

ANNUAL APPRENTICESHIP CONFERENCE 2019

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Staying on track when policy and practice continues to evolve

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It has been said that several years ago when the then skills minister Nick Boles was asked about the apprenticeship reforms plans, he said it was “like building Crossrail without knowing where it will finish”.

I like to think his point was that employers are in the train driver seat, but the government tunnel will need to go left or right a bit depending what obstacles are discovered along the way.

Others may describe this as the “make it up as you go along method” and the Annual Apprenticeship Conference and Exhibition serves to help the sector take stock and figure out what works, what needs fixing and how to keep the wheels well-oiled and moving.

Taking place across two days at the end of March, the event was packed full of keynote speeches, panels and workshops with updates on policy developments and sharing of best

practice.

One of many highlights, detailed on page 3, was the speech from Amanda Spielman, the chief inspector at Ofsted.

Despite the government claiming apprenticeships are now higher quality, with new the off the job requirement and end-point-assessments, this was not being reflected in the experience of apprentices.

Both full inspections and early monitoring visits continue to find 40 per cent of providers less than good.

This is disappointing and the sector will need to pay close attention to the implementation of Ofsted’s new Education Inspection Framework from September (see page 11).

Keith Smith, the apprenticeship lead at the ESFA, updated delegates on plans to support the small employers with access to unspent levy funding via the digital Apprenticeship System (see page 4).

The technology appears to be in place, but with the forecast budget squeeze it remains a mystery how the ESFA would ration the demand.

Sir Gerry Berragan, chief executive at the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, used his speech to

amongst other things to update delegates on the development of standards (page 5).

As we quickly approach 500 standards available for delivery and the switching off of all frameworks next year, how was the market changing?

Berragan acknowledged employers are typically picking high cost standards at higher levels faster than anticipated but far from seeing this as a concern it was a “diversification in opportunity”.

He also committed to greater transparency from the IfATE, something that John Cope from the CBI was looking for in terms of the use of the levy budget (see page 6).

And shadow skills minister, Gordon Marsden, took a break from the Brexit shenanigans to, like Ofsted, express a concern that some employers were simply using levy funds to “re-badge” existing staff development courses (see page 6).

In their second year, the *FE Week* and AELP AAC Apprenticeship Awards proved a great success. Congratulations to all the winners (see page 12 and 13).

Oh, and thanks to all the delegates and sponsors that bring so much vitality and positivity to conference, some of whom contribute their views on page 14 and 15.

See you next year! Choo Choo!



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Apprenticeship quality not improving, warns Spielman

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The quality of apprenticeships is “sticking” instead of moving forward, according to Ofsted’s chief inspector, who has urged the sector to “improve”.

Amanda Spielman delivered a keynote speech on day one of *FE Week’s* Annual Apprenticeship Conference and provided delegates with an update about what the education watchdog is finding during inspections.

She said that last year, Ofsted inspected the apprenticeship provision at just over 100 providers, of which nearly 60 per cent were “good”, or better than good.

More recent inspections “show that, for now, the sector is holding steady – despite so much new provision coming on stream”, Spielman explained.

“Since last September, of the 52 full inspections that reported on the quality of apprenticeships, nearly 60 per cent were found to be ‘good’, or better.”

So, while the picture “isn’t getting worse, I think that you would all agree that there is still work to do”.

The challenge is to “move past this 60 per cent”, she said.

Meanwhile, the findings from over 150 monitoring visits to new apprenticeship providers show that around 60 per cent were making “reasonable progress” across all three lines of enquiry, while almost a quarter received at least one “insufficient progress” judgement.

AAC host Kirsty Wark later quizzed the chief inspector on the 60 per cent figure for full inspections, saying “it seems to me that’s not particularly good”.

“That is why I wanted to talk about it today, it’s a figure that seems to be

sticking,” Spielman said in response.

“We see this across last year and this year, the monitoring visits. It is a higher figure than in other areas of education that we inspect and we’d really really like to see that improve.”

“

The challenge is to move past this 60 per cent figure

Ofsted’s deputy director for FE and skills said last May that the quality of apprenticeships was actually in decline, and that the programmes were starting to resemble the doomed Train to Gain initiative of the mid-early 2000s.

Spielman also used her speech to express her concerns that some level 6 and 7 provision, which includes “repackaged graduate schemes”, is going “completely unscrutinised” because of government policy.

She told delegates that these “expensive” apprenticeships were “high-cost programmes that soak up a lot of money”.

She referred to how graduate schemes were, in effect, being “repackaged” as apprenticeships, an issue she raised in her 2017/18 annual report.

She was also concerned that Ofsted could not inspect level 6 and 7 apprenticeships, and that if the standard did not have a degree element, it would not be regulated by the Office for Students (OfS) either,



Amanda Spielman

if the provider offering it was not on the OfS’s register, as revealed by *FE Week* in November.

“There are places that go completely unscrutinised because they don’t come within OfS arrangements and they don’t come within our space.”

“

There are places that go completely unscrutinised

Spielman said the first FE inspection she observed found that a large accountancy firm had “very clearly” turned its tax graduate trainees into level 4 and 7 apprentices.

But because of a policy decision made by

the government, and “not us”, Ofsted could only inspect the level 4 provision, while in another room, level 7 apprentices were not being reviewed.

“It was very clearly a graduate training programme that existed for many years that had been reframed slightly to make sure it genuinely did meet the requirements, but nevertheless was the kind of training that firm would have always have been providing and paying for,” she told *FE Week*.

“We were there to look at only one piece of this graduate traineeship programme, which made for an extraordinarily artificial conversation.”

Asked if she would like Ofsted to inspect level 6 and 7 provision, Spielman said, “I very much hope people will see the logic in us doing it.”

Higher level apprenticeships now make up more than a quarter of the number of starts, which the chief inspector said “narrows the options for the third of young people who leave school without a full level 2 qualification”.



Paul Joyce, Amanda Spielman and Kirsty Wark

ESFA to focus on switching small businesses over to the online apprenticeship service

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The Education and Skills Funding Agency's next "big" task is to switch small businesses over to the online apprenticeship service in the "smoothest way possible", its director of apprenticeships told AAC.

Keith Smith told delegates on day two of the conference that much of the agency's energy over the past couple of years has "been about making the apprenticeship levy work, getting big businesses to understand what opportunities the levy can deliver".

He said the last phase will be making sure "all building blocks, all the infrastructure, is properly in place for small businesses".

The government's online apprenticeship service is currently used by big employers who pay the levy to access funds generated through the policy.

Small employers were originally expected to be added to the service in April 2019, but this has been delayed for another year to "ensure a more gradual transition".

The ESFA then extended current contracts for providers delivering training for small employers until March 2020, which is how non-levy-payers train up their apprentices.

Discussing the system for non-levy-payers, Smith admitted the one in place right now is "not optimal".

"We have been using provider contracts as the main mechanism – a bit different to previous years when we did procurement," he explained.

"Our long-term plan was always to put small businesses in control of the system, exactly the same as levy-employers. This year has been quite an exciting year. We are starting to see the roll-out of that capability. That is something we always have in our sight."

Smith said that one thing he is "committed to personally" is to make "that switch over in the smoothest way possible".

"It is now time to have a conversation about how we do that so that small businesses working with you can get that balance of responsibility," he told the AAC audience.

"I have absolutely no doubt that this is going to be a big shift for these companies, but over time, we will start to see some of the behaviour we saw with big companies – who understand what all this is about, why we introduced this, why we are doing

“

Our long-term plan was always to put small businesses in control of the system

this – and businesses will start having really strategic conversations about skills."

FE Week revealed in February that training providers' non-levy funding had run dry and some were even having to turn apprentices away. Many fear the same will happen in 2019/20 as their allocations will not be big enough to meet demand.

FE Week editor Nick Linford quizzed Smith on this during a question-and-answer session after his speech. Linford asked, "Something is broken, isn't it?", if 16- to 18-year-old apprentices are being turned away.

"Just to be clear, the budget is not entirely spent this year," Smith replied.

"What I will say is the system about funding allocation – and this is one of the



Keith Smith

imperfections they encounter in the system – people can't tell where the money is. The system cannot optimise where the employer demand is.

"The system has looked at contract performance and we need money in the

system to pay for that demand, but there is always a lag.

"Every year in these conferences we have these conversations about the money not being where it needs to be and that is always what we wrestle with."



Non-Levy Service to SMEs



Our aim is for all employers to take more ownership of apprenticeships. This means we are transitioning to a programme whereby smaller employers (non-levy payers) will:-

- Take control of apprenticeship funding
- Transition to the apprenticeship service to access funding and manage their relationships with providers



Current non-levy contracts extended from 1 April '19 to 31 March '20

Plans for implementing the non-levy employer ownership journey in development and will be set out shortly. Our focus is to ensure a well managed transition to support providers and employers.

Berragan pledges better communication as he surveys the highs and lows of IfATE's year

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The chief executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education trumpeted his organisation's successes in rapidly growing the number of apprenticeship standards on day one of the conference.

Since his last appearance at AAC, Sir Gerry Berragan has led IfATE through the results of the controversial funding band reviews, taking on the development of T-levels and the "faster and better" initiative aimed at speeding up the rate at which standards are approved for delivery.

In his keynote speech to delegates, he said: "When I spoke last year, there were 244 standards approved for delivery, and that was over three years of reforms.

"There are now 421 standards approved and we have more than doubled the rate at which standards are approved since implementing faster and better."

Furthermore, in 2017, a total of 63 standards were approved for delivery. In 2018, there were 177.

Berragan said he envisaged 500 standards would be ready by the end of March 2020.

However, there has been a continual drop in starts in comparison with the



Sir Gerry Berragan sits down for a discussion with Kirsty Wark

period before the apprenticeship levy was introduced, in May 2017.

The most recent figures, for January, show a 15 per cent increase in starts compared to January 2018, but there was a 21 per cent fall compared to January 2017.

The National Audit Office, in its report on apprenticeships published last month, said the government was "unlikely" to meet its target of 3 million apprenticeship starts by 2020.

Referring to the report, Berragan said the fall in starts was attributable to frameworks – the old system of apprenticeships. "There has been a major shift from frameworks to standards happening much more quickly than was anticipated."

There has been a "diversification in opportunity," he said. Whereas 95 per cent

of frameworks were at level 2 and 3, nearly 40 per cent of standards were at level 4 and above.

This has raised concerns as apprenticeships at higher levels have proven to be popular – 12.8 per cent of starts in 2017/18 were at level 4 or above, according to the NAO – and could be drawing funding away from level 2 and 3 starts.

Berragan said that starts at level 2 have "reduced in proportion" but "not completely".

He also used his speech to acknowledge there is "more we can do to improve our communications around apprenticeship funding and transparency".

This follows criticism of how IfATE has handled the funding band reviews, with many trailblazer groups claiming their

views have been repeatedly ignored by the government agency, which has in turn not been open about its decisions to cut the rates of many popular standards.

IfATE will be improving transparency, communication with trailblazers and will clarify the decision-making framework for funding bands by June, Berragan said.

On the external quality assurance (EQA) for end-point assessments, which IfATE oversees and delivers, Berragan told the conference the institute is updating the framework for how EQA bodies operate.

It is also developing a digital system for storing reports into EQAs and re-letting the contract formerly held by Open Awards for a company to provide quality assurance for apprenticeships assessment on its behalf.

T-levels have been a "key focus" of IfATE this year, Berragan said, and were "firmly on track" for the first two waves from 2020.

This year's AAC could be the last for Berragan as chief executive of IfATE, a role he has held for 16 months. In an email seen by this paper, headhunters Gatenby Sanderson said he would be standing down when his contract is up in November.

Having not gone through the full competitive selection process, Berragan could only be appointed for a maximum of two years under Civil Service Commission rules.

An IfATE spokesperson said Berragan had not announced his intentions and it would be "inappropriate" to comment while applications were open for the post, which has been advertised on the Civil Service Jobs website.



Shadow skills minister warns of 're-badging' consequences

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Any apprenticeship that “smacks of re-badging or simply validating professional development” is not going to get the step change in numbers and quality that the programme “desperately needs”, Gordon Marsden has said.

Delivering a keynote speech on day two of AAC, Labour's shadow skills minister told delegates the country must make sure opportunities at level 2 and 3 were not lost while degree and higher-level apprenticeships were being scaled up.

Marsden called level 2 and 3 apprenticeships “absolutely crucial” in sectors such as hospitality as they are an “important access point, which can lead people into successful careers”.

Marsden pointed to research from the Sutton Trust that “tells us at present, just one in four young apprentices progress from a level 2 apprenticeship to a level 3, and that two-thirds of apprenticeships are estimated to be merely ‘converting’ existing employees and certifying existing skills”.

“Anything that smacks of re-badging, or simply validating in large normal training or professional development,” he added, “is not going to get us the step change in numbers and quality that we desperately need”.

Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman also touched on the issue during her own speech at AAC (see page 3).

Marsden also used his speech to make some stinging criticisms of the government's flagship FE policy – the apprenticeship levy. He said that under a Labour government a guaranteed annual apprenticeship budget for non-levy paying employers who offer more lower-level apprenticeships would be secured.



Gordon Marsden

Budget 'overspend' warnings conflicts with employers' levy experience, says CBI's Cope

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The government needs to “publicly” explain to employers how the apprenticeship budget could soon be overspent, since most employers' experiences suggest the opposite, according to John Cope.

The head of education and skills at the Confederation of Business Industry told AAC delegates on day two of the conference that “we need to acknowledge the growing confusion amongst employers”.

The National Audit Office warned in March that there is “clear risk” the apprenticeship programme is not financially sustainable after the average cost of training an apprentice hit double the sum that the government had predicted.

But as the NAO also pointed out in its report, levy-paying employers only used

9 per cent of the funds available to them to pay for new apprenticeships in 2017/18, meaning they accessed £191 million of almost £2.2 billion.

And as later revealed at a Public Accounts Committee hearing, employers are expected to lose around £12 million, or 9 per cent of what they paid in May 2017, when the first sun-setting period for the levy is reached, in May 2019.

Talk of the budget being overspent “highlights two very different experiences of the levy”, Cope said.

“At a system level, projections of an overspend do not tally with a typical employer's experience of an underspend on their levy funds.

“In typically restrained NAO language, ‘there is a clear risk that the budget may be insufficient should demand pick up in the way that would be needed for the programme to meet its objectives’”.

This needs to be “explained publicly, and transparently,” Cope continued.

“We need transparency to understand

how these two seemingly irreconcilable experiences are happening at the same time” before “discussing some of the trade-offs and direction of the levy in the long term”.



Jon Cope

We must market apprenticeships better to 'shift deeply held views'

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Apprenticeships need to be better advertised and promoted if they are to help solve the country's skills gap, a group of panellists warned at AAC.

Andy Smyth from City & Guilds' Industry Skills Board said that young people have been conditioned into taking the university route and “only the very bravest young people are standing up to their parents, and even their teachers, and sometimes even their friends”.

“We've got to do something with these parents and influencers so they see value in these apprenticeships,” he argued.

Bryony Kingsland, UK funding manager at City & Guilds, agreed that there is an issue of “how well we are advertising apprenticeships and how engaged schools are”.

A new Department for Education campaign, called Fire It Up, was launched in January, aiming to “shift deeply held views” on apprenticeships. The campaign promotes the benefits of apprenticeships to young people, parents and employers through a series of adverts on TV and social media, featuring real-life apprentices.

The panellists acknowledged the slow take-up of apprenticeships and that hitting



(L-r) Andy Smyth, City and Guilds' Industry Skills Board, Andy Durham, EMSI, Kate Ross, IBM, Anthony Impey, Optimity, Bryony Kingsland, City & Guilds, Kirsty Wark, presenter

the 3 million starts target by March 2020 will not be an “easy ride” – especially after latest government figures, published on March 28, show that a further 528,700 are needed in order to achieve this. But they then told the AAC audience that businesses are starting to look at apprenticeships as a better way to develop the talent they need.

Anthony Impey, chief executive of internet infrastructure provider Optimity, argued that employers are not getting what they want from the university system. “When we are talking about employers suffering from a lack of talent, I think businesses are looking at apprenticeships as a way to easily develop the talent they need,” he said.

But he warned that the increasing interest

of large employers in apprenticeships has been a challenge to small employers, as they see the former “bulking up” all the available talent.

Andy Durnam, chief executive of Emsi UK, said the company does not run apprenticeships at the moment but would “love to nurture that talent”, as they provide not only growth in a business' supply chain but also “across the entire economy”.

Panellists agreed that the main factors that would make the system better would be more flexibility on what the levy can be spent on; parity between levy and non-levy payers; improvement in parents' and students' perspectives on apprenticeships; and getting the right person into the right programme.

Action needed to increase diversity in apprenticeships

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The lack of diversity in apprenticeships, and how to remedy it, was the topic of discussion for a panel of employers and FE stakeholders on day one of the Annual Apprenticeship Conference.

The panel was made up of Sharon Blyfield, an HR Business Partner at Coca-Cola European Partners; Qasim Iqbal, HSBC UK's emerging talent manager; Dr Neil Bentley-Gockman, the chief executive of WorldSkills UK; and Susanna Lawson, the chief executive of OneFile.

Asked why the conference was having to have a discussion around diversity, Lawson said in any area of employment where there is under-representation of a demographic, "there needs to be action taken to take that upwards".

She added that the Department for Education's target of increasing the proportion of black, Asian or ethnic minority (BAME) apprentices by 20 per cent by 2020 was "quite significant" action.

However, the National Audit Office said the opposite last month. The NAO used its apprenticeships progress report to highlight and criticise how a 20 per cent increase in the number of starts by BAME apprentices would bring the percentage of such learners up to 11.9 per cent – three per cent lower than the working-age BAME population of England, 14.9 per cent.

"The department's targets for widening participation among under-represented groups lack ambition," the report said.

When asked what other ways there are to promote apprenticeships to young people from diverse backgrounds, Lawson told AAC delegates that schools need to step up.

"I think that apprenticeships in schools are not spoken about and also in some BAME families, they would talk about degrees, rather than apprenticeships," she said.

"My mum is Chinese and we would never have been told, in my family, about apprenticeships. She wanted me to go to university."

Iqbal agreed that the "good news



(L-r) Qasim Iqbal, Emerging Talent Manager, HSBC UK; Susanna Lawson, CEO, OneFile; Sharon Blyfield, HR Business Partner, Coca-Cola European Partners, presenter Kirsty Wark; and Dr Neil Bentley-Gockman OBE, CEO WorldSkillsUK.

message" of apprenticeships is "definitely" needed more in schools. He said taking up a professional career such as medicine or law was "driven" into him from a very young age, and for these, he needed to go to university.

"It's important to get ambassadors from diverse backgrounds to go into churches and mosques and talk about what an apprenticeship is and the benefits of it,"

he added.

Bentley-Gockman said the absence of diverse role models and leaders in the apprenticeships sector meant that young people from BAME backgrounds cannot see themselves in those roles.

The WorldSkills team for 2017 and 2019, he admitted, was 95 per cent white, but he hoped this would be the last year that was the case.

Post-Brexit, it's 'lifelong' skills that will be at a premium

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Apprenticeships need to develop learners' "lifelong" skills, not just technical skills, in a post-Brexit Britain, employers argued during this year's AAC.

In a panel discussion on how education can better meet the needs of businesses, employers and providers when Britain leaves the European Union, Paul Hudson, apprenticeships lead for Capita Plc, explained that at a time when "every employer in the UK is fighting for talent", it is important that apprenticeship programmes give people "employability skills and opportunities" early on in their careers.

"Resilience, communication and digital abilities are what they need because these are lifelong skills," he said.

"Apprenticeships have to develop people over time, and these skills are the ones required by employers of the future."

Kathryn Porter, director of youth strategy

for Europe, Middle East and Africa at Hilton WorldWide, echoed Hudson's comments, explaining that the level 2 standards her employer is developing ensures that apprentices gain skills that will allow them to progress throughout their careers.

"One of the things we are very conscious of when we are developing the hospitality standards is that they have career-development roots. Young people and school leavers can really identify with these opportunities, which are vital to growing us as a business," she said.

Phil Howard, head of sales at an apprenticeship provider called Intequal, said in order to deliver good-quality apprenticeships that meet the post-Brexit needs of employers, providers must work with businesses to find out what their long-term aspirations are before training their apprentices.

"For us it is really critical that the quality is at the beginning of the process, part of the recruitment strategy when we're taking on new people," Howard said.

Hudson argued that the relationship between apprenticeship providers

and employers needs to be all about "collaboration", and warned that too much policy intervention should be avoided.

"There are tweaks that are required to the apprenticeships system, but not

fundamental changes," he said.

"This is a new market and it needs to settle down [so that] employers find who the providers are. And we need to step up our game as a provider."



(L-r) Paul Hudson, Capita, Kathryn Porter, Hilton Worldwide, Mike White, RBS, Jane Hadfield, Health Education England, Phil Howard, Intequal, Kirsty Wark, presenter

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FORGING THE
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Masterclass helps to crack the on-the-job conundrum

JESSICA FINO

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Confusion around off-the-job training (OTJ) calculation rules was one of the hot topics at this year's AAC, with training providers attending workshops in a bid to get clarification over the issue.

They were left puzzled after the Education and Skills Funding Agency updated its "apprenticeship off-the-job training policy background and examples" document on March 22, a week before conference, which for the first time stated that the 20 per cent calculation for full-time staff should be always be based on 30 hours of work per week, even where they are paid for many more.

Official funding rules for 2018/19 make no reference to a 30-hour cap in the calculation, and providers have been including all "paid hours".

Bryony Kingsland, UK funding manager at City & Guilds, told delegates the way they calculate the minimum off-the-job training policy should remain the same until the

ESFA publishes further clarification.

Since the workshop, the agency has apologised for the confusion, recognised it was a mistake and removed the reference to a 30-hour cap in their OTJ guidance.

Kingsland told delegates, "The document said: 'Actually, if you are looking at best practice and policies around OTJ, paid hours full-time means 30 hours and you must put 30 regardless'."

"But the funding rules said it should be based on paid hours. If someone is paid for 38 hours a week, what do you do? What they have said to us is that the funding rules apply."

At her workshop Kingsland provided an example (see picture below) on how to calculate OTJ training, which she believes is "still correct" following conversations with ESFA.

"Regular overtime should be included in the calculation," she explained. "In this calculation, what I did was look at an actual example of one employer that has apprentices who work one Saturday in every four.

"It's a two-year apprenticeship. They



work a seven-and-a-half-hour day in general, five days a week, but they do one paid overtime Saturday per month. That overtime had to be included in the calculation because it's a regular contracted overtime that occurs.

"It then ends up with this calculation of 92.8 weeks because you have to take off statutory national holiday. That means 20 days that everyone gets, plus eight bank holidays."

She continued: "It does not matter how many holidays the employer gives, if the employer gives 32 days, you still have to deduct the national statutory amount of 28 days because as far as the ESFA is concerned that makes it fair across the board."

Kingsland also told attendees that any training that is OTJ must match the content of the programme, and if an employer asks for a non-mandatory qualification to be part of an apprenticeship and that matches to the standard, it can be used as OTJ.

But if it's completely separate, apprentices will need extra time away.

"You could end up with one apprentice needing 30 or 35 per cent of time OTJ if they are doing maths, English and non-mandatory qualification required time out, plus their 20 per cent.

"This is something to be aware of when you are planning with your employer and they are asking you extras. What amount of time is going to take that apprentice away from work, and is the employer prepared for that?"

Kingsland also presented a slide with examples of things that can count as OTJ training.

"I always show this slide because I am still gobsmacked talking to employers by how often they think that it is day-release or block-release," she said.

"There are always quite a few employers and providers who are not aware that there is actually a lot of training, mentoring and shadowing that takes place as part of a new recruit's job that the employer does and that can count towards OTJ time."

Kingsland explained this may reduce the amount of time they have to be excused from their work on day release.

OTJ training can include teaching of theory, simulated exercises and role play, attendance of competitions, manufacturer training, learning support, some online learners (webinars or blended learning), shadowing or being mentored, practical training, visiting the employer's other departments, time spent writing assessments/assignments, and industry visits or visiting other companies or suppliers.

Kingsland ended her presentation warning that Ofsted does not look at the amount of OTJ delivered, but instead at whether the OTJ content and the programme meet the individual's learning needs.

"So Ofsted might make an assessment that actually, for this particular apprenticeship, the provider should be delivering more OTJ than it in fact does.

"They won't look at percentages but at what that individual learner needs."

She advised providers therefore to make sure there is enough OTJ that makes apprentices competent when it comes to gateway and readiness for end-point assessment.

Calculating off the Job

Off the job example calculations

Example:

92.8 weeks x 37.5hrs x 20% = 696hrs
+ 24 x Saturdays x 7.5hrs x 20% = 36hrs
Total off the job = 732hrs

Off-the-job training – the vital 20%

Off-the-job training must be directly relevant to the apprenticeship standard, e.g. support the apprentices journey towards EPA. It can include:

- Teaching of theory - lectures
- Simulated exercises and role play
- Attendance at competitions
- Manufacturer training e.g. new equipment or technologies
- Learning support provided by employer or the provider
- Some online learning e.g. webinars or blended learning
- Shadowing or being mentored
- Practical training
- Visiting the employer's other departments
- Time spent by the apprentice writing assessments/assignments
- Industry visits or visiting other companies or suppliers

Chris Jones gives highlights of the new Ofsted inspection framework

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Destinations, pedagogy and curriculum will be in the spotlight under Ofsted's new inspection framework, according to the education watchdog's apprenticeships advisor.

A consultation on the new inspection framework was launched in January, and is due to close on April 5.

Ahead of this, Ofsted's specialist advisor for apprenticeships, Chris Jones, spoke to AAC delegates about what Ofsted inspections of FE providers, and the reporting on them, might look like in September, when the new framework comes into force.

Among the major changes, the inspection framework will focus less on achievement rate data than the current framework does.

This, Jones said, is because, "If we focus on numbers, we may skate across the top and not see something the provider thinks is representative of the organisation."

The new framework will instead be more concerned with the design of a provider's curriculum and progress and destination data on its learners – what Ofsted is calling "intent" and "impact".

"Intent is really important," Jones said, "as it allows you to explain why you deliver the curriculum you deliver, why you are working with those particular groups of learners or apprentices. 'Why are you special?' is an important consideration."

The new framework will also focus on implementation – how that curriculum is delivered, including the pedagogy,

something Jones said was a "dirty word" under the old framework.

Ofsted now believes the "craft of training an individual is an important attribute of why learning is successful," Jones said.

Implementation will also look at how a curriculum is restructured to meet the needs of an employer and whether or not a curriculum challenges apprentices who could achieve a distinction in the end-point assessment.

The 'intent' and 'impact' of a curriculum will be a focus

On destinations data, Jones said: "What you need to think about, for inspections, is that longer-term view of what happens to apprentices – find out what happened to some of your ex-apprentices, so you know that story about destinations."

Ofsted is also planning to stop grading the provision for high needs, traineeships and full-time provision for 14- to 16-year-olds separately, which Jones said was one of the more controversial proposals.

Under the new framework, Ofsted will grade providers on education for young people, adult learning and apprenticeships.

This is because, Jones said, traineeships



Chris Jones

and 14-to-16 provision are "broadly" about education for young people, and if it was an adult preparing for an apprenticeship, that would fall under adult learning.

"Making a judgement on high needs, currently, has been very much up to the discretion of the lead inspector," he added.

He explained that the lead inspector could decide there were not enough high-needs learners at a provider to warrant a separate section, so the report would cover them in the teaching, learning and assessment section.

"Not enough at one provider might be 20 learners, but 20 learners might be a significant number at another provider and they might get a separate grade."

"I'm not sure that's fair on those learners who have been defined as needing the most help."

"The proposals mean every time we inspect, even if there are two or three

We need a longer-term view of what happens to apprentices – a story about destinations

learners with high needs, we will talk about the provision they are getting."

Jones also showed conference delegates the proposed new inspection report front page, which is designed to be "shorter, punchier, more about the provider, and less about justifying each bullet in the grade criteria".

| Proposal: changes to inspection reports | | Ofsted |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shorter Punchier More about the provider Less about justifying each bullet in the grade criteria | | |
| Ofsted Training <small>Independent learning provider</small> | | |
| Inspection dates 26 – 29 March 2019 | | |
| Overall effectiveness Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | | Good Requires improvement |
| Education for young people | | Good |
| Adult education | | Good |
| Apprenticeships | | Good |
| The quality of education | | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | | Good |
| Personal development | | Good |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement |
| Information about the provider (150 words) | | |
| ■ | | |
| What is it like to learn/train at Ofsted Training (250 words) | | |



Martin Dunford OBE receiving the lifetime achievement award



Shane Mann

'OUTSTANDING' AAC 2019 A

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The country's best apprenticeship providers, employers and champions were honoured at the annual AAC Apprenticeship Awards 2019 ceremony.

More than 500 people celebrated the winners at a glittering gala dinner which signed off this year's Annual Apprenticeship Conference. This is the second year of the awards.

Organised by *FE Week* and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, there were two types of award: Route Apprenticeship Provider of the Year, and National Awards.

A new award to recognise employers and providers who increase diversity in apprenticeships, as well as working with apprentices who have special educational needs and disabilities, were introduced this year.

After assessing 350 entries, judges

named the Royal Air Force as the Apprentice Employer of the Year, while In-Comm Training took home the Apprenticeship Provider of the Year award.

Martin Dunford OBE, chair of the AELP, received the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Shane Mann, managing director of *FE Week's* publisher Lsect, congratulated the winners for their "outstanding work".

"These awards are a brilliant opportunity to demonstrate and celebrate the importance of apprenticeships in England and the incredible hard work that employers, providers and individuals put into them," he said.

"The calibre of applications was tremendously impressive this year and deliberations were tough in the extreme. The volume of entries we've received was overwhelming and showcased just how much talent there is in the sector.

"A huge congratulations to all our winners, who are truly making

a difference through their work in apprenticeships."

Mark Dawe, chief executive of the AELP, said: "The second year's entry nominations for these awards underlined

The calibre of applications was tremendously impressive

why it was totally right for *FE Week* and AELP to team up and shine a spotlight on the work that employers and providers are doing to promote apprenticeships.

"It never ceases to amaze me what fantastic training is being delivered to

young people and to existing employees, who need to enhance their skills in the face of current economic uncertainty.

"Providers, employers and the apprentices themselves never fail to rise to fresh challenges and tonight's awards winners perfectly illustrate why."

Apprentice Employer of the Year – Royal Air Force

Royal Air Force took home one of the most anticipated awards of the evening. Being one of the largest employer-providers, it has 2,900 apprenticeships spanning 24 different trades, from police officer to air traffic controller to dog handler. It is rated "outstanding" by Ofsted, and has a completion rate of 97 per cent across all of their apprenticeships.

In 2016, it achieved and retained Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer status and won the Macro Employer category of the 2017 National Apprenticeship Awards.



Arch Apprentices receiving the digital apprenticeship provider of the year award



CILEx Law School receiving the legal, finance & accounting apprenticeship provider of the year award



Fareham College receiving the construction apprenticeship provider of the year award



Gower College Swansea receiving the health & science apprenticeship provider of the year award



Haddon Training Ltd receiving the agriculture, environmental & animal care apprenticeship provider of the year award



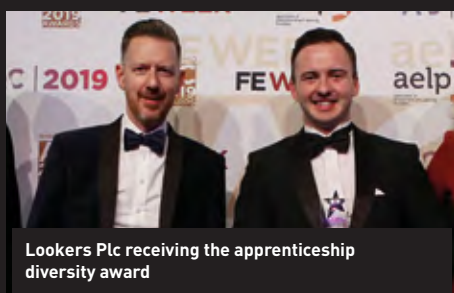
In-Comm Training receiving the apprenticeship provider of the year award



Interserve Learning & Employment receiving the education & childcare apprenticeship provider of the year award



Lifetime Training receiving the catering & hospitality apprenticeship provider of the year award



Lookers Plc receiving the apprenticeship diversity award



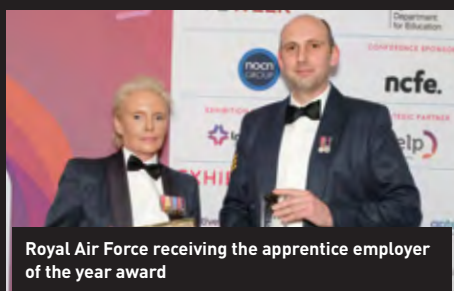
Milton Keynes College receiving the hair & beauty apprenticeship provider of the year award



Outsource Training and Development receiving the transport & logistics apprenticeship provider of the year award



Qube Qualifications and Development Ltd receiving the care services apprenticeship provider of the year award



Royal Air Force receiving the apprentice employer of the year award



Seetec receiving the business & administration apprenticeship provider of the year award



Skills Training UK receiving the outstanding contribution to the development of apprenticeships (provider) award



Steve Williams receiving the outstanding contribution to the development of apprenticeships (individual) award

AWARD WINNERS CROWNED

Apprenticeship Provider of the Year – In-Comm Training

In-Comm Training was recognised for the way its apprenticeships are delivered by pioneering an employer-led approach involving 450 companies across the UK.

It has placed engineering and manufacturing firms at the heart of its delivery, having an impressive 40 per cent uptake in starts over the past 12 months.

The provider said the award will help its plans to take its employer-led model to a national scale.

Lifetime Achievement Award – Martin Dunford

Over the past 20 years, Martin has been chief executive of two national training providers that have secured jobs and provided high-quality skills training to thousands of young people and adults across the country.

The judges said he is truly a champion of social mobility in that he and his team deliver on this in addition to promoting it.

Providers, employers and apprentices never fail to rise to fresh challenges

Throughout most of this period, Martin has voluntarily served with distinction as chairman of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, overseeing its growth from an organisation that started off as representing about a dozen national training providers in 2002 to about 900 work-based learning providers of all types and from all sectors today.



Thatchers Cider receiving the outstanding contribution to the development of apprenticeships (employer) award



Umbrella Training Ltd receiving the promoting apprenticeships campaign of the year award



Uniper Engineering Academy receiving the engineering & manufacturing apprenticeship provider of the year award



Weston College receiving the SEND apprenticeship champion award

FE WEEK OUT AND ABOUT AT AAC 2019

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The *FE Week* team (pictured below) headed to Birmingham on the eve of this year's AAC to set up camp in preparation for spending the following two days reporting live from the conference and producing a newspaper on site.

Editor Nick Linford delivered various keynote and breakout session speeches, offering vital updates on apprenticeship policy, data and views on where the system would be heading next, while chief reporter Billy Camden and reporters Jessica Fino and Fraser Whieldon darted between the

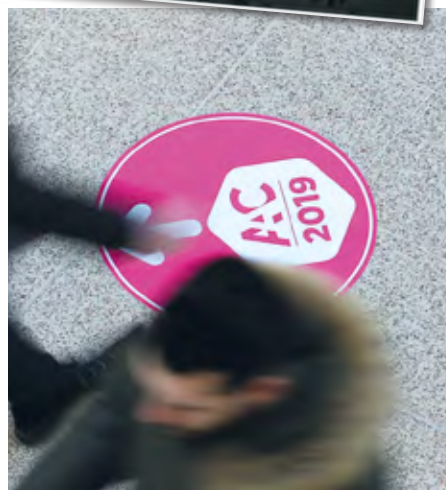
main plenary sessions and workshops to cover everything that was discussed.

Designer Simon Kay held the fort in our media suite, designing the newspaper, while senior sales team leader Bridget Stockdale staffed our stand in the exhibition workshop area, networking with delegates and talking all things *FE Week*.

Edition 276 of our newspaper went to print a couple of hours before the gala dinner on Thursday night and arrived at everyone's tables just after dessert. The coverage of AAC was a true team effort. We ended these intense few days celebrating all of the award winners by dancing to a live jazz band.



From left: *FE Week* designer Simon Kay, sales manager Bridget Stockdale, report Fraser Whieldon, reporter Jessica Fino, editor Nick Linford, and chief reporter Billy Camden



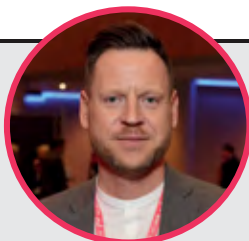
“Should government wrestle back control of how apprenticeship money is spent, or leave it with employers?”



TINA LOCKLEY

Apprenticeship contract manager, Juniper

“That’s a difficult one. I think it’s got to be both. They need the input from both I think. You can’t just leave it with employers and vice versa. I think it’s important to have feedback from everybody and let everybody have an input in how the money is spent.”



ROB CRABTREE

Head of quality, Babcock Training Ltd

“I think it should be left with employers. I think it’s given them a greater understanding of the apprenticeship system and a greater insight into how they can develop their workforce. It’s made employers sit up and listen a bit more, because it’s their money, rather than it being a government-funded programme.”



SASHA MORGAN MANLEY

Apprenticeships lead, Wisar

“They should leave it with employers, but if they leave it with employers they need to respect that employers are allowed to make the decisions. The whole point of giving employers control was that employers got to say what they need. You have to let businesses do what they need to do.”



LAURA BURROWS

Curriculum & learning technology manager, Babcock Training Ltd

“I think there are pros and cons on both sides, but we have seen a significant difference in employer engagement where it has been deemed as “their” money and they want to get much more involved in apprenticeships, so that makes the 20 per cent off-the-job requirement much easier to tackle. If government takes back control, employers could become disinterested in some cases.”



MARTYN LONG

Head of project and programmes, Leeds City Council

“I think they probably need to take back control and give it more direction if I’m honest. I’m not sure everyone would agree with me. I think it’s gotten a bit scattergun at the moment and they need a clearer direction of where they are going with it.”

“1. What has been the benefit of attending AAC? 2. What has been the most helpful and why?”



ROSA WELLS

Director, Employment & Skills, Solihull College & University Centre

“1. It has been helpful to get updated on apprenticeship policy, speaking to all of the people and finding out about their projects.

2. Probably the plenaries, where certain people have been put on the spot. Keith Smith’s speech and the 30-hours-a-week theme was good. I also enjoyed the sessions with key policymakers.”



IAN GRAYLING

Education & Training Specialist Adviser, ITC Skills

“1. The best contribution was Nick’s, and his investigation into the 30-hour rule. The benefit we get is from walking around meeting people – there are so many who are relevant. It’s a great opportunity to share issues of apprenticeship standards.

2. I was very impressed by the WorldSkills keynote [Simon Bartley] and Gordon Marsden [shadow skills minister]. They gave a more strategic global perspective which is important because the system in this country is fragmented.”



CLARE EGAN

Contracts Manager, Solihull College & University Centre

“1. I think picking up on some of the themes that have been discussed during the sessions and how they have been worked through in the workshops, where they explained what we need to do. It has been really helpful. The most helpful were workshops about prior learning and the 30-hour rule. They have been quite topical, shall I say!

2. The prior learning audit workshop and some of the ESFA workshops, as well as Keith Smith’s keynote speech.”



ANDREW DEAKIN

SGT, Royal Air Force

“1. For us, it has been looking at new solutions. We operate throughout six different programmes, and there are people here telling us we can do all in one. It’s been a learning process. There were little bits taken from plenary sessions and workshops where we thought “we need to do that”. We will implement those things in our delivery.

2. The end-point assessment workshop with NOCN. We are looking for an EPAO and we took a lot from that.”



KAY COULL

Business Development Manager, Penshaw View Training

“1. It’s the first time we have been involved. It’s been great to get our name out there as a training provider, and it’s also been great networking and making good contacts, getting involved in the seminars and finding new information. It has helped us establish where we are, what we don’t know. The main thing for us has been making new partners and relations.

2. The workshops have been really useful and engaging. The 20-off-the-job workshop was particular interesting.”



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TALENT OF
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