before the beginning of their second year of higher education, compared to their better-off peers.

Young people are facing the impacts of rises in the cost of living with 1 in 5 choosing to live at home and 55% of students now in paid part-time work, compared with 45% the year before. Growing evidence shows part-time work has wide-ranging implications, not only for degree outcomes, but also for extracurricular and social activities and a “sense of belonging”.

With a persistent access and participation gap being compounded by the cost of living, the next government should commit to continued widening participation funding and maintenance support. Information on contextual admissions, and fees, grants and loans should also be made more easily and widely available, so young people are supported to make informed decisions.

A young person's guarantee

Fund the Young Person's Guarantee to provide young people with the support required to access employment, education or training within four months of leaving employment or further education.



Youth unemployment risks diminishing the potential of young people and denting their long-term job prospects. More than 790,000 young people are currently not in education, training or employment (NEET), a 23% rise over the last two years. Not only does this damage the potential of young people and threaten their long-term job prospects, but it could also be costing the economy billions in lost GDP.

According to new calculations from the Youth Employment Group, reducing the number of NEET young people to the same levels as the Netherlands could generate £69 billion in GDP.

With rates of employment still not returning to pre-pandemic levels, and high levels of economic inactivity amongst young people aged 16-24, the next government should make youth unemployment and inactivity a priority. Targeted preventative measures for those at high risk of NEET are essential, as is tailored support for those who have been out of the workforce for at least a year. There should also be better join up between services to streamline the transition between education, further education, employment and training, to avoid young people falling through the cracks.

A close-up portrait of a young man with dark, curly hair and a slight beard, smiling warmly. He is wearing a dark jacket over a white shirt. The background is softly blurred, showing warm indoor lighting.

Will you
champion
young people
from
disadvantaged
backgrounds?



A call to action

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are being let down by the status quo.

This is a broad collection of ideas covering schools, colleges, universities and jobcentres, with no single department or Minister responsible for delivery. Indeed, it is likely that the Treasury will see some of these ideas as competing for the same limited pot of money.

Change requires champions, and our ask is simple: will you champion young people from disadvantaged backgrounds?

Share this manifesto with those who will make and shape the big decisions the next government makes - politicians, policymakers, thinkers, and leaders across all sectors. You can share this manifesto directly on social media by scanning the QR code.



impetus.org.uk/manifesto-2024



Get in touch

For more ways to champion young people
from disadvantaged backgrounds,
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impetus.org.uk/manifesto-2024



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