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IN EDUCATION

Helping young people fulfil their potential

Transforming mass youth unemployment into a Youth TaskForce for a Faster Recovery and a Better Future - The 'Gen C TaskForce'

'Although the UK will be changed by the experience, I believe we can be stronger and better than ever before...more resilient, more innovative more economically dynamic, but also more generous and more sharing'. Boris Johnson - 10 May 2020

The recession and accompanying unemployment created by the COVID crisis has already most severely affected the under 25s. Added to this, will be the cohort of young people leaving schools, colleges and university this summer.

This will bring an additional one million 18-24s onto the job market. Research and analysis* forecasts more than 600,000 of these will become unemployed. This will have an immediate knock-on effect through the whole employment market. Studies also show that the implications of mass youth unemployment are deeply negative over the long term at a personal level and for society as a whole. The crisis could produce a 'Generation C' whose future prospects are blighted.

However, we believe that the Government can launch an initiative around young people, in a practical, straightforward way, that can impact quickly and scale effectively. We believe 'Generation C' can be transformed into a powerful engine to create a UK that is 'more innovative more economically dynamic, but also more generous and more sharing'. We are proposing the launch of a 'Gen C TaskForce'. Its aim will be to provide resource and support to:

- Enable a Faster Recovery
- Build a Better Future

Young people are uniquely placed to be effective at supporting these aims. Right now, everyone is trying to adapt to the new normal, including social distancing. This is a major challenge as we get the economy and life moving again. There is a very clear example of this working – The London 2012 Olympics. Young people were key to making a form of social distancing work in places where people needed to be in numbers. They helped make it work, very effectively, often with great humour and they became a core part of the spirit of 2012. The TaskForce can help this process of adaption happen more efficiently, to speed recovery.

At the same time, the digital economy has accelerated two years in two months. Building the UK's technology capability was always going to be key to future prosperity. It is now urgent. This is a digitally native, future-facing generation. With the right skills and capabilities, they can be a driver of productivity improvements and UK competitive advantage over the next 3-5 years.

In order to achieve these aims, we think there are 4 key success factors

- Government launched and supported
- Young people at the centre of the solution
- Simple and easy for business and institutions to support and utilise.
- Enabled by innovation, technology and data.

Making it work

The Gen C TaskForce would be open to all 18 to 24 -year -olds that aren't working or in school, college or university. Everyone signing up is guaranteed an income at least equal to the job seeker's allowance that can then be supplemented by the providers.

This initiative is enabled with technology, data and innovation with young people at the heart of the way in which it works and the way it looks. We envision this as a 'marketplace' (such as Airbnb) with a high level of 'social' functionality. Online and mobile marketplaces are natural for young people to use and access. It can then be positioned like a brand that is for them. We have access to the skills and capabilities to make this inspirational and aspirational. Young people sign up, check-in, explore, engage and fulfil on their mobile devices. They influence others to do the same. This will drive adoption at speed and scale.

Anyone in the TaskForce could then apply for task or project opportunities that have been uploaded onto the platform by providers from Central Govt, Local Govt, Business, Hospital Trusts, Charities, NGOs, start-ups, media and entertainment. These can be made available in a decentralised way, enabling a multiplicity of tasks and projects across the UK, often local and close to the point of delivery.

- Local community support
- Health service support
- Local area regeneration
- Environmental projects
- Apprenticeships
- Vocational training
- Innovation initiatives

There are already multiple new approaches to apprenticeships and vocational training focused on developing broad-based capabilities in STEM skills such as AI/Data/IoT/Robotics/VR/AR. The marketplace could also work in the 'opposite direction' with new projects created and developed by young people and then 'made available to providers to adopt.

Finally, the TaskForce should have a central coordination hub to build knowledge and best practice and measure effectiveness. It should be supported by rigorous and clear processes and professional management.

There will be some clear benefits to the whole of the UK

- Averts youth mass unemployment and its impact on the whole employment market
- Enables young people to provide vital 'Recovery' support services
- Upgrades the UK's competitive position by building future-facing skills and capabilities in technology, data, innovation, energy and the environment.
- Helps increase UK productivity over the next 3-5 years
- Additive to the UK 'Levelling Up' strategy

Recovery and Future

The challenge we face is of the scale of post-war reconstruction. The Beveridge Report created the legacy of the welfare state and the NHS. We do not have the same time now, but we can harness the energy and talent of the young, enabled by innovation, technology and data to create a uniquely 21st Century legacy.

- The Gen C TaskForce mobilises young people to help the economy and society adapt to the new normal, for a faster recovery
- Designed for rapid implementation and adoption to have a major impact early this summer
- Designed to scale over time providing access to vocational and skills training to support the future economy capability needs

With the right support, project design and management, the Gen C TaskForce can become a movement of young people. It enables the Government to make a positive intervention to help young people, to their very clear benefit and to the benefit of everyone in the UK.

**Includes research from Resolution Foundation, Institute for Fiscal Studies, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development*

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