

The Future of Apprenticeships in England

Guidance for Trailblazers

Version 1 – October 2013

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Introduction and overview | 3 |
| 2. Developing the Apprenticeship standard | 6 |
| 3. Setting the high level assessment approach | 10 |
| 4. Timetable and support | 12 |
| 5. Submitting and agreeing the standard and assessment approach | 14 |
| 6. From approval to delivery | 17 |
| ANNEX A – Provisional timetable for first Trailblazers | 20 |
| ANNEX B – Questions and Answers | 21 |

1. Introduction and overview

What reforms are you making to the Apprenticeships programme?

1. The Apprenticeships programme is already successful and provides proven benefits to both employers and apprentices. However, the Richard Review found that there were key areas of the programme where significant improvements could be made to make it more rigorous and responsive to the needs of employers. Our reform programme is set out in *The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan*. The key measures aim to:
 - **Increase the quality of Apprenticeships.** An apprentice will need to demonstrate their competence through rigorous and synoptic assessment. This will focus on the end of the Apprenticeship to ensure that the apprentice is ready to progress. Apprenticeships will also be graded.
 - **Put employers in the driving seat.** In future, Apprenticeships will be based on standards designed by employers.
 - **Simplify the system.** The new employer-led standards will be short and easy to understand. They will describe the skills and knowledge that an individual needs to be fully competent in an occupation.
2. We are also planning to give employers greater control over **funding for Apprenticeships**, which will further support these three aims. We have recently consulted¹ on three options and we intend to announce our future approach to Apprenticeship funding later this year.

What are Trailblazers?

3. We recognise that these are significant reforms to the Apprenticeships programme and it will take time to move from the existing approach into the new programme. To support this process, we think that it is important to move quickly to develop examples of the new system working in practice. This will create models of effective practice and provide a strong basis for full implementation of the reforms.
4. The Trailblazers will give employers the opportunity to lead the development of new Apprenticeship standards (section 2) and the high level assessment approaches that sit alongside them (section 3). Once approved (section 5), the standards developed by Trailblazers will become *the* Apprenticeship standard for that occupation and will move through the process to delivery (section 6).

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/apprenticeship-funding-reform-in-england>

What is the scope of the first Trailblazers?

5. We announced in *The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan* the first group of Trailblazer projects. We will expand and extend Trailblazers over the coming months to develop Apprenticeship standards in a wide range of other sectors. The first Trailblazer projects are:

- **Aerospace** – Led by organisations including Airbus, BAE Systems, GKN Aerospace, the Institution of Engineering and Technology, Magellan Aerospace UK Ltd, Marshall Aerospace and Defence Group, MSM Aerospace Fabricators, Rolls-Royce and the Royal Aeronautical Society. This will develop the standard for Aerospace Manufacturing Fitter.
- **Automotive** – Led by organisations including Bentley Motors, BMW Group UK, EEF, Ford, the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Jaguar Land Rover, Siemens, Toyota Manufacturing UK and Vauxhall Motors. This will develop the standard for Automotive Mechatronics Maintenance Technician.
- **Digital Industries** – Led by organisations including Accenture, BT, BCS, the Chartered Institute for IT, CapGemini, Cisco, IBM, Microsoft and the Test Factory. This will develop the standards for Software Development and Networking.
- **Electrotechnical** – Led by organisations including Balfour Beatty, Barlows Electrical, Daly Limited, Darke & Taylor Ltd, the Institution of Engineering and Technology, the Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting Industry, National Grid and UPM Shotton Paper. This will develop the standards for Installation Electrician and Maintenance Electrician.
- **Energy and Utilities** – Led by organisations including British Gas, the Clancy Group, E.ON, the Institution of Engineering and Technology, the Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers, Leven Energy Services, National Grid, Northumbrian Water, Thames Water and Viridor. This will develop the standard for Maintenance Engineers.
- **Financial Services** – Led by organisations including Barclays, Capita, HSBC, Lloyds, Santander, Sesame and Openwork. This will develop the standards for Corporate Banking, Digital Marketing, Compliance and IFA Network Administration.
- **Food and Drink Manufacturing** – Led by organisations including Arla Foods (UK), Dairy Crest, First Milk, Fosters Bakery, Haribo, the Institution of Engineering and Technology, the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, McCain Foods (GB) Ltd, Mondelēz International, Müller Dairy, Nestlé UK, Premier

Foods, Thorntons PLC and Unilever UK. This will develop the standard for Food and Drink Maintenance Engineer.

- **Life Sciences & Industrial Sciences** – Led by organisations including Fujifilm Diosynth, GSK, IChemE, Johnson & Johnson, Lotte Chemical UK Ltd, Lucite International, MedImmune, P3 Medical Ltd, Seralab, the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Society of Biology, Synergy Outsourcing and Victrex Plc. This will develop the standards for Laboratory Technician, Science Manufacturing Technician and Medical Technology Technician.

What kinds of organisations are involved in Trailblazers?

6. Our reforms are focused on putting employers in the driving seat of Apprenticeships in future, so employers will lead Trailblazers. It is important that the standards developed work for both larger and smaller businesses and so the Trailblazer projects will need to involve employers of different sizes.
7. Professional bodies will also play an important part in Trailblazers as we want to ensure that achieving an Apprenticeship in future ensures that an individual is ready to secure professional accreditation where that is available. It is important that education and training providers are geared up and ready to deliver against new Apprenticeships standards and so Trailblazers may also want to involve training providers in their discussions. As they develop the assessment approach, Trailblazers will need to work with experts in this area to draw on their experience.

How can I get involved in Trailblazers?

8. We will develop and launch further phases of Trailblazer projects over the coming months. Employers and professional bodies are welcome to get involved with the existing Trailblazer projects or to consider working with other employers in their sector on a new Trailblazer project. If you are interested in doing so, please contact us at apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk.

What is the overall timetable for delivery of the reforms?

9. We want to take a staged approach to delivery, building on the important early work of the Trailblazers. We intend to continue and grow the Trailblazer programme in 2013/14 and 2014/15, with employers creating a range of new Apprenticeship standards and assessment approaches in different sectors and occupations.
10. The two academic years 2015/16 and 2016/17 will be the key period of transition to full implementation of the reforms. During 2015/16, building on the work of the Trailblazers, employers and professional bodies will work together to agree standards for all occupations where Apprenticeships should be available. Our aim is that from 2017/18, all new Apprenticeship starts will be on the new standards.

2. Developing the Apprenticeship standard

What form should the Apprenticeship standard take?

11. The Apprenticeship standard should be an electronic written document. It should be short, concise and clearly written to make sure that it can be easily understood by all learners and employers. We envisage Apprenticeship standards typically being around one side of A4.
12. To allow maximum flexibility, we do not intend to provide a formal template for the Apprenticeship standard, but there are a number of elements that must be included. These are set out in paragraph 23.

Can there be multiple competing standards for each occupation?

13. No, there will be one single Apprenticeship standard for each occupation. This will help to fulfil our overall aim of greater simplicity within the system.
14. It is essential that each Apprenticeship standard has widespread backing from both large and small employers and from relevant professional bodies. This is reflected in the criteria that will be used to measure and agree the standards (see section 5).

What do you mean by an ‘occupation’?

15. We recognise that there will be different views of what constitutes an occupation between sectors and so we do not plan to prescribe a list of occupations centrally. It will be up to employers and professional bodies working on the Trailblazer projects to agree what constitutes a suitable and discrete occupation for an Apprenticeship standard.
16. We would encourage the projects not to set the occupation at too general a level, which would make it difficult to agree a standard, or too specific a level, which could mean that the skills that apprentices gain are less transferable. Finding a mid point should help to create the right balance of transferability whilst tying the standard to a specific and understandable occupation. As an example, the occupations chosen by the first phase of Trailblazers are set out in paragraph 5.

What about areas where occupations and sectors overlap?

17. We recognise that there will need to be close working between Trailblazer projects and other sectors to ensure that the standards that are developed are widely applicable and equip apprentices with a foundation of knowledge and skills that enables them to move between related occupations. We will help to facilitate these discussions during the Trailblazer programme (see section 4).

18. It is up to the employers and professional bodies leading the Trailblazer projects to agree how they choose to address areas where occupations relate closely to each other and where transferability is needed. Possible options for this include:

- a) Using a **core and options model** in which a common core is agreed between a number of occupations, with additional options enabling the apprentice to specialise in each individual occupation.
- b) Agreeing **shared content** to be included in more than one Apprenticeship standard to ensure that apprentices in each are expected to attain some of the same knowledge and skills.

How much freedom will Trailblazers have to develop the standards?

19. Our reform programme is built on a fundamental desire to put employers in the driving seat of developing the new Apprenticeships programme. It is therefore important that employers have a high degree of freedom to develop the standards and assessment approaches in a way that best meets the needs of their occupations and sectors.

20. However, it is also important that there are some elements that are common to all standards so that we can define what we mean by an Apprenticeship. These are set out in paragraph 23.

Can I make use of existing material (e.g. from Apprenticeship frameworks) when designing the standard?

21. The Apprenticeships programme is already successful and we want our reforms to build on existing strengths. Trailblazers are welcome to draw information from parts of the existing system that employers and professional bodies feel are already effective. For instance, standard setters may want to specify qualifications or parts of qualifications that are well respected and used within the occupation within the standard (paragraph 27).

22. However, we want this to be a radical programme of reform and Trailblazers should not feel restricted in their thinking. They should feel free to start afresh in areas where they want the new Apprenticeship standards to develop and improve the programme.

What must be included within the Apprenticeship standards?

23. We set out in *The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan* the criteria that all Apprenticeship standards must meet. Apprenticeship standards must be short, concise, accessible documents. They must describe the level of skill, knowledge and competency required to do a specific occupation well and operate confidently within the sector. Any new standard must:

- a) describe what full competence for a specific occupation means so that, on completion, an apprentice will have the skills and knowledge and confidence to perform the role in any part of the sector;
- b) be publicly recognised by employers (including small businesses), recognised professional or trade bodies and, where appropriate, higher education institutions (HEIs), as fit for purpose;
- c) be suitable for small businesses to use to train their apprentices, if necessary with external training;
- d) contain sufficient content, and be pitched at such a level, that a new entrant to the occupation would find it stretching and require at least one year of training to meet the standard;
- e) include any skills, and any other requirements, for professional registration if such a system exists in the sector or occupation so that, on completion, a successful apprentice can achieve professional registration; and

Any new standard may:

- f) specify the level of English and maths achievement required if this is above the general requirements for all apprentices; and/or
- g) specify any qualifications that are necessary.

What is the minimum level of English and maths?

24. Employers consistently tell us that English and maths are crucial skills for successful careers. In order to continue to increase the quality of Apprenticeships, we are strengthening the minimum English and maths requirements for the programme.
25. All apprentices working towards new Apprenticeship standards at Level 2 will have to study and take the test for Level 2 English and maths if they have not already achieved it. This will help to ensure that significant progress is made towards this level. For Apprenticeships at Level 3, the minimum requirement will be to achieve Level 2 English and maths.
26. We recognise that for many occupations, employers may wish to establish a higher level of English and maths requirement. Trailblazers are free to do so through the Apprenticeship standard (paragraph 23(f)).

Can I include qualifications or parts of qualifications in the Apprenticeship standard?

27. The new Apprenticeship standard will need to set out what an apprentice should know and be able to do at the end of the Apprenticeship and the assessment of the Apprenticeship will need to cover the *whole* standard. Employers are free to specify a particular qualification within the standard (paragraph 23 (g)), such as one or more

new Tech Levels², or draw on material from existing qualifications where they feel that they are essential to developing the skills, knowledge and competence relating to an occupation.

What is the minimum duration of Apprenticeships?

28. To ensure that Apprenticeships focus on providing sustained and substantial training, all Apprenticeships will need to last for at least 12 months. When setting the Apprenticeship standards, Trailblazers will want to consider this from the point of view of the occupations they choose to work on and in ensuring that the standards are sufficiently stretching to require sustained and substantial training (paragraph 23(d)).

Will Apprenticeships still have 'levels' (e.g. Level 2, Level 3)?

29. We think that it is important for Apprenticeships to continue to be assigned a level to support transferability of skills and knowledge. However, rather than starting from the point of view of the level when designing an Apprenticeship standard, Trailblazers should focus on the occupation and what is needed for full competence. At the end of the development process, when the draft standard is submitted, the Trailblazer should recommend the level to which the standard relates.

² A list of qualifications which meet the Tech Level standard will be published by DfE in November 2013. The list is likely to include existing qualifications which are recognised by employers.

3. Setting the high level assessment approach

What do you mean by the assessment approach?

30. An apprentice must demonstrate full competence (as set out in the Apprenticeship standard) in order to achieve their Apprenticeship. This will require appropriate assessment of an apprentice's skills, knowledge and competence (the assessment approach). That is why Trailblazers will develop both of these together. Once the high level assessment approach has been agreed, Trailblazers will have a role in the development of the detailed assessment (section 6).
31. The high level assessment approach agreed by the Trailblazers should form an annex to the Apprenticeship standard so that employers and learners can clearly see both what needs to be achieved and how it will be measured.

What level of detail is required from the Trailblazers?

32. At the first stage, the assessment approach should be high level. It should describe:
- a) At **what point during the Apprenticeship assessment should take place** (e.g. 25% during the Apprenticeship, 75% at the end of the Apprenticeship).
 - b) **What form the assessments should take and which aspects of the standard will be tested by each** (e.g. half of the assessment at the end of this Apprenticeship will be through a written paper, which will test the first six elements of this standard; the other half will be through a practical synoptic assessment, which will test the remaining elements).

What are the minimum expectations around assessment?

33. As with the Apprenticeship standards (paragraph 19-20), we want to give employers and professional bodies a high degree of freedom to design the assessment in a way that best meets the needs of their occupations. It will be important to have independence and consistency in the assessment of Apprenticeships to ensure recognition and transferability. There will be three specific requirements of all Apprenticeship assessment:
- a) Apprentices will be assessed **largely at the end** – with an expectation that in most cases at least two thirds of the assessment must take place at the end of the Apprenticeship;
 - b) There will be a **synoptic element to the end-point assessment**, requiring the apprentice to identify and use effectively, in an integrated way, an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories, and knowledge from across their training;

These measures will give employers more confidence that people completing Apprenticeships are fully competent in that occupation and will be in addition to any assessment undertaken as part of a qualification specified within the Apprenticeship.

- c) All new **Apprenticeships will be graded**, with apprentices who successfully complete awarded a Pass, Merit or Distinction.

What methods of assessment can I choose to assess the standard?

34. The new Apprenticeship standard will set out what an apprentice should know and be able to do at the end of the Apprenticeship. The assessment will cover the *whole* standard and will therefore need to test both theoretical and practical elements. This will require mixed methods of assessment, which may include:

- a) Written and multiple choice tests;
- b) Observational elements;
- c) Practical synoptic assessments;
- d) A viva to assess theoretical or technical knowledge or discuss how the apprentice approached the practical assessment and their reasoning;
- e) Production of a project, or a portfolio of work; and
- f) Virtual assessment, such as online tests or video evidence as appropriate to the content.

35. It will be for employers and professional bodies involved in Trailblazers, working with assessment experts as they see fit, to agree the balance of assessment methods that are most effective to test an apprentice against the standard for each occupation.

4. Timetable and support

How quickly should the Trailblazers produce the draft Apprenticeship standards and assessment approach?

36. We want the Trailblazers to move forward rapidly so that we can gain early evidence of how the Apprenticeship reforms will work in practice. At the same time, we recognise that it will take time to secure wide buy in from their sectors and occupations to the new standards, which will be essential to their success.
37. Taking into account the level of detail required for the draft Apprenticeship standard and assessment approach, we think that it should take **up to 3-4 months** for each Trailblazer to produce these two products ready for sign off (section 5). A provisional timetable for the first phase of Trailblazers is in Annex A.

What support will the Trailblazers receive?

38. The Trailblazers will be led by employers and professional bodies and we do not want to put in place centrally-driven processes that restrict their flexibility.
39. However, we recognise that the Trailblazers will encounter questions and areas where they need further guidance during the course of their work. Each Trailblazer project will be assigned a relationship manager who will be the first point of contact for enquiries. We will update this guidance so that subsequent versions answer common questions and issues arising from the early phase of Trailblazers (Annex B).
40. We will also need to ensure that there are opportunities for the Trailblazer projects to work with each other during the development phase. This will be important both to share effective practice and to discuss areas where standards and occupations overlap and can support each other (paragraph 17-18). We will facilitate regular meetings between the Trailblazer projects to support this discussion.

What role will the Gatsby Foundation play?

41. Gatsby is an independent charitable foundation set up in 1967 by David Sainsbury (now Lord Sainsbury of Turville). It focuses its support on a limited number of areas, one of which is science and engineering education. More information regarding Gatsby is available on its website at www.gatsby.org.uk.
42. Gatsby is working in partnership with Government to support the delivery of the first Trailblazers announced in the Implementation Plan. Gatsby will have three key roles:
- Providing funding of up to £1.6 million to support the employers and professional bodies that are developing the first Apprenticeship standards and assessment approaches.

- Working with Government to facilitate discussions between the Trailblazer projects to improve links and develop areas of shared interest.
- Commissioning external research or analysis to support the Trailblazers as necessary.

I am part of the first group of Trailblazers. How can I apply for funding from the Gatsby Foundation?

43. Gatsby will put in place a process for Trailblazer projects to apply for capacity funding to develop their Apprenticeship standards and assessment approaches.

44. We will provide further details to the organisations involved in the first group of Trailblazers shortly.

Will the Trailblazer approach be evaluated?

45. Given the radical and far-reaching nature of the Apprenticeship reforms, we think it is essential for us to monitor and evaluate their impact. We will want to gather information about how the Trailblazers progress with developing the Apprenticeship standards and assessment approach so that we can learn from and improve the process in future.

46. We will use this information to update this guidance and future guidance for standard setters so that it is accessible to all those involved in developing and delivering the new Apprenticeships programme.

47. It is essential that we ensure that the Apprenticeship reforms fully support the needs of smaller businesses. During the Trailblazer phase we will examine the system specifically from a smaller employer point of view to learn lessons for future implementation.

5. Submitting and agreeing the standard and assessment approach

Once the draft Apprenticeship standard and high level assessment approach are complete, how do we submit them?

48. Trailblazer projects will keep in touch with their relationship manager as they develop the Apprenticeship standards and assessment approach for their occupations. Once they are content that the draft is complete and has support from a wide range of employers in the sector, they should submit it to apprenticeship.trailblazers@bis.gsi.gov.uk. Trailblazers will also be required to submit evidence that the draft Apprenticeship standard and assessment approach meet the criteria in paragraph 51 below.

Who makes a decision and how?

49. As the new standards will form the basis of Apprenticeships in future, including for funding purposes, the Secretaries of State will approve each of the Apprenticeship standards produced by the Trailblazer projects.

50. We will convene a panel involving employers and academic representatives, as well as experts on assessment to provide advice on the draft standard against the criteria set out below.

What criteria will the Apprenticeship standard be measured against?

51. The criteria for the Apprenticeship standard are set out in paragraph 23 and those for the assessment approach in paragraph 33. The following table sets out the suggested evidence that Trailblazers will need to provide against these criteria.

| Reference | Criterion | Suggested evidence |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Para 23 | A. Short, concise and clear | The Apprenticeship standard is concise (typically around one side of A4) and written in clear and simple language. |
| Para 23 (a) | B. Full competence in an occupation | The Apprenticeship standard describes full competence for a specific occupation. |

| Reference | Criterion | Suggested evidence |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Para 23 (b) and (c) | C. Employer support, including from smaller businesses | A wide range of employers have been involved in developing the standard and have signed up to it. Letters of support for the standard from relevant professional and trade bodies and at least five employers (including smaller employers) that are representative of the sector or occupation should be submitted as evidence. |
| Para 23 (d) | D. Stretch | The standard is sufficiently stretching that a new entrant to the occupation will require at least one year of training to meet the standard. |
| Para 23 (e) | E. Professional registration | Where professional registration exists for the occupation, the Apprenticeship standard provides the individual with the experience they need to register for this. Where applicable, a letter of support from the relevant professional body should be submitted as evidence. |
| Para 23 (f) | F. English and maths | The standard includes details of any English and maths requirements above the minimum level, if required. |
| Para 23 (g) | G. Qualifications | The Apprenticeship standard specifies any qualifications that are necessary, if required. |
| Para 33 | H. Assessment | The assessment annex sets out a high level description of the assessment approach and meets the minimum requirements of assessment: two-thirds end-point assessment, with a synoptic element, graded and with assessment of both knowledge and skills via a variety of methods. The assessment method is appropriate to the content of the standard. |

What will happen once the Apprenticeship standard is agreed?

52. Once the Apprenticeship standard is agreed, the relationship manager will notify all those involved in the project. Agreed Apprenticeship standards will be published on the National Apprenticeship Service website.

When will the Apprenticeship standards be reviewed?

53. We think that it is important for the Apprenticeship standards to be reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain up to date with the latest requirements and practice in the occupations to which they relate.

54. However, we also know that individual sectors will have different views on how often their standards need to be reviewed, depending on how rapidly technology and practice is evolving. When each Apprenticeship standard is agreed, we will work with the employers and professional bodies involved to agree a suitable review date. This will be no more than three years to ensure that the Apprenticeship standards remain current.

6. From approval to delivery

This section sets out our current thinking on the process between the agreement of the Apprenticeship standard and delivery of the first Apprenticeships under them. We will continue to refine this process with the Trailblazers as they develop the standards and assessment approaches and will update this guidance to reflect the latest position.

Isn't the current Apprenticeships system underpinned by law?

55. English Apprenticeships are currently governed by the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. The legislation is prescriptive and contains rules and provisions that are incompatible with our plans for reform.

56. We intend to use the forthcoming Deregulation Bill to amend the original legislation. This will give a clear legal basis for the new Apprenticeships programme. The draft Bill³ was published on 01 July 2013.

What key steps are required for an Apprenticeship standard to be ready for delivery?

57. We think that there are two key processes which need to take place to enable delivery against the new Apprenticeship standards:

- a) **Designing the detail of the assessment process and preparing for delivery**, based on the high level approach developed by employers and professional bodies as part of the Trailblazer.
- b) **Designing the content of the training** that will enable learners to achieve the skills and knowledge set out in the Apprenticeship standard.

58. We think that these two processes can go ahead in parallel, building on the published Apprenticeship standard and high level assessment approach for each occupation.

How will the process of designing the detailed assessment work and how will the Trailblazers be involved?

59. This will build on the high level description of the assessment approach agreed by the Trailblazer to develop the detailed assessment products that sit beneath it, including designing any written and practical tests and the associated marking scheme and details of delivery.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-deregulation-bill>

60. We are keen to use the Trailblazers to test different approaches to developing the detailed assessment process to provide evidence for future implementation. We are particularly keen to test employer-led models to create employer ownership of the end-to-end system.
61. Trailblazers will want to discuss how they get from the high level assessment approach to delivery, and their level of engagement at each stage, with their relationship manager as they develop the Apprenticeship standard. It will be important to ensure independence and consistency in the assessment of Apprenticeships to ensure recognition and transferability and therefore we expect assessment to be delivered by an independent third party.

How will the process of designing the content of training work and how will the Trailblazers be involved?

62. Education and training providers will need to develop the content of any training to deliver the new Apprenticeship standard and fit with the detailed approach to assessment (paragraph 59-61). Trailblazers may wish to involve training providers in their discussions from an early stage to help lay the foundations for this process (paragraph 7).
63. Trailblazers will want to work with training providers as they develop the content of Apprenticeships to ensure that the final materials fully underpin the agreed standard and meet the needs of employers.

When will the first Apprenticeships be delivered under the new Apprenticeship standards?

64. We expect that the first Apprenticeships under the new standards will begin to be delivered during the 2014/15 Academic Year. We expect numbers to be small to begin with as employers test delivery of the new standards, but to grow rapidly as the reforms become established.

How will the new Apprenticeships be funded?

65. We have recently consulted on changes to the way in which Apprenticeships are funded in order to place more control over funding in the hands of employers. We intend to announce our future approach to Apprenticeship funding later this year.
66. Until the changes take effect, we are looking at a number of options to fund early Apprenticeships delivered under the standards. We will provide further information on this shortly.

When will you close the existing Apprenticeship Frameworks?

67. We will close the existing Apprenticeship Frameworks as the new standards are developed and become widely used. Our aim is for all new Apprenticeship starts to be on the new standards from the 2017/18 academic year.

68. However, we will ensure that anyone who begins an Apprenticeship under an existing Framework is able to complete the Apprenticeship on this basis.

How will you move from Trailblazers to full delivery?

69. The Trailblazers will be an important source of lessons and effective practice to inform full implementation of the reforms. As future phases of the Trailblazers are developed, we will update this guidance to ensure that it is current and takes account of lessons learned from early Trailblazers.

ANNEX A – Provisional timetable for first Trailblazers

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| October 2013 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Trailblazers announced in <i>The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan</i>. • Version 1 of this guidance published. |
| October 2013 – January 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Trailblazers develop the Apprenticeship standards and high level assessment approach for their occupations, working with a range of employers and with professional bodies to ensure wide buy in. |
| February 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Trailblazers complete and submit their draft Apprenticeship standards and high level assessment approach (paragraph 48). |
| March 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretaries of State approve Apprenticeship standards and assessment approach (paragraph 49) • Approved Apprenticeship standards published (paragraph 52). |
| April 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of detailed assessment approach begins (Paragraphs 59-61). • Education and training providers begin to update their content and materials to underpin the new standard (Paragraphs 62-63). |
| End 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Apprenticeships delivered under the new standards. |

ANNEX B – Questions and Answers

We will update this section as the Trailblazers are delivered to answer frequent questions and provide details of lessons and effective practice from the projects.

How can smaller businesses get involved in these reforms?

The majority of our existing Apprenticeships are in smaller businesses, so we recognise that it is essential that these reforms work for these organisations.

We expect a wide range of different employers to be involved in the Trailblazer projects, including larger employers, their supply chains and other smaller employers. One of the criteria we have set for approving the Apprenticeship standards (paragraph 51) is support from employers, including smaller employers.

But we also recognise that we will need to use the Trailblazer programme as an opportunity to specifically consider the needs of smaller businesses so that this can feed into plans for wider implementation. We will do this as part of our ongoing evaluation (paragraph 45-47).

Do these reforms apply to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

Policy on skills is devolved and so the reforms described in this document apply only to England. We recognise the value of a joined up approach to Apprenticeships across the United Kingdom, particularly for employers with staff in more than one area. In time, the Apprenticeship Trailblazers will provide concrete evidence for this approach and we will continue to share this with colleagues in the Devolved Administrations.

What is the relationship between the Government's reform of vocational qualifications for 16-19 year olds and Apprenticeship Trailblazers?

Apprenticeship standards will specify clearly any qualifications that are necessary to achieve and demonstrate full competence (paragraph 23). From September 2014, Level 3 qualifications will need to meet new Tech Level quality requirements to continue to be reported in 16-19 school and college performance tables. A similar process is planned for Level 2 qualifications.

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to:

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET
Tel: 020 7215 5000

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