

The impacts of pre-apprenticeship training for young people

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Apprenticeships are the key means by which the UK government aims to build skills and tackle the problem of youth unemployment. However, not all young people are able to secure an apprenticeship. Traineeships, a voluntary six-month programme of work placements and work preparation training, were introduced in England in 2013 to help equip young people with the skills and experience required to secure an apprenticeship or employment.

The analysis in this paper uses linked administrative data on the population of trainees and a comparison sample of non-trainees to evaluate the impact of the programme on employment and apprenticeships. It uses a local instrumental variable approach, which allows selection into a traineeship to be influenced by unobserved preferences and for impacts to vary according to these preferences. The heterogeneous impacts can be aggregated to form an estimate of the average impact of treatment for all participants.

The results show no overall impact on employment for younger trainees (16-18 year-olds) but an across-the-board positive impact on the probability of becoming an apprentice. For older trainees (19-23 year-olds), no significant impact on either employment or apprenticeships is evident among participants as a whole but the results suggest that, for those more resistant to participating, traineeships may actually reduce the probability of becoming an apprentice.

These results confirm the effectiveness of traineeships as a means of facilitating apprenticeships among younger people. As such, they support the policy target of achieving 3 million apprenticeships by 2020.

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