

BREXITNING BUYUK BRITANIYA YOSHLAR ISHSIZLIGIGA TASIRI

Karimov Islombek Bekpo'lat o'g'li
magistr, TDIU, UPI +998972246660
ikmajor.95@gmail.com

Abstract: *This paper analyzes the impact of Brexit on youth unemployment in the United Kingdom. Using data from ONS and Eurostat for 2015–2024, the study finds that Brexit initially increased joblessness among people aged 16–24 due to reduced EU labor mobility and declining investment confidence. Over time, government programs and labor market adjustments helped ease these effects. The research concludes that Brexit reshaped youth employment patterns, highlighting the importance of skills development and adaptive labor policies.*

Keywords: Brexit, youth unemployment, UK labor market, economic policy, skills development.

Young people have been uniquely affected by the dual shocks of Brexit and the pandemic. Often the last hired and first fired, workers aged 16–24 suffered the steepest job losses in the early post-Brexit years. In 2021, youth unemployment peaked at 13.3% compared to the national average of 4.6% (ONS, 2024). This disparity was particularly pronounced among ethnic minority youth and those without higher education qualifications.

Research by Bell and Blanchflower (2021) emphasizes the long-term economic risks posed by “scarring effects” from youth unemployment. Workers who enter the labor market during economic downturns tend to earn less over their lifetimes, have less stable careers, and are more likely to disengage from the labor force. In the context of Brexit, this risk is compounded by a reduction in entry-level roles that previously benefited from free movement and EU-funded youth employment schemes.

One area of concern is the erosion of apprenticeships and internship programs, which have historically helped young people transition into work. The number of apprenticeship starts declined sharply between 2019 and 2021, and although they have since recovered somewhat, access remains unequal across regions and socio-economic groups (Department for Education, 2023).

Moreover, the mental health impacts of prolonged unemployment or job insecurity among youth are well documented. The Prince's Trust (2023) reports that more than 60% of unemployed young people surveyed in 2022 felt they “will never be financially stable,” citing Brexit uncertainty and pandemic disruptions as key concerns. These sentiments, if unaddressed, may contribute to longer-term disengagement and hinder the UK’s economic recovery.

This subsection analyzes the trajectory of youth unemployment in the UK from 2015 to 2023, focusing on individuals aged 16 to 24. As emphasized in Chapters 1 and 2, young people represent one of the most vulnerable segments of the labour market, especially during times of economic or structural upheaval. In 2015, youth unemployment stood at 12.6%, significantly higher than the national average. While the general economy showed signs of strength during this period, young people remained at a disadvantage due to several factors:

- Lack of work experience among school and university graduates,
- Prevalence of short-term or part-time contracts offered to youth,
- Limited career development opportunities for entry-level workers.

By 2019, youth unemployment had modestly decreased, but it remained nearly twice as high as the general unemployment rate, indicating a persistent structural gap.

Youth unemployment rose to 14.2% in 2020 — the highest figure recorded during this period. This spike can be attributed to:

- COVID-19 restrictions severely affecting sectors that typically employ young workers, such as retail, hospitality, and travel,
- A slowdown in hiring due to Brexit-related economic uncertainty,
- A saturated graduate job market, reducing the number of available entry-level roles.

This period highlighted the fragility of youth labour market participation, confirming the assumptions of segmented labour market theory discussed.

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