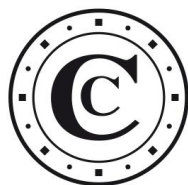


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THE 2025 ANNUAL PUBLIC REPORT

Public policies to support young people

Summary report

March 2025

Key messages

Regardless of the fiscal challenges facing our country, it remains essential to prepare for the future, which relies on its young people. Public policies in their favour are not only a response to immediate needs. They also constitute a strategic investment in building a more equitable, resilient and prosperous society. By supporting this pivotal period in life, the aim is to enable each young person to realise their potential while strengthening social cohesion and the collective progress of the country. Enabling young people to face the challenges they will have to take up requires clear, coherent and effective action from the public authorities.

Youth is a time when we establish our identity, a time of change: the transition from education to employment, from dependence on the family to independence, from being a political minority to integration into society. It is a time of psychological challenges: stress related to studies, uncertainty about the future, peer pressure or social isolation. Without support, these difficulties can be a source of vulnerability, exclusion or failure, particularly for young people in precarious situations.

The future of young people is relevant to all areas of public policy, which requires decisive action by public administrations, both national and local. These administrations cannot achieve progress without involving the whole of society: households, businesses, the educational community, the voluntary sector, research stakeholders, to name but a few.

The work carried out by the Court and the regional and territorial chambers of accounts has sought to establish sectoral assessments and identify the main issues in the organisation of public initiatives for young people. It has also involved examining the way in which these public policies are perceived by young people and assessing their effectiveness.

This report does not provide an exhaustive analysis of all the policies implemented to support young people. Indeed, other studies by the financial oversight bodies have recently led to publications or are currently in progress. They have and will give rise to reports concerning the future of young people, particularly with regard to primary education and priority education.

I. Strengthening the coherence and effectiveness of public policies for young people requires better targeting of support based on the needs of specific groups, and improvements to the pathways available pathways and a new strategy to combat addiction

Guideline 1. Guarantee equal treatment for young people and develop differentiated support mechanisms with priority targets for the most disadvantaged sections of the population

Not all young people have the same opportunities, due to social, economic, geographical or cultural differences. For example, young people in rural areas have access to a less comprehensive range of higher education options than those in urban areas, which tend to be more geared towards shorter vocational courses. Although their distance from university centres makes it more difficult for them to access information on the training available and student life, their exam results are also better, proof that nothing is inevitable and that public action is possible.

Some categories of young people face discrimination. Even among the most disadvantaged, there is potential to contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of the country. In this respect, the schemes for young adults leaving the child welfare system, which have been mandatory for several years, need to be used more effectively to help these often-overlooked individuals enter working life.

Building a country capable of overcoming long-term challenges means reducing these inequalities, which does not mean uniformity of public action. By guaranteeing fair treatment for all young people and supporting the most vulnerable, public policies strengthen solidarity and stability within society, for the benefit of individuals themselves but also of the country as a whole. In this respect, adolescent health and support centres offer a supportive environment where young people in distress can be heard and guided, in the face of a growing demand and difficulties in accessing mental health professionals, even if the public authorities need to clarify their expectations with regard to this mechanism.

To participate in civic life, young people must have access to employment. In this respect, their situation has been improving since 2017: the youth employment rate has risen by six points, more than half of which is due to the rise of work-study programmes. This improvement coincides with a massive financial effort by the State, even if the causal link between the two phenomena is not fully established. Despite this improvement, structural difficulties persist: the proportion of young people who are not in employment, education or training remains high (over 10%), access to employment is still very much dependent on the level of qualification and regional inequalities remain marked, particularly in overseas France and in priority urban policy neighbourhoods. Supply-driven management, based on volume targets for each scheme, must give way to management based on needs and results. This change is essential for all schemes to promote youth employment: support, vocational training and assistance with hiring apprentices.

To be financially independent, young people must, at least in part, be mobile and have housing. However, their specific characteristics in terms of mobility, entry into the labour market and income level make them vulnerable to the tensions of the housing market and are not compatible with high rents. Students are the main target of policies to support young people and they benefit from specific measures. Consequently, housing policy often has a limited impact when it aims to provide access to the general housing stock for all those under 30 years of age. Efforts to facilitate access to social and private housing for this group have produced mixed results, given that there are fewer housing options for young workers than for students.

Finally, young people aged 15 to 25 are significant and relatively captive users of public transport. Retaining their loyalty when they enter working life is a major challenge, particularly from the point of view of ecological transition. However, local mobility policies for young people most often focus on fares, while the main obstacle to young people's mobility is the lack of services.

Guideline 2. Rethinking the organisation and content of initial training courses to better prepare young people for social and economic independence

The current educational model, geared towards academic competition, places little emphasis on the behavioural qualities of pupils, yet these are essential to their independence and their personal and professional fulfilment. In this respect, artistic and cultural education helps develop sensitivity, creativity and critical thinking. Raised to the rank of government priority, it is now one of the four educational pathways in school education. In practice, however, it is still considered more or less optional in schools, while the quality of the actions carried out in the field is poorly measured.

Too many young people then enter the labour market with insufficient skills to integrate on a long-term basis. The aim of the 'guidance policy' is to provide families with informed information for better integration, to counter structural inequalities (social, geographical, and gender-based) and to prevent early school dropout. However, career guidance is often perceived as a default route and influenced by socio-economic and geographical stereotypes, with the consequence of limiting young people's ambitions. The situation in France is atypical in this respect: career guidance is not introduced until later, whereas many countries start to introduce young people to different occupations at primary school.

The training requirement for young people aged 16 to 18, introduced by the 2019 Law for a School of Trust, targets those who are not in employment, education, or training; in other words, all those who have dropped out of the school system, with or without a qualification. Four years after it came into force, progress has been made, but the initial objective has not been achieved. While this scheme has made it possible to mobilise local stakeholders more, few innovations in the offer have emerged, while significant territorial inequalities persist. The solutions proposed to young people in rural areas remain insufficient in this respect.

Rethinking training pathways means offering diversified routes to meet the needs and talents of each individual and providing better support for young people in difficulty with personalised schemes. This applies to the fight against failure at university. The numerous measures that exist locally have not proven their effectiveness. However, preventing failure in the first year of university is essential to ensure the country's ability to plan for the future. Its success requires a strengthening of the monitoring of student attendance.

Guideline 3. Develop a new national strategy to combat addiction

At first glance, young people may appear to be in better physical and mental health than adults because of their age. However, the reality is sometimes very different. France is one of the European countries most affected by drug and alcohol use among young people. In 2021, 2.6 % of 18-24 year olds reported drinking alcohol daily, the highest rate in the eurozone. French drug use is also thought to be among the highest in Europe.

Despite this worrying consumption, the health and medico-social response is proving to be insufficient due to a lack of proactivity and a failure to target young people. The support and care for people suffering from addiction is inadequate. The number of places available for young people in hospitals and medico-social establishments is low. Yet drugs have particularly marked harmful health and social consequences. The French Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction (OFDT) estimates the macro-economic and social cost of alcohol and illegal drugs at 110 billion €.

To prevent addiction, it is essential to act as early as possible, before the problems manifest themselves. However, the efforts made in this area are not commensurate with the challenges. The successful examples of policies implemented in the countries of the North argue for a more proactive and cross-disciplinary approach to the prevention and treatment of addictions.

The constant evolution of drug consumption methods, with an increase in the diversity of psychoactive substances, the still widespread use of tobacco and the rise of behavioural addictions, such as online gambling or social networks, as well as the fragmentation of the

current governance of the fight against drugs, make it essential to update the national strategy. This would make it possible to set ambitious risk reduction objectives, in parallel with the fight against drug trafficking.

Beyond that, policies that help promote the health and well-being of young people need to be better targeted. While just over three-quarters of young people play sport on a regular basis, this positive finding conceals significant disparities linked to gender, territory or social origin. Indeed, local public initiatives tend to target young people already seen as sporty, rather than those who are structurally more distant, such as young people facing socio-economic difficulties or those with disabilities.

II. To achieve these various objectives, the public authorities must provide themselves with the means for efficient initiatives to support young people

Guideline 4. Improve the transparency of public measures to support young people and better coordinate the public and private actors involved

The failure of many young people to exercise their rights, due to ignorance or excessive complexity, is a real problem. Many young people are not aware of the assistance or programmes available to them. Their needs are diverse and sometimes complex. It is important to simplify administrative procedures and provide better information to improve their social and economic inclusion, particularly for those in vulnerable situations.

Moreover, fragmented governance and the large number of stakeholders and systems are hindering the coherent and effective implementation of public initiatives. It is crucial to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in order to avoid contradictory instructions and to promote better collaboration between the various parties involved. The logic of taking charge by 'segment' of the population, or even contradictory injunctions regarding the diversity of the public, complicates the implementation of public policies, thus reducing their efficiency.

Guideline 5. Establish common monitoring and assessment tools for policies to support young people

The implementation of public policies must be transparent, so as to justify and legitimise the decisions taken and strengthen the confidence of all. Reporting on public action requires rigorous monitoring and assessment to highlight the most efficient and effective mechanisms and best practices, reduce waste as much as possible and avoid duplication.

Implementing long-term policies for young people therefore requires common monitoring and assessment tools that provide conclusive quantitative and qualitative data, so as to anticipate future needs and detect emerging risks. The slow development of an IT system hinders the efficiency of public action. Assessment mechanisms must be planned for at a very early stage, so that measures can be adjusted according to the results obtained. Strengthening actions to support young people will mobilise resources in a tight budgetary context.

Despite an estimated public spending of at least €2 billion per year, the effectiveness of criminal justice policy targeting young people aged 15 to 25 remains uncertain, as shown by the stable rate of young offenders convicted for repeat or reoffending under the legal definitions. In this area, the assessment tools available to the State to understand this phenomenon and adapt the tools of its policy are inadequate, while the few available studies point to the need for improvements.

Guideline 6. Provide the Nation with a strategic plan for young people and include a specific focus in all public policies

Young people will have to face the effects of climate change, digital transformations and economic and geopolitical instabilities.

They also have specific needs and aspirations, particularly in terms of education, employment, health, social and societal inclusion and participation in civic life. The design of a national strategic plan aimed at them would be an opportunity to identify these issues and to develop and prioritise appropriate, long-term solutions to reduce any inequalities in access to public services that may exist. It would provide a clear framework for coordinating all sectoral policies affecting young people.

Introductory chapter

A time of profound change, youth also carries the future within it. Young people forge their own path, with their families, but the public authorities have a decisive role to play in supporting them, if only through the studies, diplomas, training courses on offer, social rights and numerous other measures that together form public policies to support young people.

Key figures

9 million people

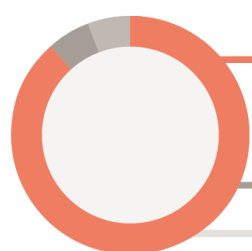
are aged between 15 and 25, i.e. 13.2% of the population. This proportion is set to fall and become lower than that of the over-75s within the next ten years

Source: Insee



21 and a half

the average age at which people end their studies in France. Over 50% of them have a higher education qualification



88.5 % are in education, training, or employment
5.8 % are unemployed
5.7 % are inactive

Source : Insee

Figures for 2022

€53.4 bn

The government spends heavily on support for 15- to 25-year-olds. It represents 2% of GDP. Education funding is by far the largest item of spending

Source: Court of Accounts

5.3 % of GDP

spending on education, all sources of funding combined, represents 5.3% of GDP, which is more than the OECD average and less than the United States or the United Kingdom, where the share of private funding is higher

Source : OECD



23 and a half

Young people leave home earlier than their European counterparts, on average at the age of 23 and a half.

Source : Insee

Source: Insee/OECD/Court of Accounts

The diverse reality of youth

Nine million 15-25 year olds in France today

Youth can be approached from a demographic angle as well as from a rights perspective. While researchers are reluctant to define narrow stages, characterising youth by age is unavoidable. The United Nations (UN) General Assembly defines youth as those aged 15 to 24, while the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union now use the 15 to 29 age range. Beyond milestones such as compulsory schooling or reaching legal adulthood, youth is shaped by the gradual development of legal and social competencies. The age of 25, with the benefit of the earned income supplement (RSA), marks a stage in this. This is why the financial oversight bodies have favoured the 15-25 age group, i.e. the ten years from leaving secondary school to acquiring all social and tax rights.

In 2024, the 15-25 age group will represent nine million people (13.2 % of the population). The demographic outlook is alarming. According to the central scenario of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (Insee), their share will decline and, within ten years or so, become lower than that of the over-75s. The impact will not be felt in the same way in all the departments; if nothing is done, the rural departments will be severely affected.

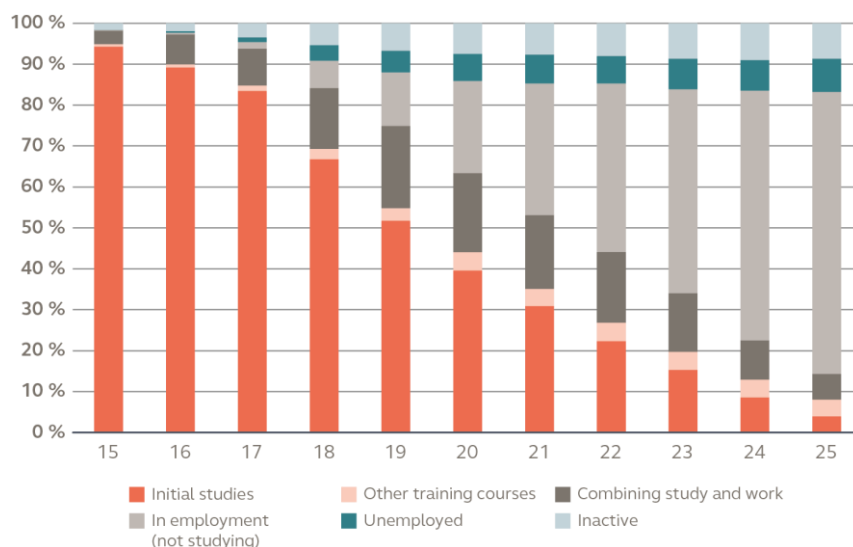
Numerous forms of financial or indirect assistance, such as reduced tariffs, are available to young people. The profusion of these presents a challenge in terms of clarity and information, resulting in a lack of awareness of rights and a very high level of non-take-up. Policies to support young people could thus contribute to widening the gap between those who are well informed and those who are on the periphery of the system.

A generally successful path to independence

Young people finish their studies at an average age of 21 and a half years. More than half of them have a higher education qualification, which puts France above the average and European targets (42 % and 45 % respectively).

The transition to working life is gradual and overwhelmingly successful by the age of 25. The vast majority of 15-24 year olds (88.5 %) are in education, training or employment. The others, known by the acronym NEET, are unemployed (5.8 % in 2022) or inactive (5.7 %). This indicator, on which France is very close to the European average, is now favoured at the international level. It avoids recurrent misunderstandings about the unemployment rate of young workers.

Situation of 15-25 year olds in terms of education and employment in 2022-2023



Scope: France excluding Mayotte, people living in ordinary housing.

Source: Court of Accounts based on Insee, employment surveys, average 2022-2023

Young people leave the parental home at an average age of 23 and a half years. This average age has increased, as has the age at which the first child is born (just over 29 years), but the increase is less than that of our European partners.

Young people are also strongly involved in community and voluntary activities, and their electoral participation, as observed by Insee, remains high (77 %), although 9 percentage points lower than the national average.

Persistent inequalities

Beyond the averages, the trajectories of young people reveal persistent inequalities. As shown by the surveys of the Centre for Studies and Research on Qualifications (CEREQ), while seven out of ten young people are permanently employed three years after leaving education, 16% are permanently excluded from the labour market. These inequalities are strongly linked to the level of qualification, which itself is still dependent on the socio-professional category of the parents. They also reflect the place of residence, with young people without qualifications from priority urban policy neighbourhoods being much more likely to be unemployed than those from rural areas. Overall, almost one in ten 18 to 25-year-olds lives in poverty. This rate is significantly lower than in Germany or the average for OECD countries. Finally, at equivalent qualification level, gender inequalities persist in access to managerial positions and in remuneration levels.

Despite the fact that most young people follow successful paths, youth is not immune to the issues of social disconnection affecting part of the population in developed countries — a situation that reflects both the quality of parental support and the public policies in place to assist young people facing difficulties.

Policies to support young people, between fragmentation and proliferation

Multiple actors, fragmented governance

From the 1980s onwards and continuously since then, young people have been made a public policy priority: creation of an Interministerial Youth Committee (1982), publication of the Green Paper on Youth (2009), establishment of the National Council for the Refoundation of Youth (2022). This priority has been taken up at the level of the European Union, whose role has been strengthened since the 2005 Youth Pact. However, the proliferation of initiatives has led to a certain degree of disillusionment.

Beyond the role of families and associations, the number of public actors is considerable. However, youth policy does not have its own dedicated structure within the public administration that is able to account for a coherent, unified strategy before Parliament or the public. The department in charge of youth policy (the DJEPVA, the French acronym for the department of youth, popular education and community life) is a small organisation that does not have the means to influence the major central administrations, especially since between 2022 and 2024, the function of interministerial delegate for youth was separated from it. Intended to meet at least twice a year, the Interministerial Youth Committee has only met three times in 42 years. Created at the request of the European Union, the Youth Policy Council includes youth representatives and is undeniably active, but does not generate all the expected feedback.

Local and regional authorities have broad responsibilities for youth and carry out a wide range of local initiatives. The lack of a clear definition of their remit in youth matters exposes them to the risk of overlapping actions, a risk that neither the lead role assigned to regions by the 2017 law nor the establishment of coordination bodies has fully eliminated.

More than €53 billion in State spending for 15-25 year olds

There is no consolidated overview of the funding allocated to young people by all public actors. The cross-cutting youth policy document that accompanies the finance bills relates only to central government and is difficult to use effectively. In this context, the Court questioned all

ministries about their funding for 15-25 year olds. In order to obtain a sufficiently accurate estimate, only measures specifically aimed at young people were considered, to which personalised housing assistance and emergency accommodation benefits were added. The result is that State spending on 15-25 year olds exceeds €53 billion, or 12 % of the budget and 2 % of GDP.

State spending on the 15-25 age group in 2023

Policy area	In €m	Policy area share
School education	21,713	26 %
Research and higher education	18,837	61 %
Work and employment	5,690	27 %
Territorial cohesion	3,524	19 %
Justice	1,144	10 %
Sport, youth, community life	657	38 %
Culture	499	13 %
External action	449	14 %
Overseas	351	12 %
Defence	294	0.5 %
Other (less than €150m per policy area)	275	0.1 %
Total	53,433	12 %

Scope: specific measures for young people, with APL and emergency accommodation.

Source: Court of Accounts

Three quarters of State spending goes on education (secondary and higher), and even four fifths if we include schools funded by all ministries. In this respect, France's level of expenditure is comparable to the average for OECD countries. The second largest item of expenditure is for work and employment, which includes the youth employment contract (€782 million paid) and aid and exemptions for employers for apprenticeships, which are growing considerably (€3.5 billion). The third largest item is territorial cohesion, which includes personalised housing assistance, followed by legal protection for young people. There are also a multitude of ad hoc programmes in the various ministries, sometimes with very little funding and with limited awareness among the target groups.

The nation is therefore making a real effort for young people. For several decades, this has been characterised by careful planning and the motivation of the agents responsible for implementing it. However, difficulties remain, centred around two issues: the balance between measures reserved for young people and general policies, to which they have access in the same way as the rest of the population; the universal nature of the most costly measures to support 15-25 year olds, the downside of which is that youth policies do not seem to be systematically geared towards the most disadvantaged groups, who also do not make sufficient use of their rights.

In view of this initial overview, the 16 surveys presented illustrate four key themes for public action:

- Access to education and training;
- Support for entry into working life and independence;
- Prevention policies aimed at young people;
- Learning about citizenship and life in the city.

PART ONE

Access to education and training

All professionals and experts agree on the major role that education and care for young people play in cognitive and emotional development, learning and well-being.

School dropout is one of the main sources of inefficiency for education systems. Leaving school prematurely, not being able to access higher education or accessing it in poor conditions has a high cost for the pupil himself, as it undermines his employment prospects. It also has a cost for society, since the presence of an educated workforce is a determining factor in stimulating innovation and long-term economic growth.

The challenge, clearly identified by the public authorities, is to establish a high-quality educational environment that provides equal access to higher education, particularly for the most disadvantaged groups, and that is able to combat social determinism, a factor that is built into our country's education system. France remains the OECD country where skills at the age of 15 are most closely linked to social background.

In this respect, guidance in lower and upper secondary school lies at the heart of the education system, helping pupils navigate the key stages of their school career. It should offer lower secondary school pupils their first glimpse of the professional world, encouraging them to think about and plan for their future studies and professional integration. This reflection is then deepened at upper secondary school.

Similarly, the training requirement for young people aged 16 to 18 aims to do everything possible to, on the one hand, prevent students from leaving the school system without qualifications or skills, and on the other, to identify young people with no support or solution.

Beyond the issue of democratising higher education, it is also a question of our country being able to take into account the specific characteristics of each region and thus enable groups that are furthest from metropolitan areas to access quality training.

At the same time, preventing young people from failing in the first year of university remains a challenge today, particularly in view of the long-standing decision to open university access to all baccalaureate holders, without selection at the entrance exam. Repeating a year and leaving without a diploma have a considerable human and financial cost. They penalise our country in its ability to plan for and face future economic and societal challenges.

1. Career guidance in secondary school

Career guidance in secondary school is at the heart of the education system, counselling pupils through the different stages of their school career and then towards professional integration. The individual and collective issues at stake in career guidance are major: they relate not only to fairness, in order to overcome structural inequalities, but also, on an economic level, to meet the skills needs of the job market and society in general.

Key figures

€400 million

(approx.) of public resources devoted to guidance

8,000

full-time equivalents



Source: estimate by the Court of Accounts

363

vocational qualifications at CAP and baccalaureate level

23,000

higher education courses offered through Parcoursup

35 %

of lower secondary school students

25 %

of upper secondary school students

report being dissatisfied with the information and advice received at school or from a guidance and information centre (CIO) regarding their career choices

Nearly

20 %

of baccalaureate holders who continue their studies regret their choice of course



1,147

pupils per national education psychologist

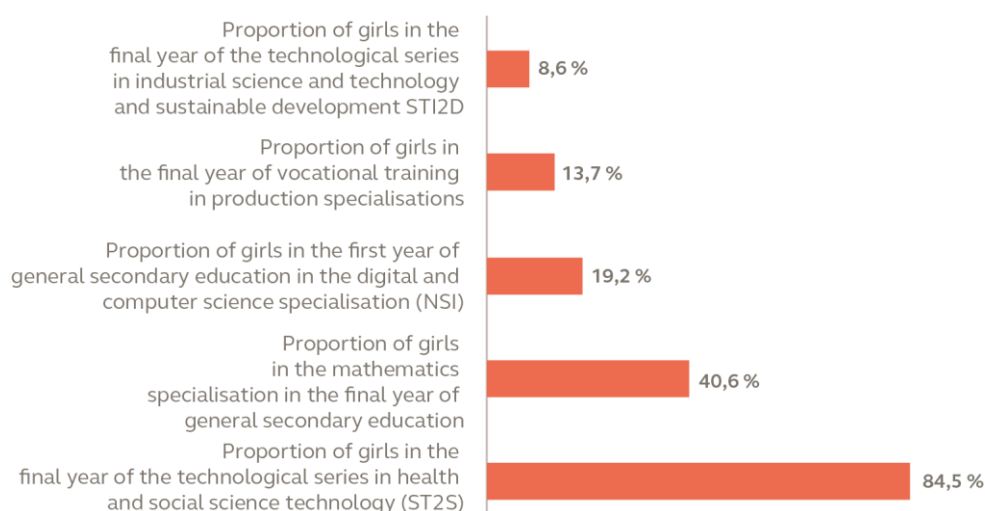
Source: estimate by the Court of Accounts

Important issues, strongly determined by early academic results, social representations and the training offer

The aim of the 'guidance policy' is to provide pupils and their families with relevant information to improve their professional integration. It aims to combat social, territorial, and gender-based inequalities, and to prevent early school leaving by supporting pupils in building plans for their future.

Guidance after lower secondary school remains heavily influenced by social background, particularly in the divide between the general and technological track on one hand and the vocational track on the other. It is based on the pupils' academic results, which are strongly correlated with their social origin, right from primary school. Even when grades and preferences are the same, decisions made by the teaching staff disproportionately steer students from disadvantaged families towards the vocational track after lower secondary school. Guidance choices also remain highly gendered at all levels of education.

Proportion of girls in the student body (2022 academic year) – public and under contract private sectors



Source: Directorate for Evaluation, Prospective and Performance

After a long decline between 2007 and 2021, applications for vocational education have been on the rise again since 2022, but this path remains less valued socially. About 40 % of the young people concerned feel that this path is 'imposed' on them. The assignment by school, depending on the places available, does not always correspond to the requests of students nor the needs of the labour market. Industrial training courses remain unattractive.

Many countries are starting to inform children about different trades and professions at primary school (Finland, Germany, Scotland). Switzerland provides an example where the vocational route, taken by 70 % of pupils, is socially valued and leads to integration or further study if the young adult wants to.

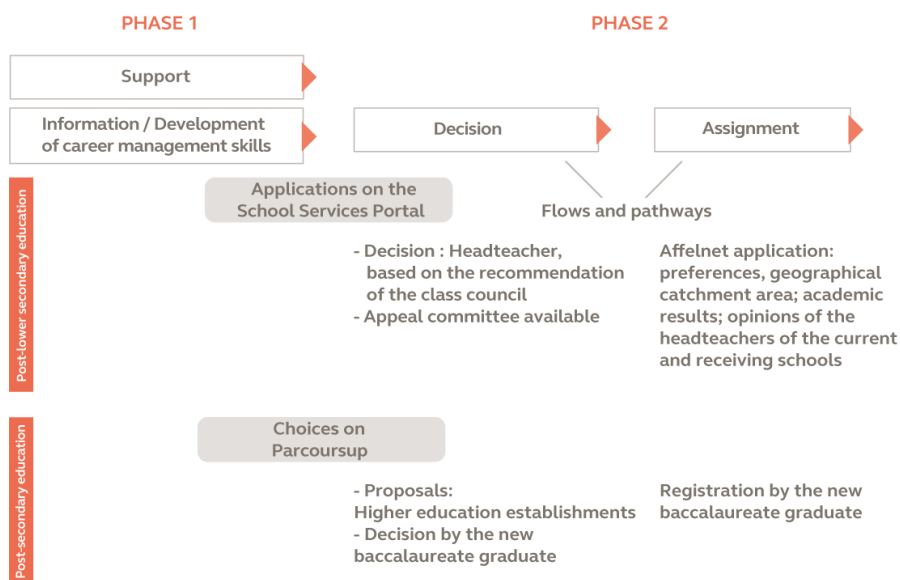
Better meet the expectations of young people

Given the multiple reforms of the education system that have taken place since 2018, a significant need for guidance has emerged for pupils and parents. At the same time, this role has been primarily assigned to the form teacher, while the mission of National Education psychologists shifted towards providing psychological support and helping pupils facing significant difficulties, whether psychological, social, or related to learning.

However, this transfer of responsibilities has not been supported by accompanying measures. In fact, teachers do not receive the necessary initial training and little in-service training. Moreover, the number of hours that are supposed to be dedicated to student guidance in lower and higher general and technological secondary schools are not included in the official timetable of compulsory lessons for pupils. They are only funded through the variable portion of the allowance for student support and guidance (ISOE) paid to the form teacher. According to many head teachers, the lack of earmarked resources and their heavy workload explain the difficulty in implementing a guidance policy in their school.

Moreover, the division of responsibilities between the State and the regions is unclear. Indeed, the law states that “*the region organises information activities*” and not “*the information activities*” for pupils. The full transfer of responsibility for ‘*guidance*’ as demanded by the regions would involve entrusting them with educational decisions that are the responsibility of the State (see diagram below).

Guidance process



Source: Court of Accounts

However, the responsibility of the regions needs to be clarified, which would make it possible to better coordinate the interventions of the numerous local actors.

Finally, guidance cannot be separated from the training offer, which must be adapted locally to the needs of the economy and society in order to provide each young person with a pathway to integration. Clarity of qualifications, relevance of training, and adjustment of schools capacities require strong political and strategic leadership at the regional level, in close coordination with the local economic actors.

Recommendations

The Court makes the following recommendations:

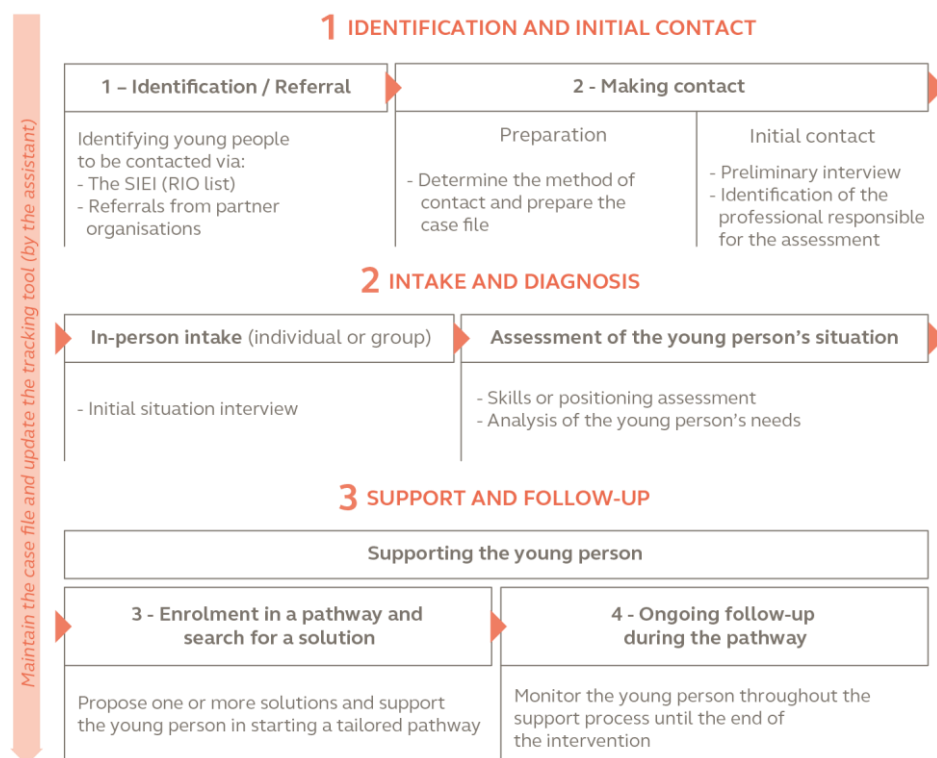
1. Include a compulsory module on guidance skills in initial teacher training programmes (*Ministry of Education, National Institutes of Teacher Training and Education*);
2. Adapt the timetable of form teachers to enable them to fulfil their guidance role (*Ministry of Education*);
3. Experiment with one or more volunteer regions to better bring together the vocational, technological and general streams in higher-secondary schools (*Ministry of Education, regions*).

2. The training requirement for young people aged 16 to 18

The training requirement for young people aged 16 to 18, introduced by Article 15 of the law of 26 July 2019 for a school of trust, has been in force since the start of the 2020 school year. It reflects the goal of taking all necessary steps to prevent students from leaving the education system without qualifications or skills, and to identify young people with no support or solution.

Under the law, the obligation is fulfilled when the young person continues their education in an educational establishment, is an apprentice or vocational training trainee, is employed or performing community service or benefits from a support or social and professional integration programme. It is based on a three-phase approach: identification, reception and diagnosis, support.

The three phases of the training requirement



Source: Ministry of National Education and Youth

Key figures

around
150,000

minors aged 16 and 17 are covered by the training requirement, out of a total of 1.6 million young people in this age group



72,000

young people were recorded by local youth support agencies as having received a placement or solution in 2023

42,000

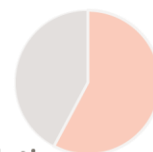
young people received support from the Ministry of National Education during the 2022–2023 school year

Source: National Education interministerial information exchange system

58%

of young people left without a solution in 2023, according to local youth support agencies

Source: Afpa



7,600

beneficiaries in 2023 of the AFPA's 'Promo 16–18', the only new scheme created under the training requirement

77%

of young people aged 15 to 17 are not well informed — or not informed at all — about the training requirement, according to a survey conducted by the Court

Source: results of the study of 15–25 year olds commissioned by the Court of Accounts from the CSA Institute



Source: results of the study of 15–25 year olds commissioned by the Court of Accounts from the CSA Institute

Shortcomings to be corrected to make the training requirement fully effective

The training requirement suffers from inadequate communication: the telephone number and the institutional website have, since their implementation, been little used by young people and their families. Territorial communication, closer to the places where young people live and their modes of communication (digital outreach, social networks), is to be sought.

The IT system set up in 2011 by the Ministry of Education to identify dropouts provides incomplete and unreliable data, which has led stakeholders to find stopgap measures (telephone calls to families to verify information, parallel IT systems), and then to develop a new, more reliable tool, the SI Communautaire (Community IT System). Scheduled for 2021, it has still not been delivered.

The obligation provided for by law remains an uncertain concept. Local youth support agencies do not systematically transmit information on the situation of young people to the departments. Moreover, in the absence of a definition of their specific role, the departments act according to their common law competences, without it being possible to know the consequences of their intervention.

Increased mobilisation of stakeholders for the benefit of underage dropouts, but interministerial coordination in need of fresh impetus

At the crossroads of several public policies (the fight against early school leaving, professional integration, poverty, youth, judicial protection of young people, urban policy), the training requirement requires the coordination of numerous stakeholders. However, the coordination provided by the State is insufficient: the organisation has run out of steam at both the national and regional levels; there are no indicators or targets; the cost of the system has not been identified; the shortcomings observed in its implementation have not given rise to any corrective measures; no assessment methodology has been defined.

At the local level, the scheme relies on the dropout monitoring and support platforms, created in 2011 and run by the National Education services and youth support agencies. They identify young people covered by the training requirement, assess their situation, and offer them solutions. The training requirement has revived some of these platforms, but many have not achieved the expected level of mobilisation.

Better identify young people and expand the range of solutions

Since the introduction of the training requirement, the identification of 'invisible' young people has improved, which may explain why the number of young people subject to compulsory training (around 150,000) is much higher than initially envisaged (60,000). However, a significant proportion of young people who are subject to it do not comply (more than 50 %), often because contact with the young person or their family is impossible to establish or has been broken off.

The solutions offered to young people are mainly the common law measures proposed by youth support agencies and the national education services; only Afpa's 'Promo 16-18' is a new measure. They are often organised over several weeks or months, with the risk of major interruptions in the young people's progress during their minority.

In addition, there are significant regional disparities, particularly affecting rural and overseas areas, with the situation in priority urban policy neighbourhoods being less unfavourable. There is a need to develop an overview of the available solutions and to share best practices.

Improved monitoring of some of the young people concerned and effective cooperation between the two public policies of education and work, which until now have been difficult to coordinate, argue in favour of a more in-depth approach rather than its abandonment. It is therefore important to quickly correct the shortcomings identified and to deploy the new IT system in order to be able to assess the effects of the training requirement on 16 and 17-year-olds.

Recommendations

The Court makes the following recommendations, to be implemented from 2025:

1. Define objectives and indicators to measure the results of the training requirement on young recipients, and assess the courses offered to them to ensure that they are sufficiently individualised and free of major interruptions until they reach the age of 18 (*Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Solidarity, Autonomy and Gender Equality, Ministry of Labour and Employment*);
2. Adapt the methods of communication of the training requirement to the specific characteristics of 16-17 year olds (*Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Solidarity, Autonomy and Gender Equality*);
3. Identify in the IT system young people who have not fulfilled their training requirement by the legal deadlines, systematise the transmission of information to the departments and ensure follow-up (*Ministry of Education, National Union of Local Youth Support Agencies, departments*);
4. Make regional maps of the solutions proposed as part of the training requirement more widespread and identify areas where the provision is insufficient with a view to strengthening it (*Ministry of Solidarity, Autonomy and Gender Equality, regions*).

3. Preventing failure in the first year of university

At the start of the 2023-2024 academic year, around 700,000 students were enrolled on bachelor's degree courses in general subjects. However, fewer than one in two students obtain their degree in three or four years. Preventing failure is therefore a key issue, not only for the young people concerned and their families, but also for society and the economy.

The Court endeavoured to analyse the impact, on the prevention of young people's failure in the first cycle, of the remedial measures implemented by the universities through funding granted by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research since the law of 8 March 2018 on student success and guidance (known as the 'ORE law'), amounting to €582 million between 2018 and 2022, and those from the Future Investment Programme (PIA) and France 2030, amounting to €794 million since 2017.

Key figures

36%



of students obtain their bachelor's degree in 3 years. This rate rises to 47% in 4 years

44%

is the progression rate from the first to the second year of a bachelor's degree

These figures relate to students enrolled in a Bachelor's degree in 2018

17%

of students leave without a degree in their first year of study

These figures relate to Students enrolled in a Bachelor's degree in 2021

Source: SIES Flash Note No. 26, published in November 2023

Parcours et réussite en licence : les résultats de la session 2022,

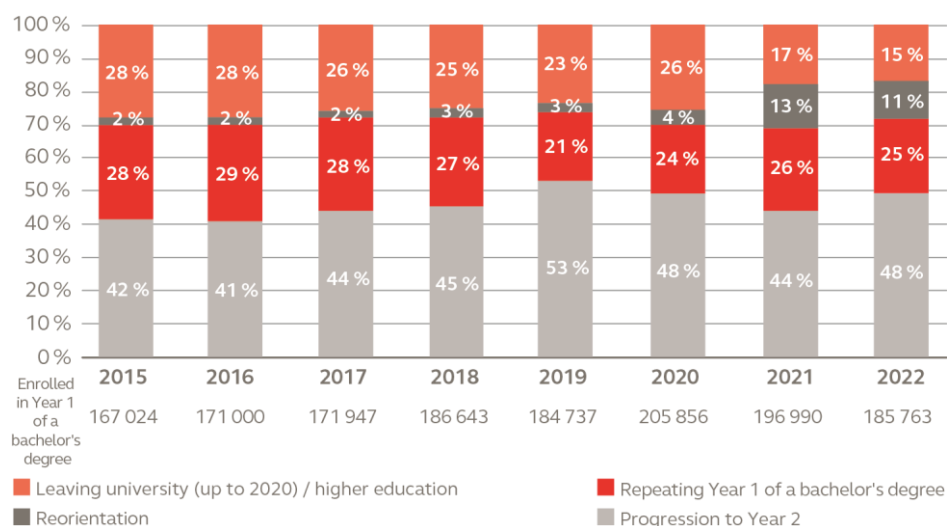
Source: SIES flash note no. 26, "Parcours et réussite en licence: les résultats de la session 2022", published in November 2023

An unsatisfactory graduation rate despite the existence of support mechanisms

Despite an increase of almost six points between 2013 (28.5 %) and 2019 (34.3 %), the three-year success rate for students enrolled in bachelor's degrees remains below the OECD average (39 %). The results of the first year, marked by a low rate of progression from the first

year (L1) to the second year of the bachelor's degree (L2) and by high rates of repetition and dropouts without a degree, highlight the need to intensify the actions undertaken.

Situation of students who obtained their baccalaureate between 2015 and 2022 one year after starting their degree



Source: Court of Accounts, based on data from the IT systems and statistical studies sub-directorate (SIES)

Some of the many measures implemented, such as the 'oui-si' programme, established by the ORE law, which offers methodological support and assistance in core subjects to around 30,000 students, have not fully demonstrated their effectiveness. Others, which focus on individual student support (mentoring, teacher advisors, etc.), are less effective due to the low level of supervision in bachelor's degrees or, in the case of specialisation and professionalisation programmes, the complexity involved in overhauling the training map. The effectiveness of this policy could also be strengthened by a better understanding of the factors behind failure (particularly student living conditions).

Furthermore, the resources mobilised are significant but do not guarantee an improvement in the situation in the future. Indeed, the budgetary funding system for universities only allows them to devote a very limited share of the corresponding resources to measures to prevent student failure. Most of them are dealing with this situation by seeking extra-budgetary funding, within the framework of the Future Investment Programme (PIA) and the France 2030 Plan. The provision of this funding has been fundamental for the deployment of structuring projects. However, it is only allocated for a fixed period. Universities must therefore anticipate the future funding conditions for projects that are in progress or yet to be launched.

The need for a more comprehensive approach to improving student success

In the absence of a strategic document and a clear definition of failure and success, the objectives assigned to those involved in the policy of failure prevention and their articulation, both at central and local level, are proving insufficient, particularly for developing the complementarity of first-cycle training courses.

The lack of harmonised evaluation procedures for prevention schemes, along with the recent introduction of contractual funding arrangements, does not support performance-based resource management in terms of student success.

The actions carried out jointly with secondary education bear witness to the efforts made by the universities to improve the conditions of access to higher education for new high school graduates. However, the diversity of the measures put in place means that they need to be

catalogued by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, with the help of the universities, in order to make them more transparent for young people and their families.

Areas for improvement that should be strengthened include the implementation, within universities and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, of an efficient IT system to monitor students' progress, and the strengthening of monitoring of their attendance, adapted to the resources of the universities. It is also necessary to better understand the real costs of the bachelor's degree programme. The available studies highlight underinvestment in bachelor's degrees, which leads to additional costs: reorientation, repeating a year, leaving without a degree, dropping out. The Court estimated the annual cost of repeating a year and leaving without a degree over the three years of the first cycle at €534 million.

Recommendations

The Court makes the following recommendations to the Ministry of Higher Education and Research:

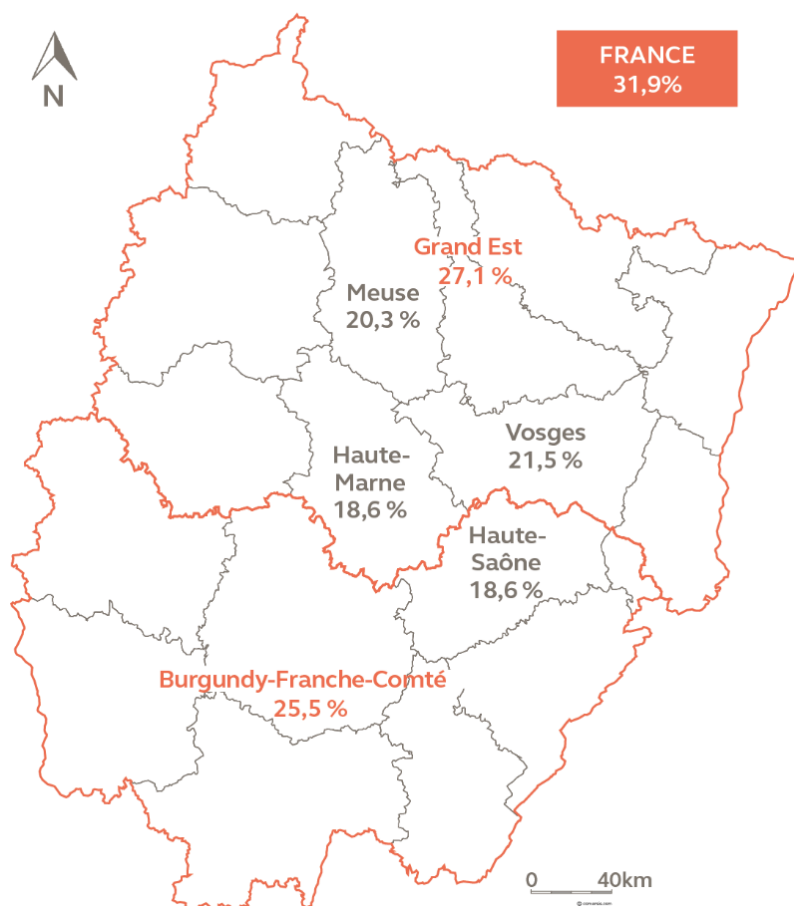
1. Better identify the causes of failure in the first university cycle;
2. Make all support measures on Parcoursup more accessible and legible;
3. Set up a system to monitor student pathways;
4. Assess the impact of the Future Investment Programme (PIA) and France 2030 on success in order to identify the most effective models.

4. Access to higher education for young people in rural areas: the example of Grand Est and Bourgogne-Franche-Comté

The rate of higher education graduates among 25 to 34-year-olds (49.4 %) is higher in France than the average for OECD countries (45.6 %). However, this rate varies from region to region and decreases the further one moves away from the major metropolitan areas.

A survey was conducted by the financial oversight bodies in four predominantly rural departments in the east of France (*Haute-Marne, Meuse, Haute-Saône and Vosges*) where the proportion of the population with higher education qualifications is lower than the regional and national averages. It aims to verify whether young people from rural areas have the same opportunities for access to higher education as young people from urban areas.

Rate of higher education graduates in the population

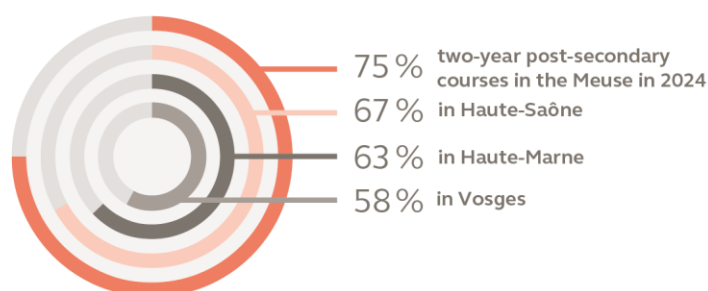


Source: Court of Accounts based on Insee (2020 data)

Key figures

around
20%

of people in rural areas had a higher education qualification in 2020, compared with nearly 32% in mainland France: 18.6% in Haute-Marne, 20.3% in Meuse, 21.5% in Vosges and 22% in Haute-Saône.



16%

of young people in Haute-Saône study in their own department. This rate is 25% in Meuse, 23% in Vosges and 22% in Haute-Marne, compared with 46% in Moselle and 57% in Meurthe-et-Moselle (university centres in Lorraine)

50%

of young people in Haute-Marne study outside their local education authority. This rate is 35% in the Vosges, 39% in the Meuse and 22% nationally

from **€1,000** to
€1,500

is the cost per month of student mobility at the start of the 2023 academic year, depending on the city

Source: UNEF survey - start of the 2023 academic year - presentation on 22 August 2023



Source: UNEF survey - start of the 2023 academic year - presentation on 22 August 2023

Young people in rural areas face more obstacles than young people in urban areas in accessing higher education

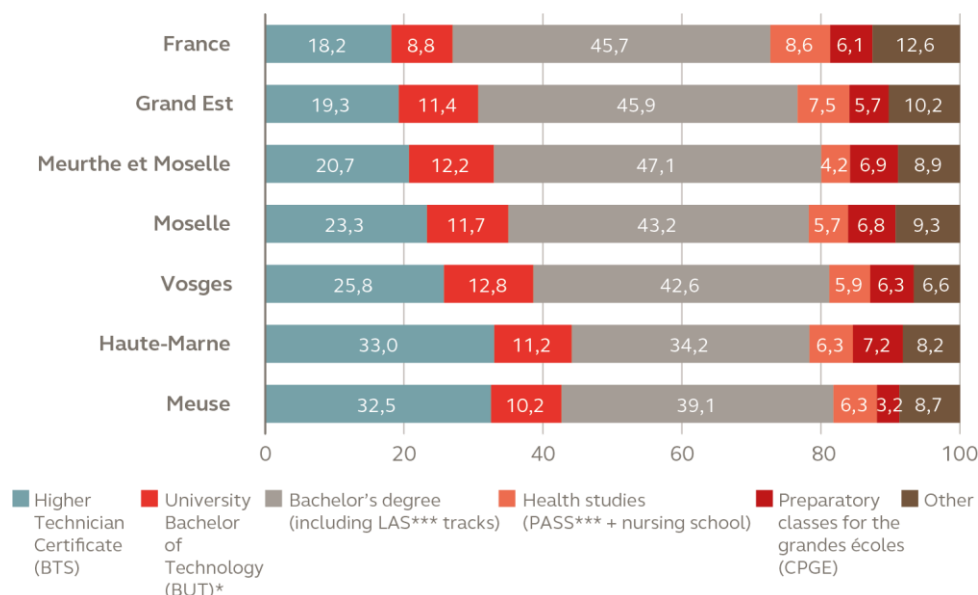
The difficulties faced by young people living in rural areas in accessing higher education are the result of both the characteristics of these areas and individual obstacles. The young people concerned have access to a less developed higher education offer than in urban areas, which is mainly oriented towards vocational courses (two years of higher education), despite the presence of some cutting-edge training programmes.

Their access to information on higher education courses and student life is more difficult, particularly because of their distance from university centres. Furthermore, the population of these areas has, on average, more modest financial resources than those observed elsewhere or at the national level. Finally, cultural barriers can sometimes play a part in the decision of young people from rural areas not to pursue higher education, which means being far away from their family, friends and social circle.

Less frequent access but better results in higher education

The choice of course is broadly similar between young people from rural areas and those from urban areas.

Choice by type of qualification in the Grand Est region in 2022 (%)



Source: Grand Est academic region according to Parcoursup 2022 - *university bachelor's degree in technology **bachelor's degree in healthcare ***specific healthcare access programme

On the other hand, a proportionally higher number of the former leave their academy to pursue higher education and are more mobile than the latter. Their exam results are also better. In 2022, the University of Lorraine recorded above-average success rates for students who obtained their baccalaureate in the French departments of Haute-Marne and Meuse.

Improving access to training opportunities for young people in rural areas

Improving access to higher education for young people from rural areas mainly relies, on the one hand, on support for the development of local training provision, as part of regional strategies shared between higher education institutions, local authorities and the local stakeholders concerned and, on the other hand, on a review of the procedures for allocating direct aid to students.

In the territories observed, there is no specific aid that takes into account the difficulties encountered by young people in rural areas in pursuing their studies. The measures identified are aimed at all young people and do not pay particular attention to geographical remoteness or other obstacles to access to higher education for young people in rural areas.

The local development of the training offer constitutes one element of the response to the needs of young people in rural areas. However, this can only be of limited scope in view of the numbers concerned and will remain, for the most part, concentrated on a small number of specific courses. In this context, improving access to higher education for young people in rural areas requires measures to encourage their mobility to the training centres of their choice. This approach requires greater consideration of geographical distance in the allocation of aid intended for them, particularly grants based on social criteria. Simplifying the procedures for obtaining and paying out this aid from the various funding bodies would also be a factor facilitating their higher education pathway.

Recommendations

The Court makes the following recommendations:

1. Simplify how aid is distributed to students, including, where appropriate, the creation of a single point of access (*Ministry of Higher Education and Research, National Centre for University and School Services, departments and regions*);
2. Increase the weighting of the geographical remoteness criterion in the calculation of social criteria grants to take into account the additional cost of mobility for young people living in the most remote areas (*Ministry of Higher Education and Research, National Centre for University and School Services*).

PART TWO

Support for entry into working life and independence

In France, just over one in ten young people aged between 15 and 24 are currently not in employment, education or training. Although this figure is falling, it remains above the European average. Many young people have difficulty entering the labour market, due to increased competition or a lack of professional experience. Unstable employment is often their first professional experience. It is essential to adapt the training offered and the guidance given to young people to meet current needs. But this is not enough to improve their entry into working life.

Housing is the primary factor that determines their ability to access training and employment and therefore their real level of independence. Many of them find themselves unable to leave the family home due to numerous obstacles, including the constant increase in rents. Various housing solutions for young people exist in the private and social rental sector. However, this offer remains inaccessible to those in unstable employment.

In addition, the search for employment sometimes involves significant geographical mobility, which can pose logistical and financial challenges, particularly for young people in rural or peri-urban areas: for those who do not have the financial means to buy a car, the public transport offer in these areas remains insufficient, although there is better coverage for journeys between home and place of study. The most recent surveys (Terram) show that 38 % of young people aged 15 to 29 in rural areas have turned down a job interview due to travel issues. To address this challenge, transport authorities have primarily supported youth mobility by offering fare reductions of 30% to 70%, and in some cases free travel. However, the development of transport services in rural and peri-urban areas remains insufficient, which particularly hinders the mobility of young people.

Some young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds or with disabilities, face additional obstacles, whether as a result of discrimination or social barriers. This is particularly, and even more acutely, the case for children who are victims of violence and neglect and are placed in the care of child welfare services. While they already receive less medical care than others and thus lose twenty years of life expectancy due to the after-effects of their trauma, according to the most recent international studies (2021), many find themselves on the street when they reach legal adulthood. Almost half of the homeless aged 18 to 25 have been placed in the care of child welfare services. Better support for these young adults, who are still vulnerable, is therefore crucial to preventing this dramatic situation. The actions of the departments, which are responsible for supporting them, as well as those of economic actors as a whole, must be scaled up.

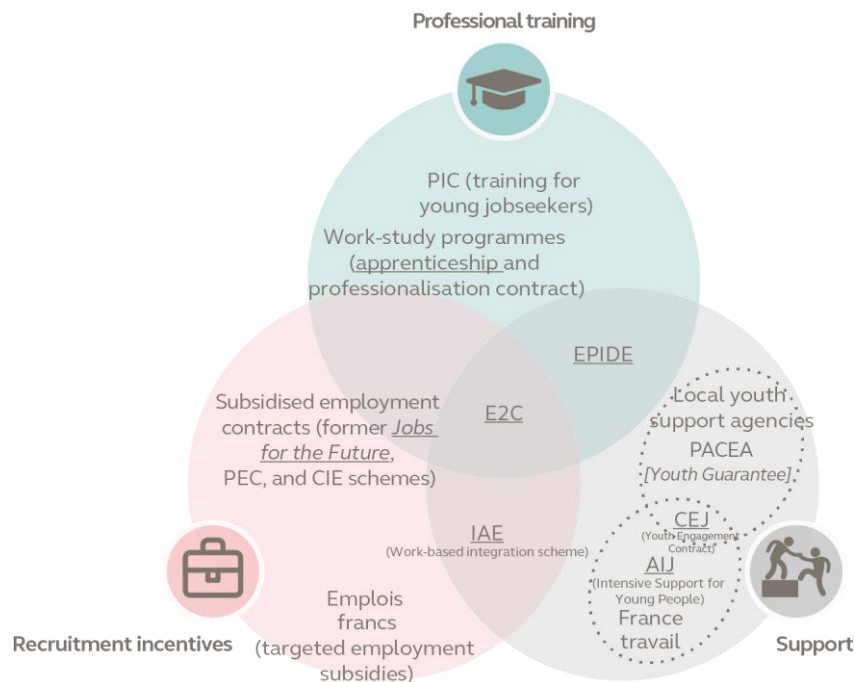
Making a commitment to these young people, by offering them pathways to more skills and therefore employment, will enable them to play a full part in the economic and social life of our country.

1. Youth employment

Young people are more likely than other working people to face the risk of unemployment and have specific needs, particularly those who are unqualified or who face so-called peripheral obstacles.

The State implements a wide range of instruments, some targeted at young people and some not, which can be grouped into three main categories: support, vocational training and financial incentives for hiring.

Principal measures to promote youth employment



Source: Court of Accounts

Notes: the measures highlighted are those specifically targeting young people; the [measures mentioned in square brackets] no longer exist today.

PIC: skills investment plan

EPIDE: establishment for integration into employment E2C: second chance schools

PACEA: contractualised pathway of support towards employment and independence

CEJ: youth employment contract AIJ: individualised support for young people

IAE: integration through economic activity PEC: employment skills programme (non-profit sector)

CIE: employment initiative contract (profit sector)

Key figures

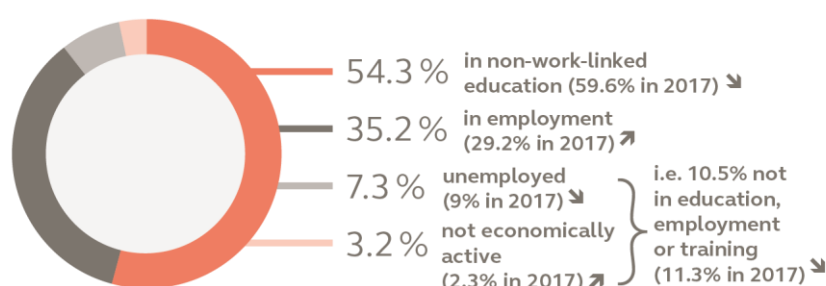
17.2 %

unemployment rate among young people, 2.4 times higher than for the workforce as a whole

€7.3 bn

of spending on targeted schemes in 2023 (x 2.1 compared with 2017)

Source: calculation by the Court of Accounts based on DGEFP and DB figures



Source: Insee

313,000

young people joined the Youth Engagement Contract (CEJ) scheme

Source: DGEFP

852,000

apprenticeship contracts signed in 2023 (compared with 305,000 in 2017)

Source: DGEFP

Unless otherwise stated, figures are for 2023.
"Young people" are those aged between 15 and 24.

Source: DGEFP/calculated by the Court of Accounts based on DGEFP and DB figures

A strategy to be updated in view of the positive trend in youth employment

The situation of young people in the labour market has been improving since 2017, with their employment rate increasing by six points between 2017 and 2023. The rise of work-study programmes alone accounts for more than half of this increase.

However, structural difficulties persist: the proportion of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) remains high. Access to employment is still highly dependent on the level of qualification, and regional inequalities remain marked.

Young people's access to employment remains more difficult in France than in comparable European countries: in 2023, among 15-24 year olds, the unemployment rate is higher in France (17.2%) than in the European Union as a whole (14.5%), as is the proportion of NEETs.

The improvement observed coincides with a massive financial effort by the State. While total spending on youth employment remains difficult to measure, spending on youth-targeted measures has risen sharply as a result of the measures taken in response to the health crisis.

Since the end of the crisis, it has remained at a historically high level: €7.3 billion in 2023, more than double the total expenditure measured in 2017.

However, the causal link between the State's financial effort and the improvement in youth employment is uncertain. On the one hand, the economic environment remains the main determining factor in young people's access to employment. On the other hand, the impact of measures designed to promote access to employment for young people is still poorly understood.

The public authorities should adopt a strategic framework that is renewed and regularly updated in line with the economic environment, according to a counter-cyclical logic. The 'One young person, one solution' plan, designed as a response to the health crisis, is no longer a relevant model.

The formalisation of the strategy requires a better distinction between the specific difficulties of young people and those that reflect more global shortcomings. Above all, the improvement in youth employment should lead the public authorities to adjust overall spending and to target their efforts more towards the young people who are furthest from employment.

Building seamless pathways adapted to the needs of each young person

While the mechanisms are numerous and complex, the criteria for guiding young people have yet to be clarified and harmonised. Without this, the paths taken by young people risk being influenced by considerations unrelated to their real needs, such as the desire to reach quantitative targets or to show high 'positive exit rates'.

The number of initiatives to identify and re-engage so-called 'invisible' groups has increased, in the form of calls for projects aimed at the voluntary sector. They must now move beyond the experimental stage and become part of a clear and sustainable approach.

The determination of the national targets assigned to each scheme is not based on a rigorous assessment of needs. The rules for the territorial distribution of resources suffer from significant inertia effects and make it impossible to correct territorial imbalances or to take the results obtained into account.

Supply-driven management, based on volume targets for each scheme, must gradually give way to management based on needs and results.

This would make it possible to target the three categories of measures to support youth employment more effectively:

- support, which must be better adapted, in terms of both nature and intensity, to the needs and motivations of each young person;
- subsidised contracts, which the State made extensive use of during the health crisis and which must continue to be refocused on the young people furthest from employment;
- subsidies for hiring apprentices, which were expanded in 2020, would benefit from being targeted at young people for whom the added value of apprenticeships is documented.

Finally, the objective of a seamless pathway is hampered by a lack of coordination between those involved in youth employment. Despite the search for a complementary approach, a competitive relationship persists between local youth support agencies and France Travail. The bridges between systems remain underdeveloped. The disconnect between prescribers and buyers of training is sometimes a source of tension.

Improving coordination is the main objective of the law of 18 December 2023 for full employment, in particular through the overhaul of governance and the systematic registration of unemployed young people with France Travail.

The success of this reform is subject to several conditions: definition of a clear and flexible dividing line between France Travail and the local youth support agencies; professionalisation of the assessment and guidance phase, which requires a better

measurement of the 'distance to employment'; strengthening of the coordination and structuring of the network of local youth support agencies; optimisation of the systems; strengthening of the links between the public employment service, the education system and businesses.

Recommendations

The Court makes the following recommendations to the Ministry of Labour and Employment:

1. Formalise the strategic framework of the youth employment policy by organising its counter-cyclical nature and its targeting of the young people furthest from employment, by better coordinating the targeted and common law mechanisms, and by setting overall objectives;
2. Following an assessment of the youth employment contract, study the relevance of reducing the number of contracts, refocusing on the young people furthest from employment, and relaxing the 15-hour rule to adapt the intensity of support to the needs of each young person;
3. Adjust subsidies for hiring apprentices according to the level of the qualification being studied.

2. Young people's access to housing

Young people have specific characteristics in terms of access to housing that make them highly sensitive to market tensions. The housing policy, which mainly targets students, has a limited impact when it aims at access to the general housing stock for all those under 30, with the exception of the rent guarantee mechanism. The fragmentation of public action calls less for a homogeneous treatment of young people than for a strengthening of local coordination, in order to offer a solution adapted to individual pathways and to ensure the consistency of initiatives.

Key figures

23.4 years

is the median age at which young people move out of the parental home in France



21

is the age at which students become a minority

Source: Insee, France, social portrait, 2023 edition

385,000

places in university halls of residence, 68,000 in housing networks for young professionals

2.7 millions

young people receive personal housing assistance, amounting to €4.4 bn



1.2 million

Visale guarantees were granted between 2016 and 2023, 92% of them to people under the age of 30

518,576

young people received mobili-jeunes aid between 2018 and 2022

Source: Action Logement, figure provided as part of the survey

The 15-29 age group accounts for

21.7%

in densely populated areas

12.2%

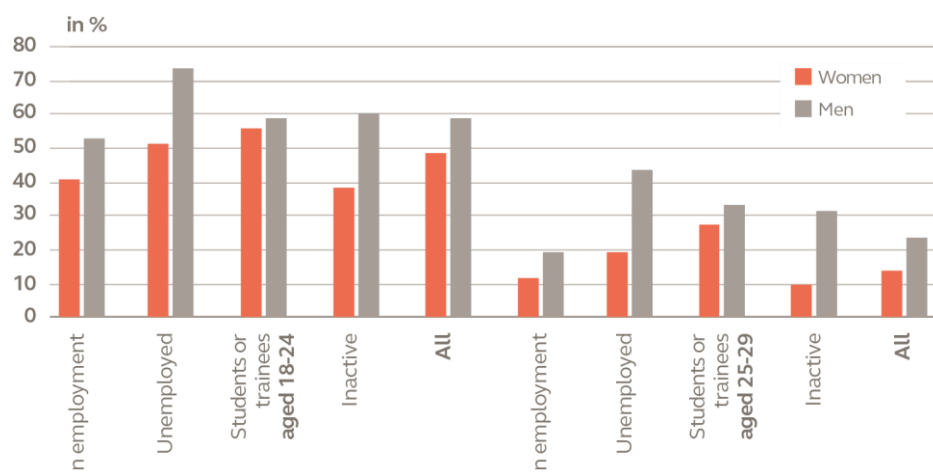
in low-density areas

Source: Insee, France, portrait social, edition 2023/Action Logement, figure provided as part of the survey

The specific characteristics of young people in terms of housing policy are mainly taken into account for students

Access to independent housing is achieved through individual pathways with varying degrees of difficulty, correlated to the level of income or integration into studies or the labour market of young people, as well as to the territory concerned. Urban areas, which concentrate opportunities for training, employment, and public transport, are marked by a longer stay in the parental home, but also attract young people who move out. Young people are particularly mobile, have low incomes and are looking for small urban housing for short periods of time, and are therefore sensitive to housing tensions.

Rate of cohabitants by type of activity among 18-29 year olds (2018)



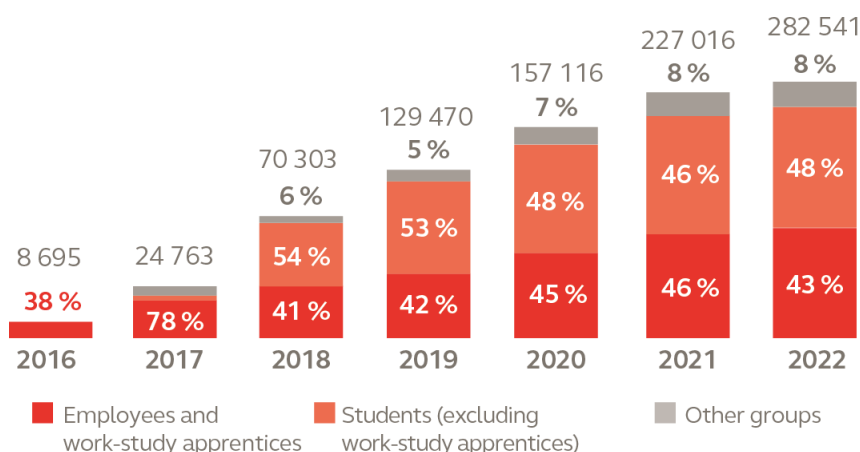
Source: French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies. References, 2022, 1.4 Young adults aged 18 to 29 (data from the 2018 census)

Despite these characteristics, the policy on access to housing for 18-30 year olds is not designed as a coherent whole. Students have mostly benefited from the measures implemented to meet their needs. A total of 385,000 units in student housing, both social and private, are dedicated to them. The allocation of housing assistance (APL) include aspects favourable to students. The regional centres for students' welfare (Crous) are well-identified interlocutors which, in addition to their student residences, manage grants based on social criteria. These grants contribute to the beneficiaries' solvency, especially for the highest grant levels. The way APL is calculated is more favourable for scholarship students, and they are given priority access to social student housing.

For all young people, fragmented support calls for better coordination

There is less public support for access to housing for young people who are not students, the majority in their age group from 21 years of age. The efforts made in the context of housing policy over the past decade or so to support a 'youth housing' approach have had limited effects, whether they aim to mobilise the social housing stock or facilitate young people's access to the private housing stock. The Visa for Housing and Employment guarantee (Visale) is an exception. This scheme has grown significantly, driven once again, however, by students.

Annual change in the number of Visale contracts and the share of each group (2016-2022)



Source: Convention quinquennale entre l'État et Action logement, press kit, June 2023

The issue of housing for young people is at the crossroads of administrative silos resulting from an approach based on target population sub-groups (apprentices, young people from the child welfare system, young people in vulnerable situations, etc.). The current measures are often underpinned by objectives of solidarity (new forms of housing such as intergenerational cohabitation) or professional and social integration, for which housing appears to be a stabilising factor. This is the case with the comprehensive and individualised support programmes for young people in vulnerable situations.

This scattering and coexistence of multiple schemes is a source of confusion and disparities in treatment that are difficult for users to understand. They do not make it possible to measure public investment and generate coordination costs, disruptions in the course of action or redundancies that are detrimental to the effectiveness of these schemes.

However, a coherent policy on access to housing for young people cannot be a homogeneous policy, given the diversity of young people's situations and aspirations. It is up to the regions, according to their own situation, to produce the knowledge necessary for public action and appropriate governance. The work carried out on students can be a source of inspiration for housing for young people as a whole. At the national level, the appointment of a lead manager, responsible for proposing a regular analysis of the housing situation of young people and promoting dialogue and the exchange of experiences between the regions, would improve the effectiveness of public action.

Recommendation

The Court makes the following recommendation:

Capitalise on best practices in access to housing for young people and disseminate them regularly at the national level (*Ministry of Housing and Urban Renewal*).

3. The mobility of young people on public transport: from pricing policy to strengthening the offer in the territories

Mobility on public transport is a major issue for the social and professional integration of young people, who have less access to a car and less financial resources than the population as a whole.

Key figures

30%

of young people aged 15 to 17 use public transport for their daily journeys, almost 4 times more than the population as a whole

38%

of young people aged 15 to 29 in rural areas have turned down a job interview due to travel difficulties



€38

the average cost of a monthly TER (regional express transport) season ticket for young people



€528

the monthly transport budget (individual vehicle or public transport) for young people living in rural areas. It is €327 for young people in urban areas

46%

of 18-24 year olds consider speed to be the most important criterion for choosing a mode of daily transport, ahead of price (31%)

+ 10.6%

in transport services (in kilometres) in urban areas between 2017 and 2022



20 operational mobility contracts

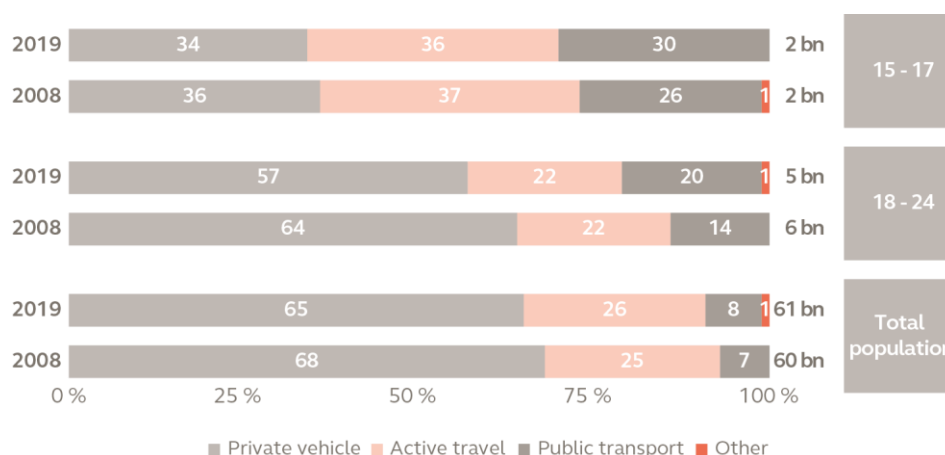
signed, covering the 300 mobility areas gradually defined since 2021

Mobility via public transport, a decisive issue for young people

Young people aged 15 to 25 are significant and relatively captive users of public transport. Although car use remains dominant, it declined between 2008 and 2019 in favour of

public transport, whose share increased during the same period from 14 % to 20 % for 18- 24 year olds and from 26 % to 30 % for 15-17 year olds.

Change in modal share (in %) and in the number of short-distance journeys



Source: ART (Transport Regulation Authority), based on ENT D 2008 and EMP 2019 – Note: Active travel refers to cycling and walking

This trend reflects the relative success of mobility policies aimed at young people. However, car use remains predominant after the age of 25. Encouraging young people to use public transport when they start working is therefore a strategic move, particularly in view of the challenge of ecological transition.

Faced with this need for mobility, the organisation of public transport is the responsibility of local authorities, with the State playing only a coordinating role. Since the French mobility orientation law (LOM) of 24 December 2019, the governance of public transport has been structured around the regions and inter-municipal bodies: the former manage regional public transport (regional express trains and coaches), the latter those of the daily living areas (metro, trams, buses). Both have also seen their powers extended to active mobility (cycling, walking, etc.). In total, more than 700 mobility organising authorities (AOM) cover the entire country.

Transport accounts for the largest share of regional and local budgets (€37 billion in 2023), to which the State adds €3 billion.

Reduced fares, the main focus of mobility policy for young people

The AOMs have so far chosen to support the mobility of young people mainly through fare reductions (in the region of 30 to 70 %), and even free travel. This policy has had a positive impact on the mobility of young people but is now coming up against several limitations: it does not target the most disadvantaged young people sufficiently; it reduces the income of transport services by the same amount; it struggles to retain these users after they enter working life.

To overcome these limitations, some organising authorities have resorted to solidarity-based pricing, which takes into account the contributive capacity of young people and limits the cost of fare reduction policies. In addition to fare efforts, the introduction of regional fare coordination and the strengthening of information campaigns aimed at young people are factors that encourage the use of public transport.

Mobility services to be adapted more to the needs of young people

The main constraint on mobility is not the price but the lack of transport services, particularly in suburban and rural areas, where the needs of young residents are insufficiently taken into account. While there is relatively good coverage of home-study trips, there is still little coverage of home-work trips for young workers. This deficiency affects the entire population, but it particularly affects young people given their low level of resources. In fact,

38 % of young people aged 15 to 29 in rural areas have turned down a job interview due to travel difficulties.

To address this, the mobility organising authorities (AOM) are working to improve public transport services in low-density areas by using several levers: extending routes, increasing high-capacity bus services, rolling out express coaches, expanding demand-responsive transport, and so on. This effort would benefit from being based on more detailed studies of young people's mobility needs. The main obstacle, however, lies in the increased financial constraints on the transport budget, which means difficult choices have to be made.

The sometimes insufficient coordination of the AOMs in terms of services and information is another obstacle. The LOM organised coordination between AOMs at the level of the 300 regional mobility basins, but the corresponding tools it created are still little used (only 20 operational mobility contracts have been signed). Their rollout should be accelerated to improve connections between residential and employment areas and to establish local connections to main public transport routes, benefiting young workers.

Recommendations

The Court makes the following recommendations:

1. Improve knowledge of young people's mobility needs and their use of transport, particularly for work (*mobility organising authorities, Ministry of Transport*);
2. Ensure that the fare advantages (season tickets or tickets) applicable to young people take into account their financial resources (*mobility organising authorities*);
3. Strengthen the provision of public transport for young people in peri-urban and rural areas rather than fare advantages, by developing coordination between mobility organising authorities (*mobility organising authorities*)

4. Support for young adults leaving the child welfare system

In France, nearly 397,000 minors and young adults were subject to a child protection measure under child welfare services (ASE) in 2023. Of these, 221,000 were placed in care and provided with accommodation, including more than 31,900 young adults.

Key figures

31,900 young adults

(compared with 18,500 in 2010) were the subject of a child welfare protection measure in 2023. They are among the 397,000 minors and young adults receiving protection.

€1,2bn

the estimated cost to the departments of providing temporary care for young adults in 2023.

A progressively better-supported group

The path of young adults coming out of child welfare services is often shaped by life challenges and difficult breaks in continuity. The departmental child welfare services have the difficult task of replacing parental protection and authority in the long term. They face difficulties in offering children educational continuity and lasting prospects for fulfilment.

To prevent young adults from being ‘thrown out’ on reaching legal adulthood, with no prospect of social and professional integration, the protection granted to young adults has been gradually extended, particularly as a result of the law of 7 February 2022 on the protection of children. This text made it compulsory to take care of young adults from social welfare who “*do not have sufficient resources or family support*” until the age of 21.

Before the adoption of this law, the social welfare services (ASE) were already supporting a growing number of young people who had reached legal adulthood. The corresponding expenditure is in the order of €1 billion.

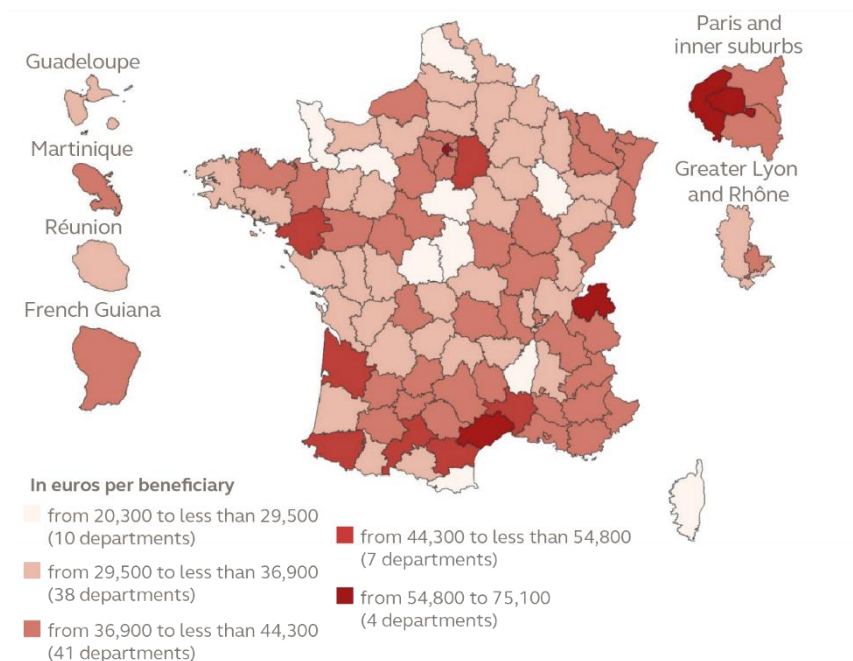
Since 2022, the implementation of the rights of young adults leaving child protection services has varied

Although the departments are trying to meet the needs of young adults, the way in which they are cared for varies from one region to another. This depends, in particular, on the pre-

existing structure of child protection policies. The law of 7 February 2022 has not resulted in a notable and uniform increase in the proportion of young adults leaving child protection services taken into care by the departments.

In 2022, the average cost of caring for children and young adults amounted to €38,200 per beneficiary per year. However, the financial effort of the departments is disparate, with some mobilising four times more resources than others.

Total annual expenditure on care per child welfare service beneficiary in 2022



Source: DREES Child welfare 2024

Without disregarding the now enforceable nature of the right to support, many departments remain committed to the contractual approach and pursue the objectives of rapid professional integration. The rate of care for young people from the ASE varies from 38 % to 83 % depending on the departments audited. The duration of 'young adult contracts' varies by region, but is generally for a limited period (six to 18 months). The duration of 'young adult contracts' offered to former unaccompanied minors (UMs) can be even shorter.

The law provides for the allocation by the State of an annual financial envelope for support to maintain the care of young adults leaving child welfare services without resources or family support. It has been set at €50 million for all departments, which is way less than the costs and has been stable since 2022. The State did not seek to direct the use of this envelope, nor defined a basic foundation.

Insufficient steering of the measures and access to common law

The national strategies to combat poverty and protect children have had tangible but limited effects. They have promoted comprehensive care for young adults leaving child welfare services. However, the project logic on which they are based leaves the decentralised government departments and the departments facing uncertainties about their consequences.

Progress has been made in areas such as housing and health insurance, but not in access to the "savings allowance" that young people are supposed to receive once they reach legal adulthood. In terms of integration, the access of young people from child welfare services to the 'youth employment contract' suffers from a lack of partnership and an identified leader,

despite arrangements adapted to 'young people in crisis' and coordinated follow-up with local youth support agencies.

As this is a decentralised responsibility, there is good reason why the level and methods of support for young people leaving the child welfare system should not be the same in all the departments. However, their action in this area must be built on a foundation that does not jeopardise the equality of users in relation to the public service. In this respect, the law of 7 February 2022 has sought to strike a new balance by systematising the right to care, without however prescribing its nature or scope. As a result, three years after its adoption, practices remain disparate from one region to another.

Recommendations

The Court makes the following recommendations:

1. Increase cooperation with local youth support agencies to guarantee access for young adults to social and professional integration programmes (*departments*);
2. Increase cooperation on disability with the departmental houses for persons with disabilities and on psychiatry with the regional health agencies (*Ministry of Solidarity, Autonomy and Gender Equality, Ministry of Health and Access to Care, departments, departmental houses for persons with disabilities, regional health agencies*);
3. Set minimum care provision targets and link the disbursement of funds accompanying the implementation of the law of 7 February 2022 to its actual rollout (*Ministry of Solidarity, Autonomy and Gender Equality*);
4. The uptake rate of the savings allowance should be improved, particularly through better information sharing among the relevant stakeholders (*National Family Allowances Fund, Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, departments*).

PART THREE

Prevention policies aimed at young people

From childhood onwards, the health of young people is built around the forms of support that adults have chosen for them. It also depends on the measures that public actors have put in place for their benefit. Taking an interest in the health of young people means looking at the health of the population as a whole.

At first glance, young people may appear to be in better physical and mental health than adults because of their age. The daily reality is sometimes different. UNICEF studies highlight harmful lifestyle habits among some young people. These affect their well-being – and in some cases place them in immediate danger – in a global context they themselves perceive as increasingly tense, marked by rising violence and climate change. These risky behaviours call for appropriate public responses. Various policies work together to promote the health and well-being of young people, the preventive aspect of which must be strengthened and better targeted.

Young people who play sports are often less likely to engage in risky behaviour, although this is less of a determining factor than family support. Encouraging sports is all the more important as it increases social interaction. The mental health of young people is also a priority, particularly since the health crisis. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15- to 19-year-olds worldwide.

In addition to the necessary strengthening of awareness-raising actions aimed at young people, in schools or on social networks, public actors must guarantee them access to listening and support infrastructures. Providing an environment of trust can help them to abandon risky behaviour. Prevention measures must make young people full stakeholders in their mental health, particularly in the case of adolescents. This is the primary task entrusted to adolescent health and support centres.

It is equally essential to make young people aware of the consequences that poor eating habits, inactivity and all types of addiction can have on their health. In France, despite stricter regulations and repeated prevention campaigns, the levels of consumption of psychoactive substances, particularly alcohol, tobacco and cannabis, remain high among young people. In addition, usage and consumption patterns are changing, as evidenced by the emergence of cases of significant occasional alcohol consumption.

Childhood obesity has repercussions throughout their lives. The young people concerned are more likely to become obese and to experience behavioural and emotional disorders, or even to suffer from depression. As adults, they may develop type 2 diabetes or cardiovascular disease, the leading causes of death in France. This phenomenon particularly affects the Pacific territories, albeit with varying intensity: 38 % of adults in New Caledonia and 48 % of those in French Polynesia are affected, compared with 17 % in mainland France.

1. Young people's access to sport

79% of young French people play sports on a regular basis. More than 2.7 million sports licences are granted to young people, some of whom practise more than one sport. The observation that French youth are sporty, however, masks inequalities or specificities related to gender, territory or social origin. Sport is influenced by the trends that shape society and is a key factor in analysing the major cross-cutting issues affecting French youth.

Key figures

79%

of young people aged 15 to 24 participate in regular sporting activities



Source: Eurobarometer statistics 2024, p44

36%

of licensed participants aged 15 to 24 are women

Source: Eurobarometer statistics 2024, p44

Number of members



Licensed sports participation drops fourfold between the ages of 15 and 25.

The crucial role of infrastructure in young people's access to sport

Local authorities finance 93 % of public spending on sports facilities. Recent investments mainly focused on easily accessible facilities, encouraging young people to engage in sport. The inventory of sports facilities was updated in 2024, but no quantitative or qualitative study has been conducted on the use of these facilities. This situation reduces the ability of funding bodies to assess the performance of their expenditure.

The 350,000 sports facilities are unevenly distributed across the territory and do not always meet the expectations of young people. In urban areas, faced with a large but saturated offer, initiatives to pool municipal, school and even private facilities must be strengthened. Priority urban policy neighbourhoods have numerous but not very diverse sports facilities. In rural areas, the number of sports facilities has increased but they remain less accessible than elsewhere, particularly for young people who do not have access to transportation.

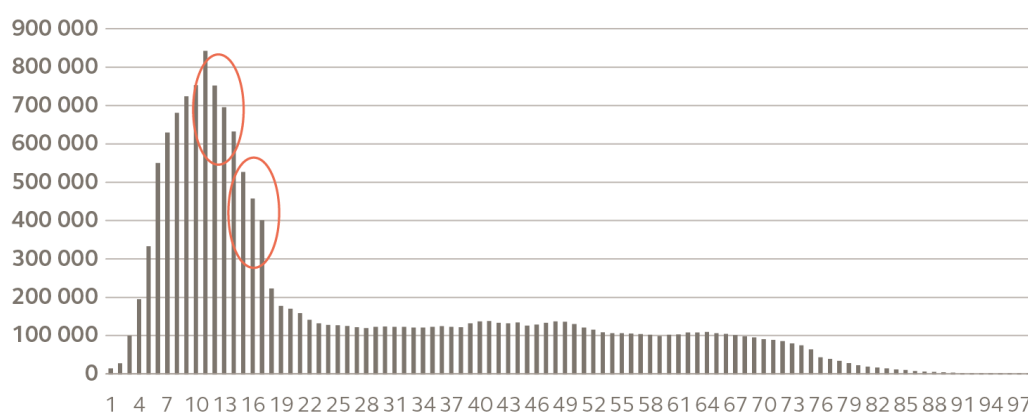
A large range of stakeholders to encourage young people to take part in sport

With 120 federations, 325,000 associations and 16.5 million members, France has a very dense network of sport actors. 42% of young French people aged between 15 and 30 are members.

The public authorities play more of a funding role than a strategic one. Very few local authorities formalise their ambitions in the field of sport in general and for young people's access to sport in particular. At the national level, existing financial support, such as Pass'sport (€75 million per year), is insufficiently targeted at priority groups.

The public and community services are not able to stem the drop-off in participation observed among 15 to 25-year-olds.

Number of licences by age, all genders combined



Source: 2022 licence census

The private sector, which offers more flexible options for participation tailored to the expectations of young people, is growing strongly. It offers pooling opportunities that are insufficiently exploited.

The Ministry of Education also plays a major role through physical education and sport (PES). However, its efforts are hampered by the limited number of hours of physical education and sport in secondary school, strain on facilities, disparities between courses and the lack of monitoring of 'exemptions'. Sport is still not practised enough in higher education.

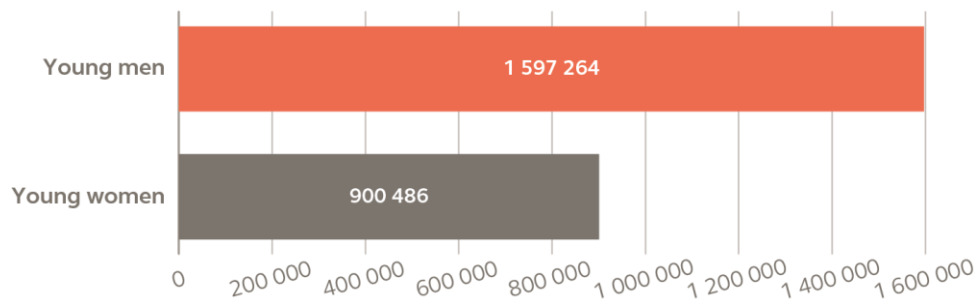
Policies geared towards performance at the expense of a targeted audience approach

Based on an approach dominated by competition rather than 'well-being sport' or 'fun', the majority of the resources committed benefit young people who are already involved in sport. Young people who are distanced from sport, due to a lack of interest or for health reasons, rarely find themselves involved in competitive practice.

Several groups should be targeted more by public policy.

Young women are structurally less likely to participate than men and are more likely to drop out of sport, and to do so for longer. Increasing their access to facilities for free practice, offering them supervision and combating socio-cultural obstacles are actions to be explored.

Young women and men with a licence, aged 15 to 24



Source: 2022 licence census

Young people with disabilities have benefited from proactive policies on the accessibility of sports facilities since 2005, but their participation remains below average. As for young people in vulnerable situations, they are not sufficiently targeted by support schemes and face a form of social inequality that is reproduced through sport.

Recommendations

The Court makes the following recommendations:

1. Provide support slots for young people, particularly those who are least likely to participate in sports, at accessible sports facilities (*National Sports Agency, municipalities and inter-municipal bodies*);
2. Develop partnerships between local authorities and private actors to broaden youth's physical and financial access to a greater variety of sports facilities (*municipalities and inter-municipal bodies*);
3. Increase the rate of pupils practising physical education by statistically monitoring disabilities and adjusting sessions according to the abilities of the pupils concerned (*Ministry of National Education*);
4. Focus the Pass'sport more on young people who are the furthest removed from participation in sport (*Ministry of Sport, Youth and Community Life*).

2. Adolescent health and support centres: a front-line response for young people in distress

Adolescent health and support centres are multidisciplinary structures dedicated to prevention and the support of issues affecting young people. There were 123 of them in operation in 2024. Most of them operate at the departmental level. The growing demand from young people in situations of distress and the difficulties in accessing specialised care facilities make them key stakeholders in the support of adolescents.

Key figures

123

ADOLESCENT
HEALTH AND
SUPPORT
CENTRES



10 full-time

staff members on average
per centre (+37% since 2018)

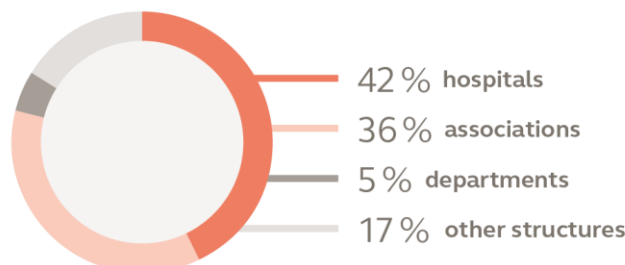
€84 million

budget per year (+44%
average budget since 2018)

Source: Court of Accounts based on data
from ANMDA and the Ministry of Health

100,000

young people supported
per year % since 2018)



Source: Court of Accounts based on data from ANMDA and the Ministry of Health

A flexible system for issues affecting young people

Created in the 2000s, the aim of the adolescent health and support centres was to respond to the demand for healthcare among adolescents through a comprehensive approach to health. Free to define their own operating methods, these organisations have gradually expanded their activities to include a social component.

Their task is to respond to the needs of those they receive through listening, assessment and guidance. Collective prevention actions are also offered to young people, as well as opportunities for professionals to raise awareness of issues affecting young people.

Examples of pathways within adolescent health and support centres



Source: Court of Accounts, based on the findings of the regional chambers of accounts

Since their creation, these entities have supported a growing number of young people, mainly secondary school pupils. In 2021, there were almost 100,000 of them, an increase of almost 20 % since 2018. Two thirds of the young people welcomed were girls. The rise in requests comes in a context of growing expressions of distress, already noted by the Court in its 2023 report on child and adolescent psychiatry.

Surveys conducted by the Court show that the adolescent health and support centres are well identified by their beneficiaries and their partners, who are generally satisfied with the support offered. However, a scientific study of their health and social impacts has yet to be conducted.

Conditions for entry into the support programme to be improved

In order to fully play their role, adolescent health and support centres must improve their accessibility, maintain their responsiveness and integrate their activities into a more comprehensive range of services.

The location of adolescent health and support centres does not always allow young people in rural areas to access them easily. The development of outreach initiatives and the strengthening of links with the Ministry of Education are identified as ways to address this issue.

The responsiveness of adolescent health and support centres is sometimes called into question when these structures are forced to partly compensate for shortcomings in other services, such as school health services and child and adolescent psychiatry.

Moreover, the clarity of their role is diminished by the abundance of youth and parenting support services, particularly those offered by the Youth Advice and Support Points (PAEJ), whose missions are similar. The merger of the adolescent health and support centres and the PAEJ would help to clarify the services available to young people.

A prevention role that must be safeguarded

The adolescent health and support centres are essentially financed by public funding, mainly from regional health agencies and, to a lesser extent, from departments and other local authorities. The corresponding expenditure amounts to approximately €84 million per year. With the creation of new adolescent health and support centres and the expansion of their role, the resources allocated by the State to the system have increased significantly.

These resources are allocated in a variety of ways. Furthermore, with similar staffing levels, the adolescent health and support centres offer very different services.

The way in which the system is managed thus appears to be unsuitable in view of the increase in its activity. A list of compulsory duties could be drawn up, emphasising individual support for adolescents and first-level prevention. Beyond these essential tasks, the regional health agencies would retain the possibility of modulating their support according to the territorial context.

This strengthening of the scope of action of the adolescent health and support centres would make it possible to guarantee a minimum level of services throughout the country while maintaining a degree of management flexibility adapted to local realities.

Recommendations

The Court makes the following recommendations:

1. Improve the clarity of services aimed at young people by merging the youth centres and Youth Advice and Support Centres, and by defining reception, support, and preventive health and social actions core mandatory functions (*Ministry of Health and Access to Care, National Family Allowances Fund*);
2. Conduct a scientific evaluation of the impact of adolescent health and support centres in identifying and preventing physical and mental health issues among adolescents (*Ministry of Health and Access to Care*);
3. Better take into account the needs and characteristics of local areas by defining clear funding allocation criteria (*Ministry of Health and Access to Care*).

3. Addiction to illegal drugs and alcohol among young people: a challenge for prevention and care

Addiction to illegal drugs and alcohol is a disease of the brain defined by physiological and psychological dependence on the consumption of these substances despite their harmful effects. In France, young people aged 12 to 25 are particularly exposed to the risk of addiction due to weak prevention and care policies.

Key figures

46.3 %

of young people aged 18-24 in 2023 said they had used cannabis at least once in their lives. 3.5% said they used it on a daily basis

× 10



starting to drink alcohol in early adolescence increases the risk of becoming alcohol-dependent in adulthood by a factor of ten, compared with starting later, around the age of 20

260

youth addiction consultations, available at 540 sites, providing reception, information, assessment, short-term support, and guidance for young people and their families

Source: response of the Directorate-General for Health to the questionnaire sent as part of the survey

230.000



young people aged 18 to 24 are affected by cannabis addiction

1 in 10 young people

consider themselves addicted to illegal drugs or alcohol

Source: response of the Directorate-General for Health to the questionnaire sent as part of the survey

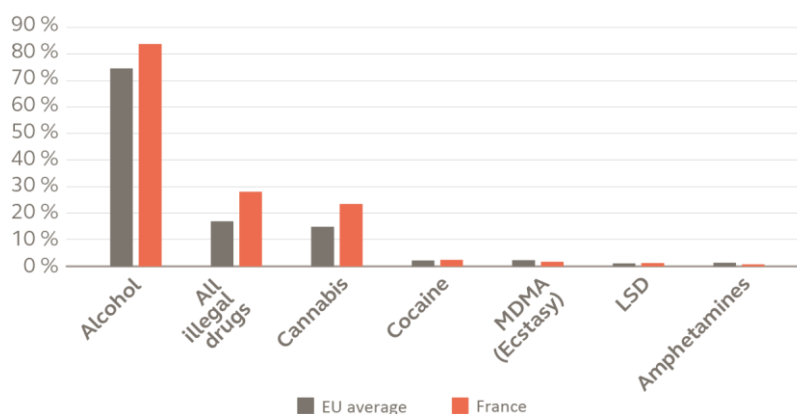
French youth particularly affected

Drug and alcohol use is a major public health problem because of the risk of addiction it causes and the diseases it is a risk factor for and aggravates.

France is particularly affected by this phenomenon: in 2021, 2.6 % of 18-24 year olds reported drinking alcohol daily (the highest rate in the euro zone). With regard to drugs, French consumption is thought to be among the highest in Europe since, all drugs combined, 28 % of

young people are thought to have consumed narcotics during the year, compared with 16.9 % in the European Union.

Estimated alcohol and drug consumption among 15-24 year olds in France and the European Union



Source: European Drug Report 2024

Although addiction is more difficult to measure than consumption, different assessment methods nevertheless make it possible to provide an estimate of the number of young people concerned, which varies from 130,000 to more than one million depending on the methodology used. The Ministry of Health is responsible for developing reliable tools for measuring young people's addiction to drugs and alcohol, based in particular on medical and administrative databases which have yet to be developed.

Healthcare and medico-social services insufficiently targeted at young people

The identification, support and care of young people suffering from addiction involves general practice, hospitals and the medico-social sector. However, the support and care provided to these people is inadequate: they target young people little or not at all and the number of places available is low.

The 'consultations for young consumers' (CJC) are the only care system specifically for young people. It offers comprehensive and tailored support, but the assessment of the scheme must be carried out at the national level before, if necessary, it is rolled out across the country.

The links between general practice, hospitals and the medico-social sector should be strengthened to ensure continuity of care and follow-up of the care pathway. It is also important to better identify the funding of care in hospitals and medico-social establishments to improve the visibility and management of the provision of care for young people with addictions.

The need for a more ambitious and better coordinated prevention policy

To prevent addiction, it is important to act as early as possible, and before the problems manifest themselves. However, prevention efforts are not up to the challenge.

The fight against youth addiction involves mobilising all stakeholders, particularly the Ministry of Education. Schools and higher education establishments have a key role to play in identifying, raising awareness and advising young people.

France has not deployed a large-scale communication campaign to prevent drug use. A detailed study should be carried out before communication actions are carried out using the right terminology and channels of expression for young people.

In addition, strict enforcement of the ban on the sale of alcohol to minors should be ensured.

The introduction of a minimum price for alcoholic beverages could also prove useful in steering young people away from alcohol.

Recommendations

The Court makes the following recommendations:

1. Conduct an epidemiological study on the situation of young people suffering from addiction (*Ministry of Health and Access to Care, French Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, Public Health France*);
2. Draw up a nationally aggregated inventory of the medico-social services available to young people with drug or alcohol dependencies and provide the interministerial strategy for mobilisation against addictive behaviour with quantified objectives for reducing drug and alcohol consumption among young people (*Ministry of Health and Access to Care, National Health Insurance Fund, Interministerial Task Force on Drugs and Addictive Behaviours, French Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, Public Health France*);
3. Mobilise stakeholders in the education, health and medico-social sectors to raise young people's awareness of the addictive risks of illegal drugs and alcohol, as well as to identify and refer young drug users (*Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Higher Education and Research, Ministry of Health and Access to Care*);
4. Launch a major campaign aimed at young people to raise their awareness of the harmful effects of illegal drug and alcohol consumption (*Ministry of Health and Access to Care, Interministerial Task Force on Drugs and Addictive Behaviours*);
5. Set a minimum price per unit of pure alcohol in each drink, in particular to prevent and reduce consumption among young people (*Ministry of Health and Access to Care, Ministry of Budget and Public Accounts*) (*recommendation reformulated*).

4. Preventing obesity in young people: the example of New Caledonia and French Polynesia

According to the World Health Organisation, obesity is an abnormal or excessive accumulation of body fat that can be harmful. As noted by the Court of Accounts in 2019, the prevalence of obesity is higher in overseas territories, particularly in the Pacific. In 2020, the rate for adults in mainland France was 15 %, compared with 38 % in 2022 in New Caledonia and 48 % in 2019 in French Polynesia. The Court of Accounts and the territorial chambers of accounts of New Caledonia and French Polynesia have therefore analysed the policies implemented in these two territories to prevent obesity in young people aged 15 to 25.

Key figures



€320,000

is the potential cost of diabetes among 15- to 25-year-olds for the health insurance system in 2028 in New Caledonia.

Source: New Caledonia Regional Audit Office (CTC), based on CAFAT data



€560,000

is the potential cost of diabetes among 15- to 25-year-olds for the health insurance system in 2028 in French Polynesia.

Source: French Polynesia Regional Audit Office (CTC), based on data from the French Polynesia social welfare fund

23 %

prevalence of obesity among 18-24 year olds in New Caledonia in 2022.

Source: New Caledonia Regional Audit Office (CTC), based on data supplied by the New Caledonia Department of Health and Social Affairs

41 %

prevalence of obesity among men aged 18-29 in French Polynesia in 2019. This rate is 47% for women in the same age bracket.

Source: survey conducted by French Polynesia* from 18/09/2019 to 18/3/2020

*The government of French Polynesia, which formally bears the name "Country"

In mainland France, this rate was 5% among 14-24 year olds in 2019.

€25 million

per year, the direct cost of obesity estimated by New Caledonia.



Source: cost estimated by New Caledonia in collaboration with the New Caledonia Regional Audit Office (CTC)

Source: cost estimated by New Caledonia in collaboration with the New Caledonia Regional Audit Office (CTC)

The rise in obesity among young people, a health and economic risk

The prevalence of obesity increased by eight points between 2010 and 2022 in New Caledonia among 18-24 year olds and by almost 10 points between 2010 and 2019 in French Polynesia among 18-29 year olds. In mainland France, it increased by only one point between 2009 and 2019 among 15-24 year olds, reaching 5% in 2019.

In these two territories, youth obesity is mainly linked to an unbalanced diet, a sedentary lifestyle and insufficient physical activity. Poverty and the socio-economic and cultural environment can be aggravating factors. However, data collection remains inadequate.

The health consequences of obesity weigh heavily on the future of young people and on social welfare budgets. New Caledonia has estimated the direct cost of obesity at €25.14 million per year. This measurement has not been carried out by French Polynesia, which has undertaken to produce it in 2025.

Young people do not benefit sufficiently from the prevention policies in place

In both territories, the prevention of obesity in young people has not been made a priority in health programmes. In New Caledonia, this policy relies on a number of actors who intervene both at the territorial and provincial level.

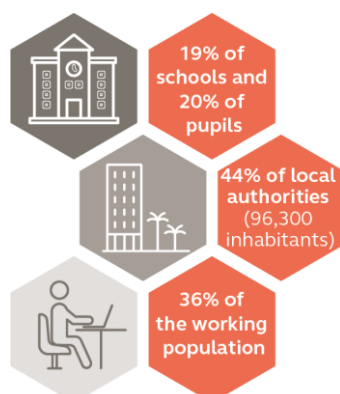
Actions by New Caledonian provinces to combat youth obesity

Southern Province	Northern Province	Loyalty Islands Province
• Addictions • Physical activities • Health education programme	• Health education programme in schools (therapeutic education) • Management of childhood obesity (monitoring of pathologies)	• Health education programme in schools (awareness-raising and information)

Source: Court of Accounts

In French Polynesia, the measures aimed at young people have resulted in prevention messages and actions in schools, municipalities and workplaces.

Review of obesity prevention actions in French Polynesia (2022)



Source: Court of Accounts

In both territories, the impact of obesity prevention programmes aimed at young people is difficult to measure.

Strengthening the fight against obesity in the interest of young people

The prevention of obesity among young people requires prioritising this risk in data collection and implementing targeted actions for this age group. Accompanied by an assessment of its effects on the health of young people, this strategy will reduce health insurance expenditure.

In New Caledonia and French Polynesia, the annual publication of a health and social barometer would constitute an essential measure of transparency. This should facilitate the monitoring of actions to combat obesity according to place of residence, social situation and age group.

As an effective tool for preventing health risks and obesity, behaviour-based taxation should be strengthened. Nutritional labelling of products could be made compulsory and the sale of unhealthy products could be regulated in and around schools. In addition, the provision of free access to sports facilities would help to reduce the sedentary lifestyle of young people.

The gradual reduction in the prevalence of obesity among young people will help to control health insurance expenditure. The financial burden of medical care diabetes for 15-25 year olds, for health insurance, could reach €0.56 million in 2028 in French Polynesia and €0.32 million in New Caledonia in 2028.

Recommendations

The Court makes the following recommendations:

1. Regulate the sugar content of imported food products, implement a behaviour-based tax on products containing sugar and impose nutritional labelling on marketed products (*governments of New Caledonia and French Polynesia*);
2. Promote youth sports and the fight against a sedentary lifestyle, starting in 2026, by developing freely accessible infrastructure for physical activity (*governments of New Caledonia and French Polynesia*);
3. Limit, from 2026, the marketing and distribution of products deemed harmful to health in and around schools and educational establishments (*governments of New Caledonia and French Polynesia*).

PART FOUR

Learning about citizenship and life in the city

The concepts of living together and social cohesion are difficult to define in a world where young people, who are discovering the problems of the adult world, display a great deal of mistrust towards institutions. This mistrust is one of the main markers of the crisis of democratic representation. Participation in political life is an important aspect of citizenship, enabling citizens to contribute to the definition of the country's major policies through the exercise of their right to vote.

The major concerns of young people are social inequalities and environmental issues. Nevertheless, and in accordance with Article 2 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, security issues, such as freedom, property and resistance to oppression, should not be excluded from the concerns.

Defence and Citizenship Day, created in 2011, is a unique opportunity to address almost the entire age group. It helps to affirm the feeling of belonging to the national community and to maintain the link between the armed forces and young people. The Ministry of Defence's desire to strengthen the military dimension of the programme must be reconciled with the broader objectives assigned to it by law.

Some of the difficulties that young people face are cumulative (schooling, health, housing, work, etc.) and constitute obstacles that can lead to their exclusion, if not criminal prosecution. The Ministry of Justice has formed numerous partnerships to address these often very difficult situations. However, despite these efforts, the situation remains unsatisfactory, which raises the question of intervention with families as early as possible. The importance of the latter in the future of young offenders is emphasised by all professionals, especially since in criminal matters, there is no homogeneous policy towards them. This is marked by a break when they reach legal adulthood. Juvenile justice is based on a specific framework where education prevails over punishment, with, in parallel, a strong individualisation of the judicial response. Young adults, for their part, are subject to common law.

Reaching legal adulthood also opens up new rights, starting with the right to vote, and also creates new obligations. Contributing to public finances, particularly through income tax, is commonly associated with citizenship, with tax independence coinciding with legal adulthood. While only 16% of young people actually pay this tax, they take a critical view of taxation, which can be explained by a lack of knowledge of the subject, combined with the feeling that they pay too much tax that is unfairly distributed, and a harsh view of the management of public funds. This observation calls for the development of education in fiscal citizenship, in a more innovative and voluntary way than is the case today.

Conceived as an education in art, artistic and cultural education contributes to the training and emancipation of the individual and the citizen, through the development of their sensitivity, creativity and critical spirit. Pupils should therefore benefit from an artistic and cultural education programme that combines exposure to works of art, encounters with artists, artistic practice and the acquisition of knowledge to offer them an opening to the arts and culture.

1. Defence and Citizenship Day, objectives to be redefined

Compulsory for all French citizens aged between 16 and 18, Defence and Citizenship Day (Journée Défense et Citoyenneté, JDC) is designed to maintain a link between the armed forces and young people, to remind them of the duty of national defence incumbent on every citizen and to ensure that they are eligible for conscription. It also serves to draw up electoral rolls, detect illiteracy and inform young people about various aspects of citizenship and good citizenship.

Key figures

806,962 young

people took part in their Defence and Citizenship Day (JDC) in 2023



1.8%

of those called up who turned 25 in 2022 had not completed their Defence and Citizenship Day (JDC)

1,261

is the number of staff positions available to the Directorate for National Service and Youth (DSNJ). 90% are mobilised by the JDC.

€105 million/year

estimated cost of the scheme

Source: DSNJ (National Service and Youth Department, Ministry of the Armed Forces)

Source: DSNJ (National Service and Youth Department, Ministry of the Armed Forces)

A system subject to considerable strain

The organisation of this large-scale programme is the responsibility of the National and Youth Service Directorate (DSNJ), in close collaboration with the armed forces, which provide the instructors for the JDC sessions.

However, the DSNJ has to deal with a steady decline in its workforce, new pressures on recruitment (in 2023, 8.5 % of its 1,261 posts were vacant) and the increasing difficulty in obtaining the necessary military instructors.

The DSNJ has put in place management tools enabling it to fulfil its various roles (JDC, participation in the universal national service (SNU), voluntary military service, youth policy, etc.) with a reduced workforce. It therefore increased venue capacity, systematically overbooked young participants to compensate for absenteeism, and merged the pools of facilitators for the Defence and Citizenship Day (JDC) and the Defence and Remembrance Day, organised under the Universal National Service (SNU), in order to optimise resources. However, the limits of productivity have now been reached. The significant savings that the DSNJ had to make in 2024 (representing 10 % of its initial budget), the mobilisation of the armed forces for the Paris Olympic Games and the preparation of the '*JDC Nouvelle Génération*' (New Generation JDC) have led the DSNJ to reduce the duration of the JDC to 2 hours 45 minutes since 1 August 2024, on a fragile legal basis.

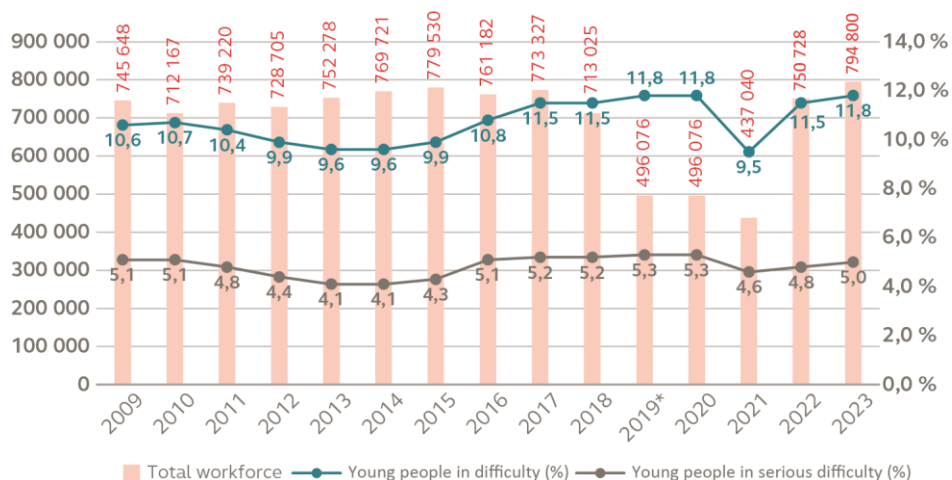
An uncertain contribution and persistent weaknesses

The 800,000 young people who take it every year say they are mostly satisfied with their JDC. On the other hand, and even if they are committed to this opportunity to meet with the entirety of a particular age group, many in the armed forces consider its content to be unsatisfactory.

The long-standing difficulties of the JDC have undergone contrasting developments. Although almost exhaustive, the census would be inoperative in the event of a call-up. Absenteeism on the first summons remains stable, but the proportion of young people who have not rectified their situation by the age of 25 has fallen sharply, from 4.1 % in 2015 to 1.8 % in 2022. On the other hand, the situation of young French people abroad has deteriorated, with almost all of them now effectively exempt from the JDC due to a lack of resources in diplomatic posts to organise it. The online JDC is still at the interministerial project stage.

Reading tests are no longer a single point of assessment. In fact, the development of assessments throughout schooling makes it possible, in principle, to detect young people's reading difficulties before the JDC. The provision of support for young people affected by these difficulties, following the JDC, is not systematic. The DSNJ therefore questions the usefulness of maintaining these tests at this precise moment. However, their abolition cannot be considered without legislative amendment.

Number of JDCs, young people with reading difficulties, including illiteracy (2009-2023)



Source: Court of Accounts based on data from the Department of Assessment and Prospective Studies, Ministry of National Education

Purposes to be determined

Although the subject is receiving increasing attention, defence education, which aims to acculturate young people to the challenges of national defence during their schooling, is still unevenly provided and its achievements are still insufficiently assessed. It is part of a civic programme that the Ministry of the Armed Forces is seeking to strengthen through the Armed Forces-Youth Ambition Plan, which was made public in 2021 and of which the JDC is intended to be a highlight.

The international context is leading to a reconsideration of its challenges and potential. This is why the director of national service and youth has been given the task of 're-militarising' the JDC, particularly for recruitment purposes. Although this objective is not among those assigned to the JDC by the National Service Code, it nonetheless provides the armed forces with an opportunity to identify young people interested in defence careers (over 300,000 information requests per year).

In line with this objective, the part of the JDC devoted to defence has been strengthened since September 2023. This marked change would be consolidated by the 'New Generation JDC', which has been undergoing trials since summer 2024. This would include sports and fun workshops, a careers forum and a digital version enabling young people's skills to be monitored over time. The cost of the JDC, which until now has been in the region of €100 million per year, is therefore expected to increase in the coming years (+€15 million in the 2025 Finance Bill for DSNJ-related expenditure alone). However, because it deviates from the balance between defence and citizenship provided for in the National Service Code, this reorientation of the JDC requires an adaptation of the legislative framework, which the Ministry of the Armed Forces must now undertake.

Recommendations

The Court makes the following recommendations:

1. Complete the ongoing trials of the new Defence and Citizenship Day within a legal framework that should be formalised as soon as possible, and ensure a thorough evaluation (*Ministry of the Armed Forces and Veterans*);
2. Submit the objectives and content of the new Defence and Citizenship Day to interministerial review, and adapt the legal framework accordingly (*Ministry of the Armed Forces and Veterans*);
3. Set up the necessary organisation and mobilise the required resources to roll out the online Defence and Citizenship Day for young French nationals living abroad (*Ministry of the Armed Forces and Veterans, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs*).

2. Young people's entry into the income tax system

Income tax marks the entry of most young people into the 'tax system', with voluntary or compulsory procedures expected of them for the first time. However, while legal adulthood at 18 years of age is immediately linked to new rights, beginning with the right to vote, tax independence, though also legally set at that age, often takes effect much later in practice. Moreover, due to the relatively low incomes of two thirds of young people under the age of 25 who are taxed separately from their parents and the exemption arrangements for certain income related to studies, only a quarter of them actually pay tax, i.e. around 16 % of the 18-25 age group.

The low proportion of young people actually subject to income tax may explain why this age group has a poor understanding of it. In this respect, a survey carried out by the Court on a representative sample of young people aged between 15 and 24 highlighted, on the one hand, a poor knowledge of the tax rates actually applied and, on the other hand, a relative distrust of the tax.

Key figures

36.7 %

the percentage of 18-25 year olds who are part of their parents' tax household

63 %

of young people think the level of taxation is too high

Source: survey of the Court of Accounts on a sample of young people



1 210 €

the average amount of income tax paid by young people aged 18-25 who are taxed separately from their parents

Source: DGFIP statistics, April 2024, no. 22

27 %

the percentage of young people aged 18-25 who share the opinion that "it is justified to cheat on your tax and social security contributions if you have the opportunity to do so"

Source: survey of the Court of Accounts on a sample of young people

Source: survey of the Court of Accounts on a sample of young people

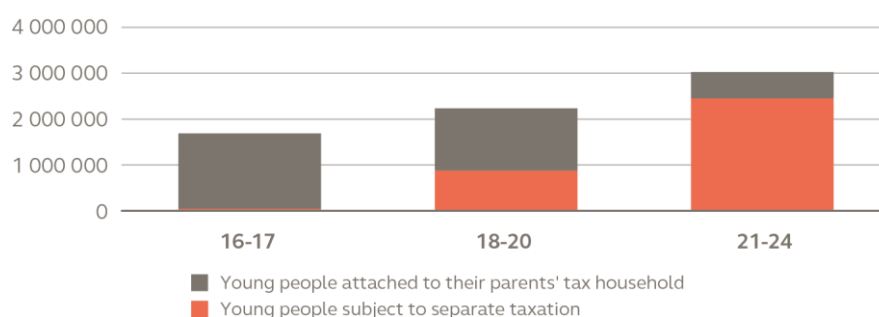
A theoretical concept of tax independence that conceals a very gradual entry into the tax system

In principle, each young person forms their own tax household from the moment they reach legal adulthood. However, they may remain attached to their parents' tax household until the age of 21 without special conditions, and until the age of 25 if they are a student. More rarely, a young person may be taxed separately before the age of eighteen, particularly if they have personal assets or take up a professional activity at an early age.

In 2022, approximately 5.3 million young people aged 18 to 25 were known to the tax authorities. 39 % of young people under the age of 21 declared their income independently, and 81 % of those aged 21 to 25. In comparison, only 3 % of minors over the age of 16 were subject to separate taxation.

Thus, the concept of tax independence at the age of 18 in fact masks a gradual entry of young people into the tax system, which in practice occurs when they begin to earn significant income.

Young people attached to their parents' tax household or subject to separate taxation (2022)



Source: Court of Accounts based on data from the Directorate General of Public Finances (DGFIP)

Due to the relatively low incomes of young people under the age of 25 who are taxed separately from their parents and the exemption arrangements for certain income related to studies, only a quarter of them actually pay income tax, corresponding to approximately 16 % of the 18-25 age group.

When a young person chooses to be part of their parents' tax household, their income is added to the taxable income of that household. In return, the latter benefits from a tax reduction, which takes different forms depending on the situation of the adult child. If they are not married, in a civil partnership or responsible for a family, their inclusion entitles them to an increase in the number of family quotient shares in the household. If they are married, in a civil partnership and/or responsible for a family, their inclusion, which may be accompanied by that of their spouse and/or that of each of their children, entitles them to a reduction in the taxable income of the household of up to €6,674 per person included. In order to simplify tax law, the Court recommends replacing this allowance with the allocation of the same family quotient shares as for young single people.

Beyond the calculation of opportunities, the issue of the tax attachment of adult children and the resulting benefits is an element of the debate on the introduction of an independence income for young people. In recent years, some youth organisations and several administrative reports have taken a position in favour of funding such a scheme by abolishing the tax advantage linked to attachment to the parents' tax household with a view to redistribution. This debate should also include the issue of allowances paid to children and whether or not they are deducted from the parents' taxable income.

Furthermore, the specific nature of the 18-25 age group justifies the tax authorities going beyond sending young people aged 20 a simple information letter about their first tax return. This first contact should take place as soon as they reach legal adulthood and be accompanied by an incentive for young people to activate their digital space on the impots.gouv.fr portal.

Specific tax mitigation measures imposing complex choices

Several exemption measures make it possible to mitigate the tax affecting the income of young taxpayers, regardless of the tax scheme adopted.

For example, sums paid in the context of volunteering or a civic service commitment are fully exempt from taxation. Exemptions also apply to income derived from activities carried out during studies or during school or university holidays (up to a limit of €5,204 gross per year) and to income derived from an internship or apprenticeship (up to a limit of €20,815 gross per year).

Conditions for the taxation of income that can be received by young people

	 International volunteering, international solidarity volunteering, and volunteering for integration	 Civic service	 Grants based on social criteria	 Internship or apprenticeship	 Student jobs
Taxation conditions	Exemption from taxation			Tax exemption up to the annual minimum wage (€20,815 gross)	Tax exemption up to three times the monthly minimum wage (€5,204 gross)
Declaration procedure	The sums in question do not have to be entered on the income tax return, and in some cases a sworn statement has to be drawn up.			Exempt salaries do not have to be entered on the tax return (only the amount that exceeds the exemption ceilings is declared).	

Source: Court of Accounts according to the French General Tax Code. Note: the amounts in euros correspond to those in force for the taxation of income received in 2023

* Income from activities carried out during secondary or higher education, or during school or university holidays.

Some exempt income does not have to be declared on the tax return, while other income does. This disparity in reporting obligations is likely to cause difficulties for young taxpayers. The Court therefore recommends harmonising the procedures for declaring the income most commonly received by young people.

Young people are critical of a tax that is often poorly understood

The results of the survey carried out by the Court on a representative sample of 1,011 young people aged between 15 and 24 reveal a poor knowledge of the tax rates actually applied and a relative distrust of the tax system.

Almost two thirds of the young people questioned consider the contribution too high. One in two young people also believe that the French tax system is not capable of effectively redistributing income. Finally, more than a quarter share the opinion that “it is justified to cheat

on one's taxes if this is an option", indicating less acceptance of the tax than in the rest of the population.

Stepping up tax awareness campaigns, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, could therefore improve young people's knowledge of the tax system and their acceptance of taxation.

Recommendations

The Court addresses the following recommendations to the Ministry of the Budget and Public Accounts:

1. Replace the allowance for taxpayers with married adult children or dependents attached to their tax household with the allocation of the same family quotient shares as for young single people (recommendation reiterated);
2. Upon reaching legal adulthood, send an information letter to young people encouraging them to activate their personal digital space;
3. Harmonise the procedures for declaring the income of young people who are exempt;
4. Promote tax awareness to help familiarise young people, including before they reach tax independence, with the core principles of the French tax system.

3. Young people and criminal justice

Delinquency among young people in the 15 to 25 age group is an important issue in public debate. The Court analysed the criminal justice response from the moment cases are referred to the public prosecutor's office until the sentences handed down are served. Crime prevention and child protection policies, as well as the actions of the security forces, are not included in the scope of the analysis.

This criminal justice response is not consistent across the age group in question. It is based on specific principles for minors, which lead to individualised justice, whereas from the age of 18, it favours a speedier criminal response and treatment under common law.

Key figures

The 8.2 million young people aged between 15 and 25 make up 12% of the French population. In 2023, they accounted for 26% of those accused, 34% of those prosecuted and 35% of those convicted

61 %

the proportion of young people aged 15 to 25 convicted of drug offences

Source: Ministry of Justice, SG, SSER, Cassiopée statistical file (data as at 31 March 2024)

9.4 months

For minors, the average time to trial dropped from 23 months after the offence in September 2021 to 9.4 months in September 2023, following the reform of the Juvenile Criminal Justice Code

6.6 %

the proportion of prison sentences (in whole or in part unsuspended) out of all sentences handed down to minors in 2022. This rate is 22.5% for adults.

45 %

of young people aged 15 to 25 sentenced between 2010 and 2022 have already been sentenced at least once in the past



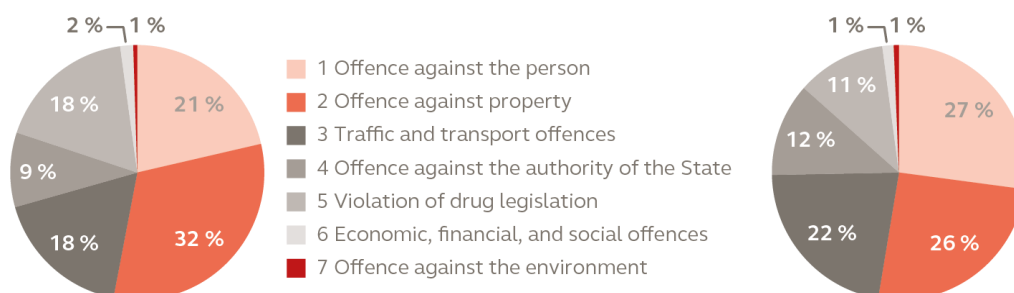
Youth offending, a difficult phenomenon to characterise

Offending by young people aged 15 to 25 is difficult to understand. The shortcomings of the Ministry of Justice's IT systems add to the methodological difficulty of identifying a relevant and objective indicator.

The generally accepted number of defendants depends on a variety of factors in addition to the behaviour of young people: police activity, severity of criminal law, etc. Its 18.2 % decline over the past 10 years is mainly due to the widespread use of fixed fines for the illegal use of narcotics.

Despite this trend, young people aged 15 to 25 remain over-represented in the criminal population. While they make up 12 % of the French population, they represent 26 % of those accused, 34 % of those prosecuted and 35 % of those convicted.

Breakdown of defendants by type of case in 2014 and 2023



Source: Ministry of Justice, SG, SSER, Cassiopée statistical file (data as at 31 March 2024)

The age of legal adulthood: a turning point that shapes the criminal justice response

The distinct approach of criminal justice policy towards minors is based on three principles enshrined in France's constitutional framework and in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989, to which France is a signatory: the presumption of lack of discernment, trial by a specialised court (the juvenile judge), and the primacy of educational measures over punitive ones.

For young adults, court proceedings fall under ordinary law and are generally faster, often relying on penalty orders, guilty plea hearings, or immediate appearances before a judge.

Alternatives to prosecution are more frequently used in cases involving minors (55.5 % in 2023) than in those involving young adults (29.8 %). Likewise, non-custodial measures and educational sanctions make up the majority of sentences handed down to minors. In 2022, fewer than 7 % of sentences issued by first-instance juvenile courts (3,313 in total) involved full or partial custodial terms. Incarceration is more frequent for adults, accounting for more than 22 % of sentences handed down.

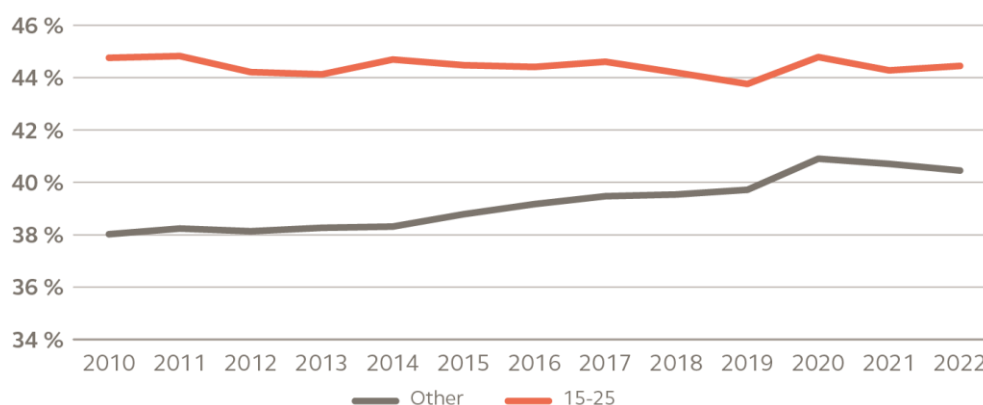
When a conviction is handed down, the conditions of enforcement also differ significantly. The break affects both the supervision of young people and the way they are supported. Young offenders move from being supervised by youth justice educators — where their daily routine is strictly structured — to the adult prison system, where they are granted greater personal autonomy but face far harsher detention conditions.

Measures have been introduced to ease the impact of this transition. However, they remain underdeveloped and insufficient to lessen the impact of the transition to legal adulthood.

Limited effectiveness and the need to strengthen partnership-based policies

Despite public funding estimated by the Court at at least €2 billion per year, the effectiveness of criminal justice policy targeting young people aged 15 to 25 appears limited. Both quantitative and qualitative studies consistently show that it struggles to curb delinquent pathways. Between 2010 and 2022, the proportion of 15- to 25-year-olds convicted for repeat or reoffending under the legal definitions¹ remained stable at around 45 %. In addition, the reoffending rate among young people has consistently been higher than that of the rest of the convicted population.

Rate of individuals convicted for reoffending or repeat offending, by age



Source: Court of Accounts based on data from the Ministry of Justice

The assessment tools available to the State to understand this phenomenon and adapt the tools of its policy are too weak. The few available studies show, however, that improvements are necessary. They illustrate the importance of certain key factors in the onset of delinquency and show that the links with other public policies are insufficient, particularly in terms of security, health and child protection. It is also essential to take early action with regard to families.

¹Legal reoffending is defined as committing a new offence—punishable by ten years' imprisonment—within ten years of a conviction for a crime or an offence carrying the same sentence (Articles 132-8 to 132-11 of the French Penal Code). Repeat offending occurs when a person who has already been convicted commits a new offence that does not meet the conditions for legal reoffending (Article 132-16-1 of the Penal Code).

Recommendations

The Court addresses the following recommendations to the Ministry of Justice:

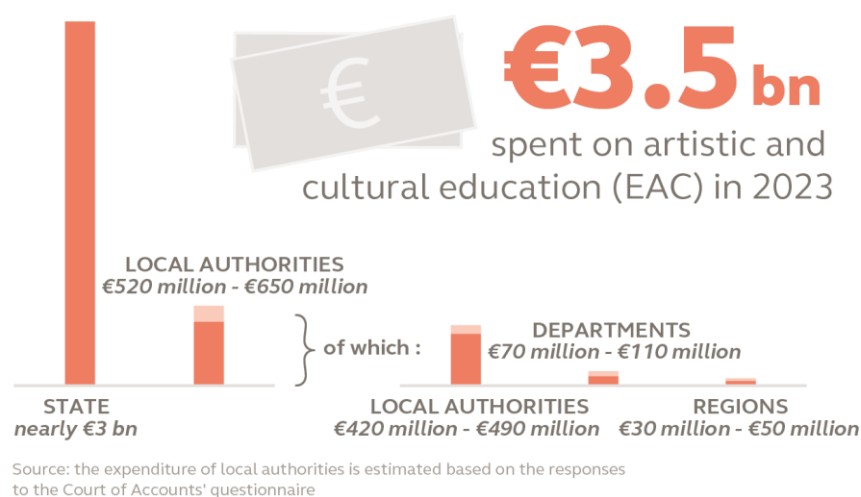
1. Following an evaluation, promote support and monitoring schemes to better assist young people under judicial supervision in their transition to legal adulthood;
2. Strengthen the tools for assessing criminal justice policy for young people;
3. Strengthen cooperation between the Ministry of Justice and other actors involved in the care of minors and adult offenders.

4. Artistic and cultural education for schoolchildren

Throughout their schooling, pupils should benefit from an artistic and cultural education curriculum that “combines exposure to works of art, encounters with artists, artistic practice and the acquisition of knowledge”. This curriculum is based on a core of arts education, which is compulsory in primary and lower secondary school, and offered as an area of expertise or optional field in upper secondary school. This teaching is extended through partnerships with cultural actors and supported by local authorities.

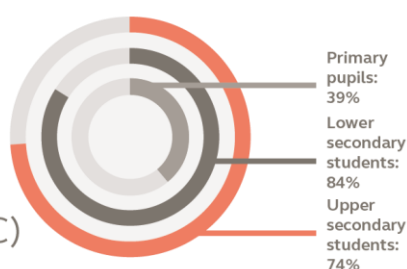
In 2024, the Court of Accounts carried out an assessment of this public policy, classified as one of the ‘government's priority policies’ and whose main objective is to reduce cultural inequalities.

Key figures



57 %

of pupils benefited from an artistic and cultural education (EAC) action in 2023-2024



72 % of

secondary school pupils (all ministries combined) benefited from an arts and cultural education (EAC) activity funded by the collective component of the Pass Culture in 2023-2024

12,582

cultural organisations were listed under the collective component of the Pass Culture as of early 2024

Source: Pass Culture SAS

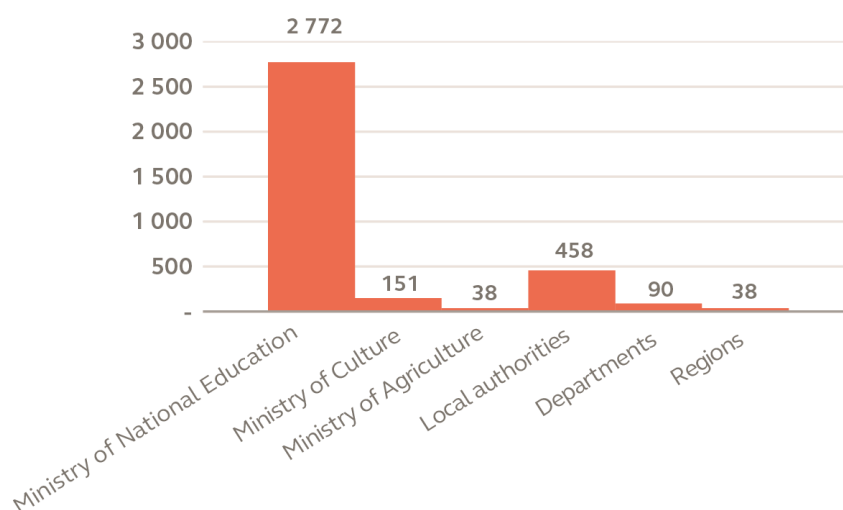
Source: the expenditure of local authorities is estimated based on the responses to the Court of Accounts' questionnaire
Source: Pass Culture SAS

An evolving policy, elevated to the rank of government priority

New tools contribute to making arts and cultural education widely accessible. The Adage app, rolled out in January 2020, provides teachers with access to a geolocated catalogue of cultural activities and to the collective component of the Pass Culture, which helps fund their projects in lower and upper secondary schools (€25 per lower secondary pupil, €30 per student in the first year of upper secondary or preparing for the vocational certificate, and €20 per student in the second and final years of upper secondary).

This new resource, amounting to €51 million in 2023, complements the existing substantial funding dedicated to this policy: €3 billion from the central government in 2023, with local authority spending estimated by the Court at between €520 and €650 million.

Estimated spending on arts and cultural education in 2023 (in € million), excluding tax-related measures



Source: Court of Accounts' calculations based on responses from ministries, local authorities, and the annual performance report (RAP) for programme 361 of the State's budget

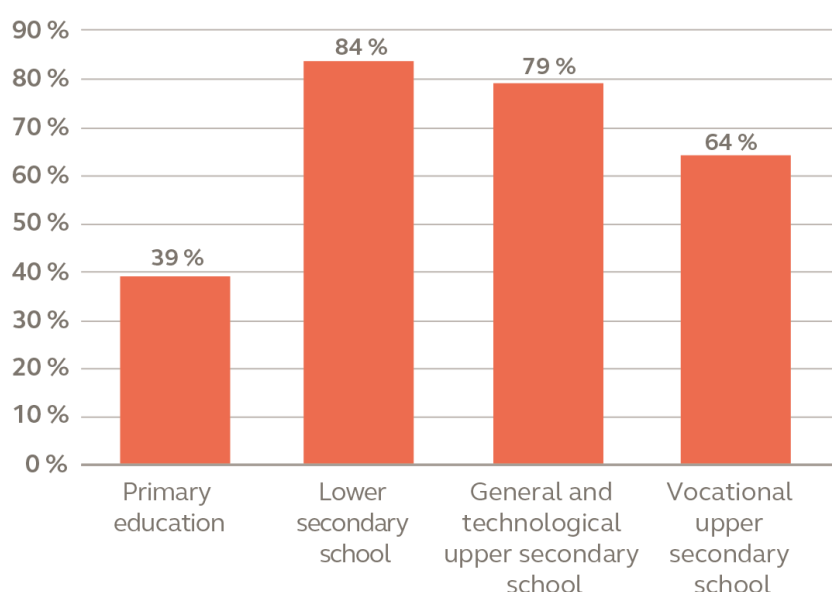
The official priority given to artistic and cultural education has stimulated the proliferation of actions and schemes in increasingly broad fields and their inclusion in artistic and cultural education may be discussed.

Heterogeneous implementation depending on the establishment and the region, variable quality due to lack of adequate management

Artistic and cultural education benefits a growing proportion of pupils: 57% of pupils benefited from at least one activity in 2023-2024, compared with 42 % in 2022-2023. However, a school trip to a show or museum is accounted as equal to regular participation in an artistic workshop.

The objective of reducing inequalities is still far from being achieved: in 2023-2024, 79 % of high school pupils benefited from artistic and cultural education activities in the general and technological streams, but only 64% in the vocational stream, that concentrates disadvantaged pupils.

Proportion of pupils having benefited from at least one artistic and cultural education initiative in 2023-2024 according to level and type of education²



Source: Court of Accounts based on Adage data
Date of observation: 22 July 2024
Scope: all ministries

Inequalities are also territorial: the cultural offer remains very uneven from one area to another and is sometimes more limited in rural areas. It also depends on the proactive approach of local actors.

To optimise the provision of artistic and cultural education, the governance of this policy must ensure effective collaboration between all the partners involved. However, it is lacking at the national level, in the absence of genuine interministerial coordination, and there is room for improvement at the local level between the State and local authorities.

The creation of the collective part of the Pass Culture has led to the development of a plethora of offerings (more than 12,000 listed organisations, some of which were created for this purpose), following a one-stop-shop model.

The minimalist framework for listing does not allow for effective quality control of publicly funded activities aimed at young people. This oversight, which relies exclusively on teachers, is proving to be inadequate, which leads to the emergence of opportunistic actions in terms of their content (offering a loose link with artistic and cultural education), their cost (some actors adapting their remuneration to the means available), or even their very existence (some associations or companies having been set up to benefit from the Pass Culture funding).

The need to guarantee young people an effective, coherent and high-quality programme

Artistic and cultural education today is highly dependent on individual initiatives by teachers. It should therefore be systematically implemented throughout primary and secondary education. The survey identified best practices, for example in schools that organise their pupils' courses by level, all of whom benefit from one or more activities (cinema, reading, theatre, music, etc.). Access for all pupils also requires the personal involvement of the school principal or head teacher.

² The data relating to secondary schools do not include pupils following post-baccalaureate training, which is outside the scope of the assessment.

Teachers' commitment is crucial to ensuring that all young people have genuine access to arts and cultural education. It is therefore important to involve them in raising the profile of arts subjects, to improve their training, and to make project management easier.

Recommendations

The Court makes the following recommendations:

1. Before the start of the 2025 school year, and annually thereafter, hold a national consultation between the relevant ministries and local authorities (*Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Culture*).
2. Starting in the 2025 school year, extend the systematic organisation of arts and cultural education programmes to all classes in primary and secondary schools, under the leadership of the headteacher or school principal (*Ministry of National Education*).
3. From 2025, establish a formal regulatory framework for the listing process under the collective component of the Pass Culture, and focus it on national or local schemes that include a mandatory periodic evaluation process (*General Secretariat of the Government, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Culture*).