Report from the

Independent Apprenticeship Policy Group

on a long-term vision for apprenticeships

February 2020

Pearson

Contact the Independent Apprenticeship Policy Group c/o:

Siân Owen
Head of Stakeholder Engagement
BTEC & Apprenticeships, Pearson UK
sian.owen1@pearson.com

Table of contents

Foreword

By Neil Carmichael

The Independent Apprenticeship Policy Group (IAPG) brought together 15 experts with a wide range of interests, to discuss the future direction of apprenticeships. Every individual involved in this report is firmly committed to the value and success of the apprenticeship system which supports thousands of individuals and employers to flourish and the economy to grow. The aim of this work is to support the system whilst the new reforms bed down, and to ensure the system is fit for the future in the face of global social and economic change.

The report develops three key themes.

Firstly, our ambition is to create a sustainable apprenticeship system fit for the long term. Investment needs to be employer-led and reflect the broader needs of the economy. And as patterns of economic growth and skills shortages vary considerably across the regions of England the provision of training programmes should to adapt to local and regional circumstances. We highlight the contribution of small and medium enterprises and the importance of engaging them in the apprenticeship system in order to help them grow and thrive.

Secondly, we want the system to evolve to unlock the talent of more individuals to help them access and achieve. Apprenticeships need to be properly signposted, valued and accessible, and we must invest more in one of our key resources – young people. Employers could be better supported to deliver the apprenticeship they are invested in to help their business grow, and we must reverse the cuts in investment in the sectors that support the training and jobs crucial to our future success. Progression should be a central feature of apprenticeship policy and individuals need to be put at the heart of how progression is understood and measured.

Thirdly, apprenticeships are widely acknowledged to be a key driver of meeting skills needs and driving up productivity. We need to think about how these productivity gains are best captured in order to help us understand the best course for the future investment.

I want to thank the members of the IAPG who brought expertise, insight, imagination, and debate to all proceedings and I am hugely grateful to all of my colleagues for their passion, their ideas, and the work they have done. And Pearson UK for their sponsorship, and for their support for the independence and co-operation required to bring together this joint report intended to inspire thinking and help make a positive and lasting difference.

Executive Summary

Our inquiry

The Independent Apprenticeship Policy Group (IAPG) was brought together to explore the apprenticeship system in England. Our approach was evolutionary and pragmatic. We set out with a firm belief in the success of the current system but as the most recent reforms bed down we wanted to bring together experts in the sector with an ambition to ensure the system remains fit for the future and continues to unlock talent and meet skills and productivity needs. The 13 recommendations made in this report are based on the expertise and vast experience of 15 IAPG members, and existing evidence and research.

Findings

We know that significant social and economic trends are taking shape which are having a material impact on jobs and skills needs both in the UK and globally. Demographic shifts are taking place, we are seeing a major shift in how businesses operate, and the preferences and values of the incoming workforce is important for employers in terms of how they engage with, attract and retain talent in their businesses. All of this is taking place at a time of rapid technological advancement and, in the UK, we are also facing a skills and productivity challenge.

Apprenticeships already play a significant part in unlocking talent at an individual level, in businesses and more broadly in supporting the industrial and economic strategies of government. They support new and existing employees, and are available to support employees at all levels. The system is inclusive and successful but to remain a competitive economy in the coming years, the apprenticeship system will need to evolve so we can be prepared for the future.

1. The apprenticeship system needs to be ***sustainable in the long term***

Whilst the apprenticeship budget now available through the levy provides a significant boost to employer investment in training, the success of the apprenticeship programme means that ***the current budget available is not enough to support the demands being made on the system.*** Employers need to be in the driving seat of apprenticeship levy investment and decisions on spend should remain employer-led, but these need to be set within a structure in order to create a ***sustainable system that reflects the broader needs of the economy.***

The pattern of economic growth and skills shortages varies considerably across the ***regions of England.*** If the apprenticeship programme is to contribute to tackling these shortages to increase prosperity in different areas, the provision of training programmes will need to adapt to local and regional circumstances. ***City regions and Mayors, working closely with employers and other stakeholders, could usefully project and plan for skills shortages*** and direct investment in apprenticeships where it is needed most to support sustainable regional and local economies.

The engagement of ***small and medium enterprises (SMEs)*** is essential to economic prosperity. Failing to engage SMEs will mean that thousands of potential apprenticeship vacancies do not materialise, which could reduce the productivity of these firms as well as limit the opportunities available to the individuals that work within them. ***Adequate investment needs to be made available for SMEs,*** preferably through additional financing from government.

2. All individuals should be ***supported to engage and succeed***

Access

More young people, typically Gen Z, are interested in exploring all the options open to them including those thought of as less 'traditional' yet providers are still struggling to gain access to pupils in secondary schools to promote apprenticeships. More should be done to guarantee that young people receive ***independent and impartial advice and guidance*** about their career options, including apprenticeships. We have also seen a noticeable ***reduction in the proportion of apprenticeships delivered to young people*** since the the introduction of the levy and the new funding model. Apprenticeships are a valuable option for many young people and to reverse this trend we suggest that ***investment in 16-19 year-olds apprentices should be in line with the investment in other young people*** following the raising of the participation age to 18.

Provision

As the reforms bed down all stakeholders in the apprenticeship system will grow more confident of their role and responsibilities. However, a consistent theme expressed to the IAPG was that ***the employers role needed to be clearer, and better supported. Guidance on 'best practice'*** should be available to employers. Apprentices also needed to be supported adequately to access and achieve. There is concern that some of the ***recent cuts to funding bands*** have particularly affected standards in sectors with acute labour shortages such as social care. In addition, without ***sufficient funding of English and maths,*** we cannot support every apprentice to reach the required standard. The investment made into ***Individual apprenticeship standards needs to be at a sustainable level.***

Fit-for-purpose assessment

The IAPG supports the need for 'independence' in the assessment process however, the ***sustainability of the assessor model is a potential issue.*** The recruitment of independent assessors needs to be addressed if end-point assessment (EPA) is to grow sufficiently to meet forecast demand. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) could usefully work with sector bodies and assessment experts to explore a model that ***allows for sector body and in-house employer expertise in assessment judgements.*** To maintain trust, the ***overarching quality assurance of apprenticeship assessment is critical.*** At the time of writing, 20 different external quality assurance (EQA) bodies are responsible for varying numbers of standards and the system is fragmented and complex. To maintain high and consistent standards a simpler, consistent and more cost-effective model; ***one regulator, working closely with the relevant sector and professional bodies,*** needs to have overall responsibility for external quality assurance functions.

Progression

Although much of the political focus is understandably on the recruitment of apprentices, progression should be a central feature of apprenticeships policy. The way the data is captured needs to be refined, and ***individuals need to be put at the heart of how progression is understood.*** The ***definition of progression needs to be a broad one*** and take account of what progression might look like for the individual. To support progression, ***the apprenticeship 'brand' must be valued by learners and employers*** as well as parents and educators and give individuals a valuable portable and recognised currency. The place and role of ***externally certified qualifications*** within an apprenticeship needs to be clarified by sector.

3. Measuring success in meeting skills and productivity needs

Apprenticeships are widely acknowledged to be a ***key driver of meeting skills needs and driving up productivity.*** However, it is not wholly clear how these productivity gains are best captured and recorded in the longer-term. HM Treasury should consult with employers, providers and academics about how best to ***measure productivity gains in the longer-term*** and capture the costs for employers involved in taking on apprentices.

This report is based on these major themes. Based on the discussions and evidence from the IAPG, addressing these should help us build a sustainable apprenticeship system that unlocks talent and supports the future economy.

Members and sessions

The IAPG was launched in June 2019. We held six sessions with IAPG members from June to December 2019. We took the questions being raised to the Liberal Democrats Party Conference where we heard from Vince Cable, and to the Conservatove Party Conference where we were joined by Gillian Keegan MP and Co-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Apprenticeships. Panel members included Neil Carmichael, Chair, Independent Apprenticeship Policy Group; Matthew Fell, Chief UK Policy Director - Executive Committee, CBI; Cindy Rampersaud, Senior Vice President, Pearson UK; and Will Smith, Public Affairs Manager, Chartered Management Institute.

We are extremely grateful to everyone who contributed to this inquiry and offered their thoughts, their vast expertise. We would also like to acknowledge our thanks to CITB for input from their evidence base.

Summary of Recommendations

1 Building a sustainable apprenticeship system to unlock talent and meet skills needs in a changing economy

1.1 Setting a structure for a sustainable system

Recommendation 1: Decisions on apprenticeship spend should remain employer-led, but within a structure of incentives set by government, and agreed between government and employers. For example, the structure should prioritise investment in the skills that support the Industrial Strategy. It should also prioritise new investment, in employees that are not currently supported to undertake skills training, and take into account how the levy can be used to support investment to tackle regional inequalities and social deprivation. This would help create a sustainable system that meets employer needs, and which reflects the long-term broader needs of the economy. This structure should be informed by measure of productivity gains referred to in Recommendation 13.

1.2 Regional talent and skills

Recommendation 2: City regions and Mayors, working closely with employers and other stakeholders, could usefully project and plan for skills shortages and, within the structure outlined in Recommendation 1, direct investment in apprenticeships where it is needed most to support sustainable regional and local economies.

1.3 Small and medium-sized enterprises

Recommendation 3: Adequate investment needs to be made available for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), preferably through additional financing from government, to ensure we support the skills needs and help boost the productivity of non-levy paying employers.

2 Supporting individuals to engage and succeed

2.1 Access

Supporting progression into apprenticeships from school and college

Recommendation 4: More should be done to guarantee that young people receive independent and impartial advice and guidance about their career options, including apprenticeships. This should include a review of the implementation of the Baker Clause, the implementation of the Government's Careers Strategy, and the role of the Careers Enterprise Company.

Investing in young people

Recommendation 5: Since the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA), young people up to the age of 18 have been incentivised, by being fully supported by government, to stay in full-time education or training, or training with a job. The investment in 16-19 year-olds apprentices should be in line with this to support the ambition for every young person to continue in education or training beyond the age of 16.

2.2 Provision

Helping employers deliver provision that unlocks talent and delivers the skills they need

Recommendation 6: Greater assistance should be given to employers, in particular smaller employers, to provide, and to demonstrate that they provide, high value apprenticeships. This should include a definition of and guidance on 'best practice' for apprenticeship employers, and could include a voluntary code of practice.

Ensuring investment supports access and provision in key sectors

Recommendation 7: The funding set to support the delivery of individual apprenticeship should not be so low as to reduce the quality of training or dissuade employers from recruiting apprentices. Funding bands, and the investment made in supporting apprentices to reach the required level of English and maths should be set at a sustainable level to ensure the skills needs of the future are met by providing high quality training.

2.3 Fit-for-purpose assessment

Sustaining the assessor model

Recommendation 8: The Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education (IfATE) could usefully work closely with sector bodies and vocational assessment experts to explore a model for end-point assessments (EPAs), that allows end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs) to draw on sector body and in-house employer expertise in assessment judgements.

Supporting students to achieve

Recommendation 9: Robust and independent EPA could usefully capture assessments and activities, designed by an EPAO, and completed as part of the apprenticeship programme. This could include softer skills and competences, and highly technical skills tested before the EPA.

Quality assuring the apprenticeship system

Recommendation 10: To maintain high and consistent standards, one regulator, possibly Ofqual, working closely with the relevant sector and professional bodies needs to have overall responsibility for EQA functions for apprenticeship assessments, including the formal regulation of EPAs and taking responsibility for the Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO). IfATE should continue to have overall oversight of the whole system of EQAs.

2.4 Progression

Putting individuals at the heart of the way we understand progression

Recommendation 11: In line with changes made over time to schools and higher education measures, refinements should be made to the capture progression data for apprenticeships. The definition of progression needs to be a broad one and take account of progression might look like for the individual. It should be viewed as taking place if an apprentice: (a) sees their salaries increase after the training is complete; (b) acquires significant new skills or responsibilities in a new or existing job; (c) is promoted within their current organisation, or (d) is in sustainable employment after their apprenticeship finishes. This should form part of the measure of productivity gains referred to in Recommendation 13.

Advancing the apprenticeship brand

Recommendation 12: The place and role of externally certified qualifications within an apprenticeship needs to be clarified by sector. The certification of an apprentice's achievement should be considered as a means of improving the value and recognition of apprenticeships, and giving individuals a valuable portable and recognised currency. This could include turning an apprentice's EPA into a qualification so that apprentices finish their training with a certificate that is understood across the apprenticeship system.

3 Measuring success in meeting skills and productivity needs

Recommendation 13: HM Treasury should consult with employers, providers and academics about how best to measure productivity gains relating to apprenticeships. This would include the level (for example, firm, sector, region) at which this would be most useful for policymakers and apprenticeship stakeholders. This should include but not be limited to measures of progression referred to in Recommendation 11, and can inform investment in future apprenticeships as referred to in Recommendation 1.

Introduction

We know that we are currently facing significant social and economic trends which are having a significant impact on jobs and skills needs both in the UK and globally. Significant demographic shifts are taking place across the globe with many economies now supporting an increased number of people over the age of 60s. We are also seeing a major shift in how businesses operate, employing fewer people but working as part of a wider ecosystem where businesses, enterprise and individuals connect. The preferences and values of the incoming workforce - Gen Z - is also having an impact. Many have an emphasis on the importance of wellness, work-life balance, flexibility, the environment, and social responsibility and the implications of this is significant for employers in terms of how they engage with, attract and retain talent in their businesses.

All of this is taking place at a time of rapid technological advancement and the increased coexistence of humans alongside technology in work and life. By the mid-2030s, up to 30% of all current jobs could be automated according to a 2018 PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) report. 10 million jobs could be affected; some will be automated, others will change, and new roles will be created. All of this will put further pressure on the need for the current workforce to upskill, and the need to better prepare young people for longer and more flexible careers.

In the UK, we are also facing a skills and productivity challenge; the latest Employer Skills Survey funded by the DfE found that 13 per cent of employers reported skills gaps in their workforce and approximately 1.27 million staff lack full proficiency in their role (equivalent to 4.4 per cent of the total UK workforce)[1]. In addition, a report last year from the Edge Foundation, a vocational education charity, cited the following statistics from recent labour market research:

— The Open University found that 68 per cent of employers are struggling to find the skills they need in the last year at a total cost to UK business of £4.4 billion;

— The Learning and Work Institute showed that UK employer investment in training has fallen to half the EU average per worker – £5.1 billion less in real terms than 10 years ago;

— Research by the Office for National Statistics suggests that 1.5 million jobs in the UK are at high risk of automation, with younger workers more likely to be affected;

— The Centre for Cities identified the challenges facing individuals with low or no skills in urban areas as well as the stark geographical variations in skills shortages[2].

The apprenticeship system plays a significant part in unlocking talent at an individual level, in businesses and more broadly in supporting the industrial and economic strategies of government. The programme is intended to help address two important problems: poor productivity in the UK compared with many international competitors; and a significant fall in employers' investment in training over recent decades. The programme aims to allow people in England to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for their occupation. Its objectives are to[3]:

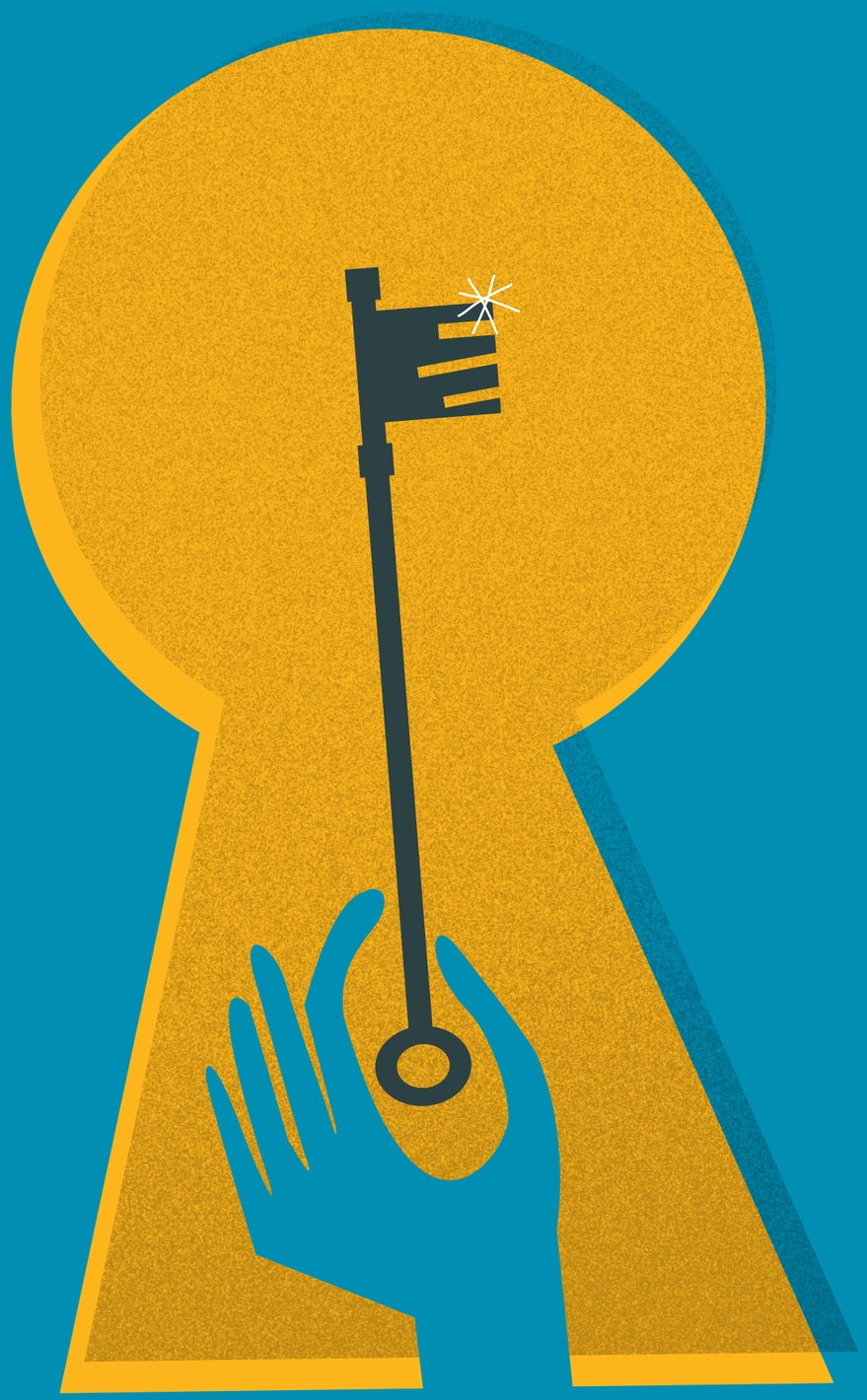
— meet the skills needs of employers;

— create opportunities for apprentices to progress in their careers;

— draw apprentices from a wider range of social and demographic groups; and

— create more quality apprenticeships.

Government has set out to meet these objectives by contributing to the cost of apprenticeship training and assessment, and in 2017, the DfE made significant reforms to support delivery of the programme, including setting up the Institute for Apprenticeships, moving from apprenticeship frameworks to apprenticeship standards, and introducing new funding arrangements, including the apprenticeship levy. We must now embed the changes and learn from experience about what is working and what needs to be further developed, and continually evolve the system as we prepare for the future.



1 Building a sustainable apprenticeship system to unlock talent and meet skills needs in a changing economy

1.1 Setting a structure for a sustainable system

Whilst the apprenticeship budget now available through the levy provides a significant boost to employer investment in training, the success of the apprenticeship programme means that the current budget available is not enough to support the demands being made on the system. The levy is currently categorised as 'Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL)' spending by the government, which means that the DfE (Department for Education) cannot exceed the spending limits set by HM Treasury. This contrasts with 'Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)' spending, which is automatically adjusted by the Treasury to meet demand (e.g. welfare payments, pensions).

After the introduction of the levy, fewer learners started apprenticeships than expected and the DfE underspent on apprenticeships by £400 million in 2017-18 against a budget of £2 billion. However, the 2019 NAO report[4] tells us that the average cost of training an apprentice on a standard is around double what was expected, making it more likely that the programme will overspend in the future. The Department's projections show that, even if starts remain at current levels, spending could rise to more than £3 billion a year in 2020/21 once frameworks are withdrawn and all apprenticeships are on standards. The IfATE has confirmed that the apprenticeships budget is predicted to be overspent by £1.5 billion in 2021/22[5] and the NAO has concluded that there is a clear risk that the budget may be insufficient. Given this forecasted overspend, it is clear that we need to manage the priorities for the levy and explore the possibility of further funds being invested in skills, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the apprenticeship programme.

Given the reality of limited budgets, the question is, where should the investment in apprenticeships be made in order to build a sustainable and effective system that meets future skills needs? The key is how the stated objectives of the apprenticeship system translate into policy implementation.

It is clear that the levy needs to support the skills the employers themselves identify as being required to support their growth and productivity. Employers should be in the driving seat when it comes to where levy money is prioritised. However, it is also important to balance this with the need to create a sustainable system that reflects the needs across the economy. It is important to avoid situations in which the courses being provided are adding little, if anything, to the skills base of the economy. Employers have two years to spend levy funds before their investment is taken back, and this has meant that some of the apprenticeship spend has been on skills training that might otherwise come from a regular training budget in the absence of the levy.

A survey of levy-paying employers by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development in 2019 found that 22 per cent said they were spending their levy 'on training that would have happened anyway' and 14 per cent had 'directed funds away from other forms of training that were more appropriate to the skills needs of the business' since the levy commenced in 2017. This suggests that, as the apprenticeship system develops, and the two year cycle becomes 'business as usual', more needs to be done to encourage firms to balance investment in existing training and development with new training and development, and new employees. And more needs to be done to support the four 'Grand Challenges' of the Industrial Strategy[6]: AI and the data revolution (embedding and maximising the advantages of AI and data), clean growth (low carbon technologies across the economy), mobility (low carbon transport, automation, infrastructure), and the aging society (healthcare and labour market challenges).

Recommendation 1: Decisions on apprenticeship spend should remain employer-led, but within a structure of incentives set by government, and agreed between government and employers. For example, the structure should prioritise investment in the skills that support the Industrial Strategy. It should also prioritise new investment, in employees that are not currently supported to undertake skills training, and take into account how the levy can be used to support investment to tackle regional inequalities and social deprivation. This would help create a sustainable system that meets employer needs, and which reflects the long-term broader needs of the economy. This structure should be informed by measure of productivity gains referred to in Recommendation 13.

1.2 Regional talent and skills

With around £3 billion being raised each year, the government must ensure that sufficient funding flows down to employers and providers around the country. The pattern of economic growth and skills shortages varies considerably across the regions of England. If the apprenticeship programme is to contribute to tackling these shortages to increase prosperity in different areas, the provision of training programmes will need to adapt to local and regional circumstances. It is also important to recognise that geographical disparities in apprenticeship opportunities will mean that apprentices in deprived parts of the country may find it more difficult to access progression opportunities both within and outside their current employer.

The Independent Apprenticeship Policy Group (IAPG) supports the principle of devolution as it is not possible to capture all the complexities of local labour markets at a national level. Discussions between key stakeholders should also take place at a more local level wherever possible. The six directly elected mayors around the country have been instructed to "work with leaders of local councils and businesses to create jobs, boost skills, build homes and improve travel."[7] It has recently been reported that local Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs), established within mayoral combined authorities (MCAs) or local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), may be set to have more influence over which further education courses receive funding by providing advice to national and local government over the sectors prioritised in their region. It would be sensible to build on the new MCA responsibilities by encouraging them to work closely with local employers, and providers and other apprenticeship stakeholders, to take a more strategic view of skills needs in their respective areas.

On a related note, the funding given to the likes of Greater Manchester, Tees Valley and Cornwall could provide further opportunities to enhance the provision of apprenticeships. For example, they could offer additional funding to employers and providers who deliver specific apprenticeship standards that address local skills gaps. Alternatively, the devolved areas could create financial incentives for employers (particularly smaller organisations) to begin offering apprenticeships or expand their existing provision. The £3 billion 'National Skills Fund' included in the Conservative Party 2019 election manifesto may also represent another potential source of revenue to support such initiatives, as one of its stated goals is reserving a portion of the Fund for "further strategic investment in skills".[8]

Recommendation 2: City regions and Mayors, working closely with employers and other stakeholders, could usefully project and plan for skills shortages and, within the structure outlined in Recommendation 1, direct investment in apprenticeships where it is needed most to support sustainable regional and local economies.

1.3 Small and medium-sized enterprises

Whilst levy-paying employers access their own levy contributions through the digital account held in their name by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), non-levy employers still rely on the funding allocations distributed to training providers by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) – the funding arm of the DfE. The introduction of the levy contributed to a 20 per cent increase in new apprenticeships among those paying into the levy, however, smaller businesses, who don't pay into the levy have cut their on-the-job training by 10 per cent. Investment in apprenticeships for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is falling.

Contracts worth a total of £485 million were awarded to around 700 providers for delivering apprenticeships to small employers for the 15 months from January 2018 to March 2019, and this contract has since been extended to March 2020. This was a much smaller amount than the estimated £1 billion available in the previous 12-month period. This system is starting to change, as non-levy employers access funding through the online apprenticeship service. However, the IAPG heard evidence from numerous sources that suggests the current funding for non-levy employers in some parts of the country has already run out. No more investment is likely to be allocated given the growth in the levy spend by levy-paying employers.

Yet according to the latest figures from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)[9] there were 5.9 million small businesses at the start of 2019 up by 200,000 compared to 2018. In 2019, there were 2.4 million more businesses than in 2000, an increase of 69% over the whole period. These make up over 99 per cent of the total businesses in the UK. SMEs account for about three fifths of the employment and more than half of turnover in the UK private sector. Total employment in SMEs was 16.6 million (60% of the total), whilst turnover was estimated at £2.2 trillion (52%).

The engagement of SMEs is an essential part of the apprenticeship reforms and economic prosperity, particularly in sectors such as construction that rely on the work of smaller employers through supply chains and subcontracting arrangements. Failing to engage SMEs will mean that thousands of potential apprenticeship vacancies do not materialise, which could reduce the productivity of these firms as well as limit the opportunities available to the individuals that work within them. There is currently no separate apprenticeship funding pot for smaller employers under the levy, which could significantly reduce the ability of small employers to engage with, and benefit from, apprenticeships.

A survey by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) in August 2019 found that the lack of funding has already had notable consequences. A quarter of training providers have had to turn away a prospective new small employer of apprentices, 17 per cent of providers have stopped recruiting apprentices altogether for new and existing small employer customers and a further 25 per cent have had to cut back on apprentice recruitment for their employer customers[10]. In addition, the bureaucracy facing small employers can be a major burden as they are unlikely to have access to a dedicated HR department or recruitment function. Fragmented sectors that often lack established professional bodies (i.e. those with a sizeable proportion of small and micro businesses) such as the creative and digital industries will face an even greater challenge because they cannot easily engage with government programmes and initiatives. The lack of support for apprenticeships in SMEs risks deterring large numbers of employers from offering apprenticeships, and the skills that will contribute to the growth of some of our key industries.

Recommendation 3: Adequate investment needs to be made available for SMEs, preferably through additional financing from government, to ensure we support the skills needs and help boost the productivity of non-levy paying employers.

2 Supporting individuals to engage and succeed

Although it is widely acknowledged that the levy contributed to a drop in apprenticeship starts from 2017 to 2019 compared to previous years, the IAPG believe there has been, on the whole, a rise in the quality of training being provided. This is largely the result of the new 'apprenticeship standards' designed by employers, as well as a result of employers being more empowered to select training providers that are best able to fulfil their specific needs, particularly if an employer operates in a highly competitive market. The drop in apprenticeship starts is also more than likely temporary; many expect the system will take time to adjust to the reforms, but that in the long term the impact of the levy will be a positive one. In addition, the initial drop in starts may also start to reverse as awareness among employers of the apprenticeship levy rises, but not if the current restrictions on investment are maintained.

The views of the IAPG on apprenticeship quality align with a survey by the DfE in 2017 that found 62% of those who had some involvement with the new apprenticeship standards considered them to be an improvement on the old 'frameworks'.[11] In addition, the NAO has previously found that many employers, training providers and representative bodies think it is beneficial for apprentices to work towards acquiring a set of knowledge, skills and behaviours determined by sector experts, which is why they thought the new standards generally represented a higher-quality package of training than frameworks.[12]

However, we need to be ambitious and work to continually improve outcomes for the individuals taking apprenticeships. The IAPG focussed on access, high quality provision, fit-for-purpose assessment, and progression.

2.1 Access

Supporting progression into apprenticeships from school and college

A positive working relationship between apprenticeship providers and their local schools and colleges is a key element of growing the apprenticeship system. The evidence collected by the IAPG shows that where employers and providers are keen to engage young people in apprenticeships, they often encounter barriers to achieving this. Schools and colleges should always be encouraged to give objective information and guidance to learners who are looking to study elsewhere. The 2018 Commission on Sustainable Learning for Life, Work and a Changing Economy[13] recommended that the 'Baker Clause', which mandates that all education providers raise awareness among learners about the different education options available, should be monitored closely to evaluate and benchmark how it is being implemented and adhered to in schools.

The evidence heard by the IAPG indicates that apprenticeship providers are struggling to gain access to pupils in secondary schools to promote apprenticeships, which is typically the result of hesitance on the part of some schools to allow other organisations to offer their pupils a wider range of opportunities. This echoes the findings of the Education Select Committee in Parliament, who recently stated that "some schools are flouting their obligations" despite government ministers repeatedly emphasising the importance of the Baker Clause. The Committee concluded that "too many students are still not receiving independent and impartial careers advice and guidance about the routes open to them, including apprenticeships [and] we recommend that the Government, with Ofsted's support, properly enforces the Baker clause."[14] In response to the Education Select Committee's report, the DfE said it is "prepared to intervene in cases of serious non-compliance [and] this could include an official or Minister from the Department writing to the school and, ultimately, the legal powers of intervention available to the Secretary of State may be enforced."[15]

Other reports have identified similar trends. A survey last year by Youth Employment UK found that apprenticeships are increasingly being presented to young people as an option but "the university route is discussed more often with nearly twice as many students as the apprenticeship route".[16] Research by the Demos think tank in 2015, sponsored by CITB, found that the majority of apprentices said their schools did not provide them with guidance on apprenticeships, so they relied either on their own initiative or found out about apprenticeships through friends and family. What's more, this research referenced a survey that found almost one in five apprentices reported being actively discouraged from pursuing an apprenticeship by teachers and careers advisers because university was perceived by their school as the 'number one pathway'.[17]

As highlighted in the 2018 Commission on Sustainable Learning for Life, Work and a Changing Economy[18], the quality and quantity of career guidance for young people in this country is uneven. The implementation of the Baker Clause needs to be in conjunction with an evaluation of how careers advice could be better coordinated, in order to make it easier for both individuals and employers to engage. This comes at a time when more young people, typically Gen Z, are interested in exploring all the options open to them including those thought of as less 'traditional'. The Pearson 2019 Global Learner Survey[19] found that the incoming generation of workers value university education as much as previous generations - but they place similar value on alternatives, such as vocational or trade training. In a changing world, and one in which more young people are open to alternative pathways, especially vocational training, it is ever more important that young people are made aware of the options open to them.

Recommendation 4: More should be done to guarantee that young people receive independent and impartial advice and guidance about their career options, including apprenticeships. This should include a review of the implementation of the Baker Clause, the implementation of the Government's Careers Strategy, and the role of the Careers Enterprise Company.

Investing in young people

A noticeable trend since the levy and the new funding model was introduced has been the reduction in the proportion of apprenticeships being delivered to young people. Recent analysis has shown that apprenticeship starts for 16 to 18-year-olds are down 22 per cent in 2018/19 compared to 2014/15, and starts for 19 to 24-year-olds are down 28 per cent over the same period. Although the number of starts for 19 to 24-year-olds has stabilised in the last 12 months, it has continued to decline for 16 to 18-year-olds – falling another 8 per cent in 2018/19.[20] This is largely due to a series of incentives which together encourage the delivery of training for older and existing employees rather than young learners entering a profession for the first time.

Providers currently receive a small additional payment of £1,000 if an apprentice is aged between 16 and 18 years old, or is aged between 19 and 24 years old and has either an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan provided by their local authority or has been in the care of their local authority.[21] In addition, the government covers the full cost of training for small employers if their apprentice meets the same age-based criteria.[22] Even so, this setup is considerably less incentivising than the arrangements in place before the levy commenced where the higher average cost of delivery for younger apprentices were recognised; providers were fully funded for apprenticeship frameworks, or received an additional payment worth 20% of the funding band for an apprenticeship standard, if an apprentice was aged between 16 and 18 or was an eligible 19 to 24 year old.

Recommendation 5: Since the Raising of the Participation Age (RPA), young people up to the age of 18 have been incentivised, by being fully supported by government, to stay in full-time education or training, or training with a job. The investment in 16-19 year-olds apprentices should be in line with this to support the ambition for every young person to continue in education or training beyond the age of 16.

Case study

Connor Coupland

Winner of 2019 BTEC Apprentice of the Year (16-18)

Connor Coupland is an apprentice with AOne+ Integrated Highway Services, undertaking the off-the-job portion of his training at Leeds College of Building. He was nominated for the BTEC Apprenticeship of the Year (16-18 age category) by the college's Curriculum Manager Vicky Patterson who describes Connor as 'a gifted Apprentice, who excels at everything he turns his hand to.'

In his short career to date he has achieved distinction grades in all his units, been shortlisted for the National Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation's Apprentice of the Year 2018, been awarded the ICE's Quest Technician Scholarship, which is considered to be a benchmark of excellence for Apprentice Civil Engineering Technicians, and been shortlisted for the G4C Technical Apprentice of the Year. To be making such ripples in his industry all before the age of 18 shows not only what an exceptional young man he is, but the power of apprenticeships in helping people to develop their talent and skills in a meaningful and impactful way.

Young people often have a competitive advantage when it comes to the skills needed in today's workplace. Their familiarity with technology, and the fluency of algorithmic thinking enable them, to bring key ICT skills into business to help them capitalise on the potential of digital technologies. This is something Connor has quickly demonstrated during his time at AOne+.

As part of his job, Connor is heavily involved with managing their Geographical Information Systems (GIS) database which plays a crucial role in determining maintenance works for the highway network in Yorkshire. Frustrated with an existing procedure for requesting information at work, Connor used his knowledge of modern computer systems to come up with a proposal for completely overhauling it - streamlining the process, replacing the old databases and making the system more user-friendly. He then presented his findings to the wider team for implementation. His company adopted the system and were so impressed, they gave him a supervisor role.

Connor is a keen and active ambassador both for apprenticeships and for STEM and is passionate about engaging and enthusing other young people. He regularly undertakes school visits, where he facilitates classroom activities and discusses his job as an apprentice. He is particularly keen on emphasising the 'fun' element of his job and making sure the children learn about opportunities in the construction industry. Indeed, he sees it as his duty to share knowledge and best practice through participation in STEM events where he organises fun and engaging activities for future generations. "I like to lead by example and show that if you work hard, you can achieve anything," he says.

When it comes to apprenticeships as a route into a rewarding career in engineering, Connor is glowingly enthusiastic: 'My BTEC Apprenticeship is the best of two worlds - it provides learning and development at college, in addition to gaining invaluable workplace experience. I get to experience two very different learning environments. My BTEC Apprenticeship helps prepare me for industry, by teaching me the fundamentals, and then allows me to put what I have learned into practice. It enables me to understand how my company and the construction industry operates. So far, I've been able to improve my communications, commercial knowledge, design skills, professional development, sustainability knowledge, management and leadership skills."

With changes to the apprenticeship system still relatively recent and evidence that school careers services, on the whole, are not promoting apprenticeships as an alternative to A levels strongly enough, Connor wants to do his part to spread the word.

"I strongly believe that all young apprentices should be encouraged to visit their old schools and tell children how exciting apprenticeships are. Too many people opt for A-Levels without realising how brilliant apprenticeships are!"

2.2 Provision

Helping employers deliver provision that unlocks talent and delivers the skills they need

The reforms enacted since the Richard Review in 2012 have recast the roles of various stakeholders. The extra responsibilities handed to employers through the government's 'employer-led' model have placed them at the heart of the apprenticeship system. Employers now have a more active role in designing standards. Having employers play this leading role in shaping apprenticeship programmes to unlock their current and future talent pipeline is vital to the long-term success of the system.

To build a high-performing apprenticeship system, all stakeholders – employers, training providers, awarding organisations and government – must be clear about their roles and responsibilities. Otherwise, there is a risk that apprentices do not receive the necessary knowledge, support and guidance during their training programme. As the reforms bed down all stakeholders will grow more confident of their roles and responsibilities. However, a consistent theme expressed to the IAPG was that the employers role needed to be clearer, and better supported.

For example, in England there are no formal requirements to act as an apprentice's instructor. This contrasts with several other countries, where those individuals training and mentoring apprentices are often trained themselves and they may even be required to have an appropriate qualification and/or extensive work experience in the relevant occupation:[23]

— In Canada, those who supervise apprentices must be qualified 'journeypersons';

— In Germany, those who supervise apprentices have to pass the 'trainer aptitude exam', which involves demonstrating their ability to assess educational needs, plan and prepare training, assist in the recruitment of apprentices, deliver training and prepare the apprentice to complete their training;

— In Norway, optional training is offered to employees involved in supervising apprentices, which covers topics such as the curriculum, evaluation procedures, administrative forms and preparing and delivering a training plan for apprentices;

— In Switzerland, apprentice supervisors are required to complete a targeted training programme in addition to having a vocational qualification and at least two years of relevant work experience.

As recently noted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), governments can also enhance the training capabilities of firms through a wide range of tools that include the provision of training for apprentice instructors and offering support materials to firms to help them improve their training skills. For example, aside from the formal training requirements for apprentice supervisors in Switzerland, the government has produced the 'QualiCarte' - a checklist of 28 quality criteria that are used by companies for self-assessment.[24]

Most employers are keen to provide an outstanding training programme for their apprentices to ensure they train their talent, meet skills needs and increase productivity. Ofsted inspect the total apprenticeship programme and will inspect the employers input as part of that. However, the IAPG heard that, even within the same organisation, there can be inconsistent practices in terms of how well apprentices are being supported and developed by their trainer/mentor. In addition, subjective interpretations of 'behaviours' or 'skills' that apprentices are supposed to acquire can therefore create more variability in an apprentice's experience. This becomes even more of a barrier for occupational areas that do not have a long history of designing progression routes and training programmes.

The role of the employer needs to be supported in a way that does not create an additional burden for employers who can already access training, coaching, and mentoring qualifications for staff involved in apprenticeship delivery, but in a way that provides genuine support for employers to help deliver the outcomes they need.

Recommendation 6: Greater assistance should be given to employers, in particular smaller employers, to provide, and to demonstrate that they provide, high value apprenticeships. This should include a definition of and guidance on 'best practice' for apprenticeship employers, and could include a voluntary code of practice.

Ensuring investment supports access and provision in key sectors

The transition from the old frameworks to the new standards was intended to raise the bar on quality; a commendable move by ministers. The issue that has arisen in recent months is whether the increased length and complexity of apprenticeship programmes is now adequately reflected in the funding made available for each standard. To illustrate the point, the NAO warned last year that the DfE had calculated the average cost of training an apprentice on a new standard to be around £9,000 – approximately double the cost allowed for when budgets were set in 2015.[25]

Given its role in setting the funding band for each apprenticeship standard, the IfATE is central to any efforts to make sure providers can deliver the volume of training that employers expect. Even so, there have been problems with the IfATE during its early operations regarding their communication with providers as well as the level of transparency over the decisions they make on funding. The perceived lack of openness makes it hard for providers to plan their training programmes more than a few months ahead, particularly when the IfATE is conducting live reviews of popular standards. Without any proper scrutiny of the decisions being made by the IfATE, both employers and providers are left unsure about what might happen in future to the affordability and sustainability of their apprenticeship provision.

Some of the recent cuts to funding bands have particularly affected standards in sectors with acute labour shortages such as social care, and in some cases resulted in providers ceasing delivery. An increasing number of apprenticeship standards may become financially unviable due to the uncertainty over their funding, which could significantly reduce the number of opportunities available to learners of all ages. This, in addition to the restriction of funding for non-levy employers has also forced providers to reduce, if not cease, activity in some local areas.

The impact of English and maths requirements is another issue that could affect the apprentice's learning journey. At present, it is a requirement for those undertaking a Level 3 or higher apprenticeship that they hold or achieve an approved Level 2 in both subjects before they can successfully complete the apprenticeship.[26] Without sufficient funding of English and maths support for apprentices, the quality of teaching may not be high enough to help every apprentice reach the required standard. The IAPG also received reports of providers turning away learners because they do not meet the 'entry requirements' for English and maths, reflecting providers' concerns about not being able to deliver what learners need under the existing funding rules. The ESFA fund Functional Skills qualifications in English and maths at £724 per learner within the Adult Education Budget[27] compared to just £471 for the same qualifications within apprenticeships. This disparity makes it far harder to educate apprentices, which in turn reduces their chances of completing their programme.

Recommendation 7: The funding set to support the delivery of individual apprenticeship should not be so low as to reduce the quality of training or dissuade employers from recruiting apprentices. Funding bands, and the investment made in supporting apprentices to reach the required level of English and maths should be set at a sustainable level to ensure the skills needs of the future are met by providing high quality training.

Case study

Damar is a long-established (1980) independent apprenticeship training provider headquartered in Stockport, but operating nationwide. Its national client-base includes many law firms, where Damar has a particular area of specialism, but also government agencies and large corporates. It also works with a number of businesses in the travel sector, having been involved in the apprenticeship standard for travel consultants.

In the North West, Damar works with a broad swathe of employers, offering apprenticeship recruitment and delivery to Levy-paying and non-Levy businesses in areas such as administration, management, accounting and customer service, as well as legal services and travel. The company currently has around 100 employees and about 1,800 apprentices on its books.

Damar took a positive view of the new standards from the kick-off and, arguably, beforehand. Several years before apprenticeship standards came into being, it assembled the consortium that developed the first "trailblazer" legal apprenticeship and,responding to the needs of employers, has since been proactive in helping to develop and now deliver several standards. This has involved working extensively with colleagues at Pearson, with whom it delivers the Customer Service Practitioner and Business Administrator Apprenticeships. It has also involved significant change to the structure of its business.

"At Damar we have built tailored content that meets the specific needs of particular sectors, very successfully, in several of our core sectors and, provided funding caps for Apprenticeships are not reduced to a point that makes it hard to include added value, I think this will continue. I also hope that there will be more apprenticeships at level 2. One effect of the growth in apprenticeships at level 3 and above and the significant funding cuts for the remaining level 2 frameworks has been a reduction in the number of opportunities for school and college leavers. This has led to fewer apprentices progressing and achieving their full potential. We have apprentices who began with us at level 2 and are now part-way through level 7 solicitor apprenticeships. I hope that it will be possible for future school leavers to do the same."

2.3 Fit-for-purpose assessment

One of the boldest recommendations from the Richard Review in 2012, was the proposed shift away from continuous assessment towards a final test for each apprentice. The Review claimed that "continuous and time consuming assessment, driven by paper-based tests, accumulated 'evidence' and assessors with a vested interest in apprentices passing the test, demeans the apprentice's accomplishment." Consequently, the Review called for the introduction of a holistic 'end-point' test "that demonstrates that the apprentice can take the knowledge and expertise they have gained and apply it in a real world context to a new, novel problem."[28] In addition, the Review wanted to see a firm commitment to ensuring that the testing and validation process should be "independent" i.e. those carrying out the final assessment "should be entirely independent and have no incentive or disincentive related to the outcome of the assessment."

Sustaining the assessor model

The EPA for an apprenticeship may be available at a number of points in the year. The locations at which EPAs are needed around the country are also far more varied than the schools or colleges typically use for academic exams for example. Some apprenticeships can have fewer than 100 apprentices a year taking their final assessments.

The scalability of the assessor model is problematic, and it is questionable whether the model is providing value for money. This should be addressed given the cost to the public purse. The recruitment of independent assessors is a major challenge and this needs to be addressed if EPA is to grow sufficiently to meet forecast demand for apprenticeship standards. There are currently no flexibilities that allow for EPAOs to utilise employers, providers and sector bodies as independent EPA assessors. It also raises concerns about the viability of EPOAs ability to deliver some EPAs, not least because of the reduced prospect of eventually recouping any up-front costs incurred when designing and delivering the required assessments. Some EPAOs are already making a loss on the delivery of EPAs, such is their desire to ensure that standards are being protected but the IAPG does not believe that this is sustainable in the long run.

If an EPA is not sufficiently viable to attract EPAOs then it can affect training providers' ability to arrange an EPA when their apprentice is ready to be assessed because there might not be an available assessment opportunity for several weeks, if not months. Over the medium to long term, there is a risk that providers may curtail their enrolment of apprentices in case there is an insufficient volume of EPAs available. There is a further risk that EPAOs may pull out of the market altogether.

Designing and delivering a new wave of EPAs across hundreds of new apprenticeship standards was always likely to encounter some obstacles. The IAPG supports the DfE's drive to improve the quality of the assessments alongside their work to raise the quality bar with the new standards. The evidence received by the IAPG suggests that considerable progress has been made in creating a new vision for assessing apprentices when their training is complete. It is nevertheless important to consider the areas where some of the design features of the new EPAs are causing difficulties for employers, providers and EPAOs.

The IAPG supports the Richard Review's assertion of the need for 'independence' in the assessment process. At present, "an independent third party, who has not been involved in the training or employment of the apprentice, and has no other conflict of interest, will deliver the EPA" according to the IfATE.[29] The requirement for 'independent assessment' is a central feature of EPAs, but the interpretation of this requirement is potentially causing problems in terms of the capacity of the EPA system as well as the complexity and bureaucracy that 'independence' may generate in some cases.

The accountancy sector is a good example of a sector where valued qualifications utilise sector expertise in assessment. In the final test of strategic business management of professional competence, The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) requires a finance and management case study and initial professional development scheme, assessed using work based experience.

Recommendation 8: The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) could usefully work closely with sector bodies and vocational assessment experts to explore a model for end-point assessments (EPAs), that allows end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs) to draw on sector body and in-house employer expertise in assessment judgements.

Supporting students to achieve

It is reasonable for the IfATE to place restrictions on the rules around the different components of EPAs in order to prevent the rollout of weak or inappropriate assessments. Nevertheless, the IAPG received evidence that these rules have become too rigid, largely due to the apparent desire to promote a style of assessment that is 'academic' in nature rather than seeking to build an approach to assessing apprentices that is based on best practice in vocational training. For example, the incorporation of academic-style assessments such as essays into apprenticeships has meant that some competent and effective trainees are struggling to pass their assessments. The rigid implementation of some of the IfATE's rules regarding which assessment methods and tools are allowed within an EPA has also caused frustration among employers and EPAOs as it has prevented them from producing the type of EPAs that their industry sector needs - particularly in sectors that operate with a 'licence to practice' for specific occupations.

The ambition behind the Richard Review's move towards a 'final test' for each apprentice was understandable, given the emergence of some poor practice around continuous assessment and quality assurance. However, the lack of continuous (on-going) assessment within the overall framework for assessing the competence of apprentices has always been against the wishes of many employers, who generally prefer a mixture of continuous and summative assessments which more appropriately assess the skills and competences apprentices need to demonstrate. This has not been emphasised enough during the apprenticeship reforms, so now would be an appropriate time to redress the balance.

Recommendation 9: Robust and independent EPA could usefully capture assessments and activities, designed by an EPAO, and completed as part of the apprenticeship programme. This could include softer skills and competences, and highly technical skills tested before the EPA.

Quality assuring the apprenticeship system

The IAPG believes that the quality assurance mechanisms used for the apprenticeship system are one of the most critical elements of a functioning skills system. It was widely acknowledged in the evidence received by the IAPG that any loss of trust in the quality of apprenticeships could damage the overall brand. A loss of trust may also deter employers from engaging with apprenticeships or entering their apprentices for their final exams, while potential apprentices might be discouraged from applying for technical courses instead of academic ones - further weakening the brand.

All EPAs delivered by EPAOs are externally quality assured by an EQA organisation (EQAO). Employers can choose from one of four options in terms of the organisation they wish to monitor and oversee the delivery of their EPA. IfATE are one of the bodies that can be chosen and directly quality assures the assessment of nearly half of all standards. In addition, IfATE has a statutory responsibility to oversee the whole system of EQAs. The four EQAO are:

— an employer led model
— a professional body
— Ofqual
— the IfATE.

The role of this external quality assurance (EQA) body is to ensure that EPAs are "fair, consistent and robust across different apprenticeship standards and between different assessment organisations."[30] At the time of writing, there are 20 different EQA bodies responsible for varying numbers of standards and their associated EPAs. This setup has promoted inconsistency and unreliability across the apprenticeships landscape, which the IAPG consider to be detrimental to the interests of apprentices and their employers. The most popular choice for an EQA body among employers is the IfATE itself, which is now responsible for almost 100 EPAs and all the EPAOs that deliver them, yet the IfATE is not a regulator or inspectorate nor does it have any experience of monitoring the design and implementation of vocational assessments. Similarly, some of the EQA bodies do not have a track record in producing and validating assessments for apprenticeships or vocational qualifications.

The system is fragmented and complex. Some EQAOs are more stringent than others, and most are taking different approaches. This is resulting in a lack of consistency in the quality assurance of EPAs. In their September 2018 report, 'The apprenticeships ladder of opportunity: quality not quantity', the Education Select Committee reiterates an earlier recommendation that Ofqual should be given responsibility for the EQA of all end-point assessments.

The apprenticeship system should encourage excellent practice and protect both apprentices and taxpayers from malpractice. A simpler, consistent and more cost-effective model of EQA needs to be in place for EPAs. Under the central oversight of IfATE, having one body oversee the quality of all EPAOs would help ensure that EPAs are fair, consistent and robust across different standards. However, given the importance of the voice of the sector, whichever body overseas quality assurance should work closely with the relevant sector and professional bodies on the standards that fall within their footprint.

Recommendation 10: To maintain high and consistent standards, one regulator, possibly Ofqual, working closely with the relevant sector and professional bodies needs to have overall responsibility for EQA functions for apprenticeship assessments, including the formal regulation of EPAs and taking responsibility for the Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO). IfATE should continue to have overall oversight of the whole system of EQAs.

2.4 Progression

Although much of the political focus is understandably on the recruitment of apprentices, the IAPG wants the subsequent progression of apprentices to be a central feature of apprenticeships policy.

Putting individuals at the heart of the way we understand progression

Gathering accurate data on different interpretations of progression presents a significant challenge to the apprenticeship sector. Providers cannot be expected to collect accurate figures from employers regarding promotions and job roles for every apprentice, while qualitative surveys at a national level would only ever be indicative. 'Destination data' is already problematic for providers to collect because it involves tracking apprentices after they have completed their training and therefore do not meet with their provider anymore. Even the data that is processed by the government on destinations, completions and salaries are not always accessible as the DfE, ESFA and the IfATE tend to have separate datasets that are not designed for sharing and wider analysis.

However, government has taken numerous positive steps in this regard, such as the publication of 'destination measures' that record where a student goes and what he/she does after leaving school (which includes apprenticeships). Meanwhile, training providers are expected to monitor the progress of their apprentices as this can be checked by Ofsted during an inspection, and providers are measured on the proportion of apprentices who complete their training programme.

Even so, the IAPG heard from various stakeholders that the issue of apprenticeship progression is more complicated than it might initially appear. While the importance of progression during an apprentice's career was widely acknowledged by the IAPG, the concept of 'progression' can be interpreted differently depending on the context. Progression is also a more straightforward prospect in some industry sectors than others. This is already evident in the varying 'achievement' rates between sectors, with a 12-percentage point gap between the proportion of apprentices finishing their training in 'arts, media and publishing' (62 per cent) compared to 'science and maths' (74 per cent).[31] Similarly, research has shown that wage returns are strong in some sectors such as engineering and manufacturing, but many apprenticeships are undertaken in sectors where salaries are comparatively low and where returns to undertaking an apprenticeship are typically weak.[32] While there are many factors that will contribute to such variations, the IAPG received evidence that the way careers are structured in different industry sectors could potentially be a relevant issue. Some sectors are very 'stratified' in their job roles, which means that progression is typically more linear and less flexible around the interests and aptitudes of each apprentice. Likewise, many apprenticeship standards are focused on specific occupations rather than feeding into higher-level training and career routes, which could hinder the progression of some apprentices.

Most statistical analyses of the progression of apprentices concentrate on wage increases. For example, recent analysis showed that apprentices who have completed a Level 3 programme earn 20 per cent more on average than those who only reached Level 2.[33] Nevertheless, the IAPG heard that internal promotions and upskilling were potentially valid examples of progression as well but this is not currently being recorded in a systematic way. The IAPG acknowledged that career development is becoming less linear as people increasingly move between related occupations and career routes, yet purely level-based progression measurements would not recognise these alternatives.

In other areas of education efforts have been made over time, to refine what is measured in terms of progression, and how the data is presented. For schools, progress 8 and attainment 8 scores, and employment and continued training outcomes, can be compared. In higher education, the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) includes graduate-level employment outcomes.

Recommendation 11: In line with changes made over time to schools and higher education measures, refinements should be made to the capture progression data for apprenticeships. The definition of progression needs to be a broad one and take account of progression might look like for the individual. It should be viewed as taking place if an apprentice: (a) sees their salaries increase after the training is complete; (b) acquires significant new skills or responsibilities in a new or existing job; (c) is promoted within their current organisation, or (d) is in sustainable employment after their apprenticeship finishes. This should form part of the measure of productivity gains referred to in Recommendation 13.

Case study

BT employs over 100,000 people in 180 countries. It is one of the largest flagship British-owned businesses around, and is one of the world's leading communications services companies. The Future Leaders programme is part of a forward- thinking in-house management development programme for BT's first line leaders and managers. In 2017 Pearson TQ (PTQ) was awarded the contract to deliver a new Apprenticeship standards through BT's Future Leaders programme. Learners were interviewed about their experience as they came to the end of their programme.

Steve English is a Repayments Project Engineer at Openreach, based in Liverpool. He has worked for BT for 19 years and had previously completed a Level 2 Advanced Apprenticeship in Telecoms and IT in 2012. "I had been in the same job for 11 years and when the opportunity to go on the Future Leaders Programme came up, I thought it would be a good way to encourage me to commit to a change of career," Steve says. "My kids are late teens now, so I haven't got the same time commitments to them that I did, and I was ready for a change.

"I'd already done a Level 2 Advanced Apprenticeship and like this one, you had to apply for it and get accepted, so I'd had a positive experience."

It's been fairly intense at times, admits Steve, but he's overcome the challenges. "I'm in my 40s so I've been out of full-time education for a long time, so just getting back into the swing of things was a challenge. The Level 2 Apprenticeship was easier as it was more work-related, whereas this is more involved and there are more essays to write. I've enjoyed it, it's been really interesting reading up on things. I've probably done 60% of it at work, but it was my choice to do the rest at home – my wife has been studying for a Masters and my daughter was doing her GCSEs, in the summer so it's become the norm in our house!"

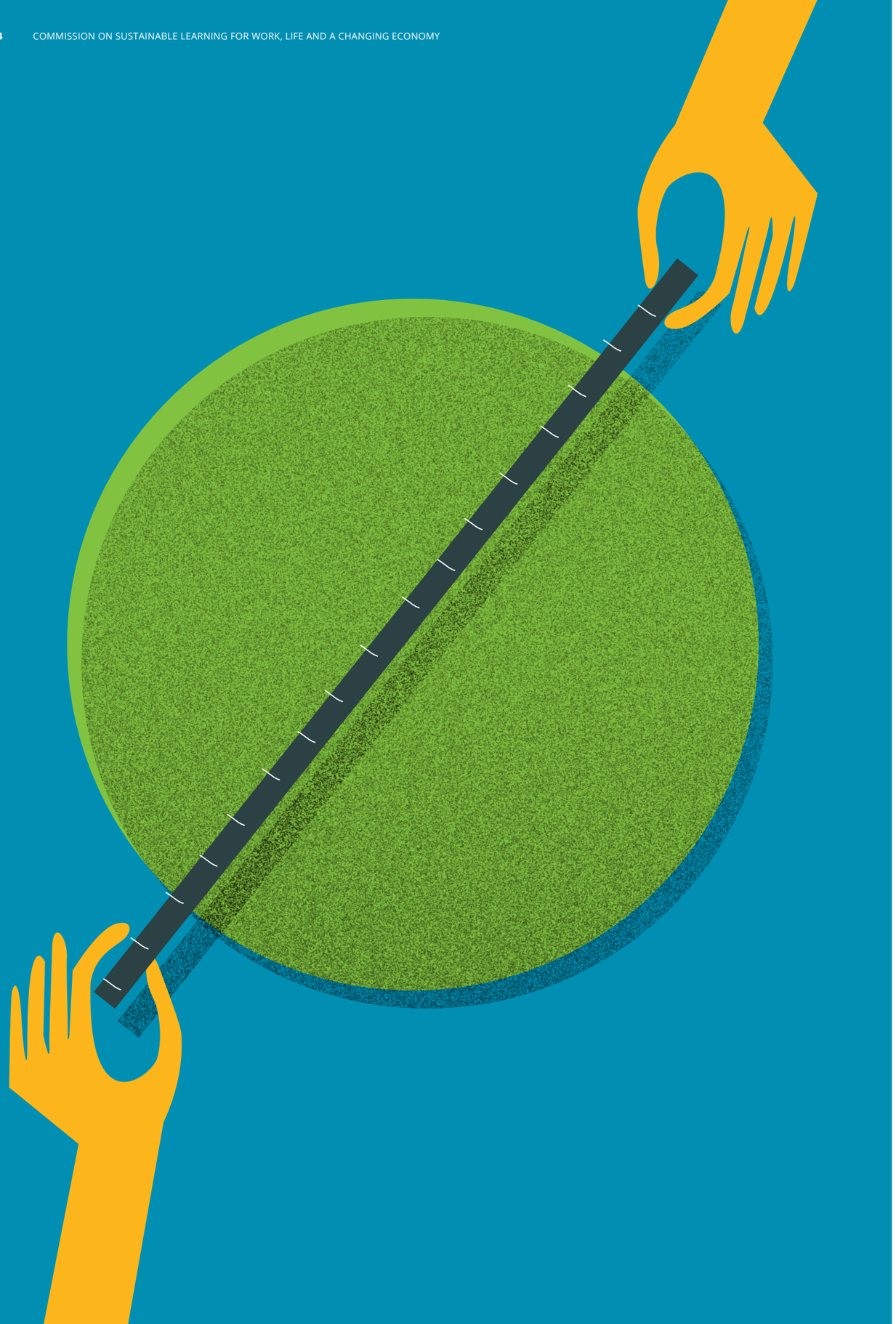
Steve has seen positive progress since enrolling on the programme. He says: "The fact that I was doing the Apprenticeship really helped me to get a promotion. I'd been acting manager a lot of the time in the last 12 months and now obviously I've moved into my new role, so I've definitely been using a lot of the stuff I've been learning already."

Advancing the apprenticeship brand

If apprenticeships are to rival other education and training options such as university degrees, the apprenticeship 'brand' must be valued by learners and employers as well as parents and educators. Although there are many examples of excellent apprenticeships being delivered, there are some aspects of the wider apprenticeship programme that might restrict any attempt to build up the visibility of the apprenticeship brand. For example, one issue discussed at length by the IAPG was the lack of a recognised 'quality mark' for apprenticeships. Although apprentices receive a certificate at the end of their training, this does not necessarily represent a confirmation of the quality of the programme they have completed. Other countries sometimes use branding from professional bodies for specific occupations to help demonstrate the importance of the credentials that an apprentice has acquired, and this gives individuals a valuable portable and recognised currency.

In the early stages of the apprenticeship reforms, the DfE chose not to allow employers to put qualifications into apprenticeship standards. The IAPG welcomed the recent decision to show more flexibility on this matter. Although qualifications are now allowed within apprenticeships, they are not allowed to be used for assessing the apprentices during, or at the end of, their training. This has created a situation in which employers may value specific qualifications, often because of their value within an industry sector, yet the same qualification does not count towards an apprentice's EPA.

Recommendation 12: The place and role of externally certified qualifications within an apprenticeship needs to be clarified by sector. The certification of an apprentice's achievement should be considered as a means of improving the value and recognition of apprenticeships, and giving individuals a valuable portable and recognised currency. This could include turning an apprentice's EPA into a qualification so that apprentices finish their training with a certificate that is understood across the apprenticeship system.



3 Measuring success in meeting skills and productivity needs

High-quality technical education makes a substantial contribution to unlocking talent, addressing skills shortages and raising productivity. Apprenticeships tackle a range of issues so that both new entrants to the labour market and people already in the labour market are given the support they need to continually develop new skills throughout their career. The introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April 2017 has been transformative in our skills system. Public spending on the apprenticeships programme increased from £1.2 billion in 2010-11 to £1.6 billion in 2017-18. After the levy was introduced it raised £2.7 billion in its first year. HM Treasury recently forecast that the levy would raise £3.4 billion a year by 2023-24,[34] representing a significant increase on the apprenticeship budget. In addition, giving levy-paying employers the 'purchasing power' to employers, as envisaged by Doug Richard in his review of apprenticeships back in 2012,[35] has meant that the provision of apprenticeships in England has become more employer-led in terms of which apprenticeships are being delivered, and to whom.

Apprenticeships are widely acknowledged to be a key driver of meeting skills needs and driving up productivity. However, it is not wholly clear how these productivity gains are best captured and recorded in the longer-term. It is often hard to identify the impact of a single apprentice or group of apprentices on an entire organisation, particularly in a time of rapid technological development and investment throughout the economy. Moreover, when apprentices move jobs, they are often forced to 'restart' their apprenticeship, which can create the impression of a lack of progress for apprentices at a specific provider or employer even if the reality was more nuanced.

What's more, the cost to employers of hiring and training apprentices, and how these vary according to sector, and who does what, is not yet fully understood. If the government wishes to expand the take-up of apprenticeships, it will need to investigate how different industry sectors approach recruitment and retention - particularly for unskilled workers. Once a clearer picture of the costs facing employers has been constructed, it should then be possible for the government to identify particular groups of employers or industry sectors that may require greater assistance from either the DfE or the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) in future.

Recommendation 13: HM Treasury should consult with employers, providers and academics about how best to measure productivity gains relating to apprenticeships. This would include the level (for example, firm, sector, region) at which this would be most useful for policymakers and apprenticeship stakeholders. This should include but not be limited to measures of progression referred to in Recommendation 11, and can inform investment in future apprenticeships as referred to in Recommendation 1.

Members of the Independent Apprenticeship Policy Group

Neil Carmichael

Chair of the Independent Apprenticeship Policy Group

Neil, Honorary Professor of Politics and Education, University of Nottingham, and UCL (IoE), is Chief Executive of UCEC (Education China); Board Member for Strategy, FN Robotics (China); Non-Executive Chair of the Association of Dental Groups; Senior Adviser at PLMR; and Chief Education Consultant at Christine Lee & Co (solicitors). He is also a consultant with the Westminster Foundation of Democracy, currently working in Myanmar.

He served as a Member of Parliament for Stroud (2010-17), sitting on the Education Select Committee throughout the period and latterly as Chair. He established the All Parliamentary Party Group (APPG) on School Leadership and Governance. He was Chair of the Conservative Group for Europe and is Director of Modern Europe. He was Chair of the Board of FESTOMANE (Festival of Manufacturing and Engineering), until 2019.

Neil frequently appears in the media and regularly speaks on education, Europe and the environment

Charlotte Bosworth

Managing Director, Innovate Awarding Body

Charlotte is Managing Director of Innovate Awarding which is an awarding organisation delivering vocational qualifications and end-point assessment for Apprenticeships. Charlotte also Chairs both the AELP and Federation of Awarding Body Groups for End-Point Assessment Organisations.

She has worked in both academic and vocational examination boards for over 25 years and has driven many assessment reforms and developments.

Charlotte has a passion for the vocational education sector and sits on a number of Boards including The Federation of Awarding Bodies, AAT, Walsall College, David Nieper Educational Trust and Career Colleges Trust.

Lizzie Crowley

Senior Skills Advisor, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

Lizzie leads the CIPD's programme of research and policy development on the UK skills system. She is a policy and research professional with over 14 years of experience in the employment and skills arena, having worked with both the public and private sector to develop high-quality research to inform organisational practice, public policy and shape the public debate.

Mark Dawe

Chief Executive, Association of Employers and Learning Providers (AELP)

Mark was appointed as CEO of AELP in 2016. He sits on the WorldSkills UK Board as well as on a range of government boards under the ESFA, IfATE, and the DfE.

Most recently, Mark was CEO of the OCR exam board for 5 years. He has been a governor of primary and secondary schools, and a further education college. Mark has a wealth of experience in the education field. Prior to his role at OCR, he was Principal of Oaklands College, and AELP Board Director, and Deputy Director, FE Strategy, and Deputy Director, Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit, at the DfES.

Having read Economics at Cambridge University and qualifying as a chartered accountant at KPMG, Mark joined Canterbury College becoming Head of Corporate Services in 1994. In 2000, he helped set up eGS, an e-procurement provider. He gets his grit and resilience from supporting Plymouth Argyle and Boreham Wood, cycling and four children.

Fiona Ellwood BEM

Member of Board of Trustees at Dentaid-charity, and Patron and Executive Member of Society of British Dental Nurses, Vice Chair Society of British Dental Hygiene and Therapy

Fiona is a recognised key opinion leader for oral health education and preventative programs, an editor of the Dental Nursing Journal, and writes prolifically for other journals. She recently established the Dental Professional Alliance.

Fiona is a trained mentor and has fostered a mentoring culture within and outside of dentistry. She is the founder of the Dental Mentoring Network and a member of Dental Mentors UK. Her underlying ethos is to help others through their clinical or academic journeys.

She holds an honorary Fellowship from the Faculty of General Dental Practitioners, and is a Fellow of the Faculty of Dental Trainers at the Royal College of Surgeons, and of the Institute of Administrators and Managers. Fiona holds a Masters in Education (M.Ed), an MSc PG Cert in Public Health and a PG Cert in Mentoring and is now enrolled on a PhD programme with a focus on education.

Iain Hatt

Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality, Wiltshire College and University Centre

Wiltshire College and University Centre is a further education college with four campuses in Chippenham, Trowbridge, Salisbury, and the Lackham estate near Lacock. The college also has a specialist motorsport engineering building at Castle Combe race track. The college serves 12,000 students studying courses from entry level through to degree programmes and has a rapidly growing number of apprentices in a wide range of professions.

Iain represents the college on several forums and has an excellent track record in quality improvement in the further education sector. He has over eighteen years of experience in further education - managing organisational change, driving improvement, and developing and delivering high-quality teaching and learning.

Before joining Wiltshire College and University Centre in 2014, Iain worked in senior management positions at Exeter College and South Devon College and was a member of the senior management teams which took both colleges to outstanding Ofsted grades.

Clare Keegan

Business Development and Apprenticeships Manager, Harper Adams University

Clare's work with apprentices started in 1995 when she joined a small provider as an assessor and verifier. For the past 15 years Clare's focus has been on higher education and she held roles at Staffordshire University and the Lifelong Learning Network before moving to Harper Adams University.

Over the past 7 years Clare has worked to develop higher and degree apprenticeships and employer engagement in apprenticeships. Her current role involves managing national and international relationships to support the growth and diversity of apprentices across specialist land-based sectors. She networks with partners across the West Midlands including the LEP, the Chambers of Commerce, and subject specific organisations, and represents the university on the Marches Skills Provider Network.

Clare represents Food and Drink and Agri-tech on the Telford Business Board, and supports Telford and Wrekin Council, working with the DIT internationally, to attract business to the Newport Innovation Park to grow an agri-tech business park.

Chris Lowe

Senior Director of Corporate Affairs, Asda

Chris manages Asda's relationships with the government at UK, devolved nation, and local levels. Asda has over 1,500 apprentices on 27 different programmes studying a range of diverse subjects from food technology to data science.

Sian Owen

Head of Stakeholder Engagement, Pearson UK

Siân heads up stakeholder engagement for the BTEC & Apprenticeship division within Pearson UK. She has over 20 years of experience in the education sector after starting her career in academic and vocational qualification development. In 1999 Siân moved into a team within Edexcel providing external consultancy where she led on education and skills research and implementation projects with a wide range of clients including the Australian and Omani governments. In 2001 she moved into the policy team at Edexcel, and then Pearson, to focus on education and skills policy across the UK. She was responsible for analysing and bringing together stakeholders to influence a broad range of education and skills policy including post-16 funding, 14-19 reform, skills and apprenticeship reform, and vocational higher education. Siân holds a degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics.

Cindy Rampersaud

Senior Vice President for BTEC and Apprenticeships, Pearson UK

Cindy is responsible for Pearson UK's technical, vocational and apprenticeship qualifications and services. She moved into the education sector in 2011 when she took up the role of Deputy Principal at City and Islington College. In 2016 she was appointed Deputy Further Education Commissioner by the DfE working on the government's area-based reviews of the further education sector nationally.

Before moving into education Cindy held a number of senior roles in the entertainment media sector including EMI, Warner Brothers and Virgin.

Cindy is passionate about the vital role education and skills-based learning plays in helping individuals make progress and in driving economic growth and productivity. She has a special interest in the role technology can play in providing access to education and lifelong learning and how it can innovate what and how we learn. Cindy sits on the boards of The Children's Society, and Speakers Trust.

Laura-Jane Rawlings

Chief Executive Officer. Youth Employment UK (YEUK)

Laura-Jane is a passionate campaigner for youth employment and the rights for all young people to access employment and have their voices heard on the issues that affect them. Laura-Jane believes that it is for all of us to create a youth friendly society so that young people can fulfil their potential.

Recognised as a leading youth employment expert Laura-Jane provides support, insight and expertise to many groups such as the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Youth Employment, and DWP ESF Committees.

Laura-Jane is a Board Member of the Youth Futures Foundation and has been a secondary school governor for 6 years. Laura-Jane has worked on a number of consultative projects with organisations such as the Department for Culture Media and Sport, Cambridge Local Authority, Northamptonshire Learning Partnership, Chilled Food Association, PiXL and WorldSkills UK

Ed Richardson

Senior Policy Adviser for Apprenticeships and Skills, Confederation of British Industry (CBI)

Ed is Senior Policy Adviser for Apprenticeships and Skills at the CBI. He has had extensive experience covering the apprenticeship reforms, including the levy, and the introduction of Levels. Prior to covering skills, he was the CBI's lead on regional policy and devolution. He has previously worked at the Bank of England.

Tom Richmond

Director, EDSK think tank

Tom has spent over 15 years in the world of education. He began his career teaching A level Psychology at one of the country's leading state schools, having gained a BSc in Psychology from the University of Birmingham and an MSc in Child Development from the IoE.

After three years in teaching Tom moved into policy development working at Policy Exchange, the Social Market Foundation, Pearson, G4S, a leading professional body, and for an MP. He subsequently worked as a ministerial advisor, under both Michael Gove and Nicky Morgan. He spent a further two years teaching at a sixth form college before moving back into policy at the Reform think tank and Policy Exchange.

He has written extensively for publications such as the TES and Schools Week and appeared on numerous media outlets, including the BBC News Channel, Sky News, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio 5 Live, LBC and TalkRADIO.

Stewart Segal

CEO, Aegis Management Service Ltd, and Non-Executive Director, Skills Training

Stewart has worked in the funded work-based learning sector for over 20 years and in particular has supported AELP since its formation. He was the Chief Executive Officer of AELP from 2013-2016. Stewart is now a Non-Executive Director of Skills Training UK and Youth Employment UK.

He has worked as an independent consultant within the training sector as CEO of Aegis, working with a number of training providers and colleges specialising in business development and funding issues. Following a background in HR and general management in the private sector Stewart joined Hertfordshire Training and Enterprise Council in 1994 as Chief Executive until 1998 when he joined Spring Skills as Chief Executive. Spring Skills was then largest independent training provider in the sector and involved in the delivery of a range of programmes in the service sectors such as retail, customer services, hospitality and business administration.

Will Smith

Public Affairs Manager, Chartered Management Institute

Will manages CMI's parliamentary and policy stakeholder engagement work. He previously worked for an MP in Parliament, and in a public affairs agency.

CMI supports its active learner community of 81,000 students with management and leadership qualifications at all levels, for all stages of their career. This includes 18,000 learners on a CMI apprenticeship - 3,000 of which are on the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship, the UK's most popular degree apprenticeship.

Pauline Watson FCIPD

People Development Operational Lead at HC-One

Pauline is a people development professional experienced in organisational development, and a wide range of workforce development strategies, culture change and change management, succession planning and talent management in the public and private sectors, most recently within health and social care.

She has vast experience of skills, qualifications and workforce development. Pauline's experience includes implementing welfare to workforce development policies through £20m of ESF-funded skills and employment programmes in the North East region, and tailoring national programmes and services, such as the Careers Advice Service, offender learning and skills, sector skills strategies, apprenticeships and welfare to work, to meet local and regional skills needs.

Glossary

AEB (Adult Education Budget) – Funds the delivery of education and training for learners aged 19+. Some of the qualifications funded through the AEB include basic English and maths skills, basic digital skills and adult community learning.

AELP (Association of Learning and Employment Providers) – A national membership organisation that represents the interests of an extensive number of organisations. Members deliver the majority of Britain's apprenticeships, traineeships and programmes for the unemployed.

AME (Annually Managed Expenditure) – Government spending that covers programmes which are demand-led – such as welfare, tax credits or public sector pensions. It is spent on items that may be unpredictable or not easily controlled by departments, and are relatively large in comparison to other government departments.

Apprenticeship – Allow individuals to gain the skills, knowledge and experience they need to get into many careers. They combine paid work, training, and study.

Apprenticeship levy – A UK tax on employers which is used in England to fund apprenticeships. In the current tax year it is payable by all employers with an annual pay bill of more than £3 million at a rate of 0.5% of their total pay bill.

Apprenticeship service – Online service that allows employers to choose and pay for apprenticeship training more easily.

Baker Clause – The duty on schools to allow FE and other providers to speak to their pupils about technical qualifications and apprenticeships. It came into effect in January 2018.

BEIS (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy) – Replaced the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) in July 2016. Responsible for business, industrial strategy, science, research and innovation, energy and clean growth and climate change.

Centre for Cities – Independent, non-partisan urban policy research unit and a charity registered. The Centre's main goal is to understand how and why economic growth and change takes place in the UK's cities.

CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) – The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development is a professional association for human resource management professionals.

Commission on Sustainable Learning for Life, Work and a Changing Economy – Established in June 2018 as an independent taskforce and drew on the expertise of Commissioners and witnesses, economic modelling, and evidence sessions to create a report on the future of learning and skills.

DEL (Departmental Expenditure Limits) – Government budget allocated to and spent by government departments. The amount, and how it is split between government departments, is set at Spending Reviews. The government controls DEL by deciding how much each department gets.

Demos – Think tank based in the UK with a cross-party political viewpoint. It was founded in 1993 and specialises in social policy, developing evidence-based solutions in a range of areas - from education and skills to health and housing.

DfE (Department for Education) – The Department for Education is a department of Her Majesty's Government responsible for child protection, education, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.

Education Select Committee – Select committee of the House of Commons in the Parliament of the UK. The remit of the Committee is to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Education and any associated public bodies.

EHC plan (Education, Health and Care plan) – Legal document which describes a child or young person's special educational needs, the support they need, and the outcomes they would like to achieve. For children and young people whose special educational needs require more help than would normally be provided in a mainstream education setting.

EPA (End-Point Assessment) – The final assessment for an apprentice to ensure that they can do the job they have been training for. EPA is separate to any qualifications or other assessment that the apprentice may undertake during the on-programme stage of the apprenticeship.

EPAO (End-Point Assessment Organisation) – Organisations on the register of end-point assessment organisations are eligible to conduct independent end-point assessment of apprentices.

EQA (External Quality Assurance) – System of independent monitoring of the development and delivery of end-point assessment (EPA) of apprenticeships.

EQAO (External Quality Assurance Organisation) – One of the four types of organisation that can undertake EQA. The four options are: employer, professional body, Ofqual, and The Institute for Apprenticeships.

ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) – An executive agency of the government of the UK, sponsored by the Department for Education. Formed on 1 April 2017 following the merger of the Education Funding Agency and the Skills Funding Agency.

Functional Skills – Qualifications developed by the UK Government as part of an initiative to improve England's literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

HMRC (HM Revenue and Customs) – Non-ministerial department of the UK Government responsible for the collection of taxes, the payment of some forms of state support and the administration of other regulatory regimes including the national minimum wage.

HM Treasury – The British government department responsible for developing and executing the government's public finance policy and economic policy sometimes referred to as the Exchequer, or more informally the Treasury,

IfATE (Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education) – An employer-led crown Non Departmental Public Body. Oversee the development, approval and publication of apprenticeship standards and assessment plans as well as the occupational maps for T Levels and apprenticeships.

Industrial Strategy – Strategy led by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to boost productivity by backing businesses to create good jobs and increase the earning power of people throughout the UK with investment in skills, industries and infrastructure.

L&W (Learning and Work Institute) – Independent policy, research and development organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion.

LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships) – Voluntary partnerships between local authorities and businesses in England set up in 2011 by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation within the local area.

MCAs (Mayoral Combined Authorities) – Combined authorities are corporate bodies formed of two or more local government areas, established with or without an elected mayor. Mayoral combined authorities have elected mayors.

NAO (National Audit Office) – Scrutinises public spending for Parliament. Led by an officer of the House of Commons and independent of government, the NAO public audit perspective helps Parliament hold government to account and improve public services.

National Retraining Scheme – Government's new programme to help adults retrain into better jobs, and be ready for future changes to the economy, including those brought about by automation.

National Skills Fund – Government investment of £3 billion over the course of the current Parliament which will build on existing reforms, including ongoing work to develop a National Retraining Scheme, an end-to-end service designed to help workers prepare for the changing labour market.

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) – Intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries, founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade.

Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) – Non-ministerial government department that regulates qualifications, exams and tests in England and, until May 2016, vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. Often referred to as the exam "watchdog".

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) – Non-ministerial department of the UK government, reporting to Parliament. Ofsted is responsible for inspecting a range of educational institutions, including state schools and some independent schools.

ONS (Office for National Statistics) – Executive office of the UK Statistics Authority, a non-ministerial department which reports directly to the UK Parliament.

OU (The Open University) – A public research university, and the biggest university in the UK for undergraduate education. The majority of the OU's undergraduate students are based in the UK and principally study off-campus; many of its courses can also be studied anywhere in the world.

PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) – Multinational professional services network of firms operating as partnerships under the PwC brand.

QualiCarte – Instrument used to assess the quality of on-the-job training. Developed by the Swiss Conference of Vocational Training Offices (CSFP), in collaboration with the Swiss Employers' Union (UPS) and the Swiss Union of Arts and Crafts (Usam).

Richard Review – Doug Richard's independent review on what apprenticeships should be and how they can meet the changing needs of the economy, published in 2012, by the then Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS).

RoEPAO (Register of end-point assessment organisations) – Register of organisations that have been assessed as being suitable to conduct independent end-point assessment of apprentices and be in receipt of public funds.

RPA (Raising of the Participation Age) – The 'Participation Age', this is the age that young people have to stay in education and training. From summer 2013 this was raised from 16 to 18. Young people must continue their education or training until their 18th birthday in full time education, work-based learning, such as an apprenticeship, or part time education or training if they are employed, self employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week.

SAPs (Skills Advisory Panels) – Local partnerships aiming to strengthen the link between public and private sector employers, local authorities, colleges and universities. Help Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs), the Greater London Authority (GLA) and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) fulfil their local leadership role in the skills system by helping them understand their current and future skills needs and labour market challenges.

SME/s (Small and medium-sized enterprise/s) – Businesses whose personnel numbers fall below certain limits. The abbreviation "SME" is used by international organizations such as the World Bank, the European Union, the United Nations and the World Trade Organization.

TEF (Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework) – A national exercise, introduced by the government in England. It assesses excellence in teaching at universities and colleges, and how well they ensure excellent outcomes for their students in terms of graduate-level employment or further study.

YEUK (Youth Employment UK) – A leading organisation working to change the youth employment landscape for young people in the UK aged 16-24.

References

1 Department for Education, Employer skills survey 2017: Research report, 2018, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733509/Employer_Skills_Survey-report.pdf

2 Edge Foundation, Skills Shortages in the UK Economy: EDGE Bulletin 5, 2019, https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/skills-shortages-in-the-uk-economy-edge-foundation-report/

3 National Audit Office, The apprenticeships programme, 2019, https://www.nao.org.uk/report/the-apprenticeships-programme/

4 National Audit Office, The apprenticeships programme, 2019, https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/The-apprenticeships-programme.pdf

5 FE Week, Levy budget bust: Government agency warns of imminent apprenticeship over-spend, https://feweek.co.uk/2018/12/03/levy-budget-bust-government-agency-warns-of-imminent-apprenticeship-over-spend/

6 Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Industrial Strategy: building a Britain fit for the future, 2017 &2018, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-building-a-britain-fit-for-the-future

7 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Devolution and mayors: what does it mean?, 2019, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/devolution-and-mayors-what-does-it-mean

8 Conservative Party, Get Brexit Done: Unleash Britain's Potential, 2019, https://vote.conservatives.com/our-plan

9 Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Business population estimates 2019, 2020, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/business-population-estimates-2019

10 AELP, Levy shortage starving small firms of apprenticeships poses early test for Johnson campaign pledge, 2019, https://www.aelp.org.uk/news/news/press-releases/levy-shortage-starving-small-firms-of-apprenticeships-poses-early-test-for-johnson-campaign-pledge/

11 Department for Education, Apprenticeships evaluation 2017: employers, 2017, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-evaluation-2017-employers-survey

12 National Audit Office, The apprenticeships programme, 2019, https://www.nao.org.uk/report/the-apprenticeships-programme/

13 T Commission on Sustainable Learning for Work, Life and a Changing Economy, 2018, https://www.pearson.com/uk/about-us/news-and-policy/news/2018/12/independent-commission-highlights-urgent-need-focus-skills-lifelong-learning-in-changing-economy.html

14 House of Commons Education Committee, The apprenticeships ladder of opportunity: quality not quantity, 2018, https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmeduc/344/344.pdf

15 Department for Education, The apprenticeships ladder of opportunity: quality not quantity: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2017–19, 2018, https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmeduc/1814/181402.html

16 Youth Employment UK, Youth Voice Census Report, 2019, https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/youth-voice-census/

17 Demos, The Commission on Apprenticeships, 2015, https://demos.co.uk/project/the-commission-on-apprenticeships-2/

18 Commission on Sustainable Learning for Work, Life and a Changing Economy, 2018, https://www.pearson.com/uk/about-us/news-and-policy/news/2018/12/independent-commission-highlights-urgent-need-focus-skills-lifelong-learning-in-changing-economy.html

19 Pearson, Global Learner Survey, 2019, https://www.pearson.com/content/dam/one-dot-com/one-dot-com/global/Files/news/gls/Pearson_Global_Learner_Survey_2019.pdf

20 FE Week, Government set to miss apprenticeship target by a massive 800,000 starts, 2019, https://feweek.co.uk/2019/11/28/government-set-to-miss-apprenticeship-target-by-a-massive-800000-starts/

21 Education and Skills Funding Agency, Apprenticeship funding rules for training providers, 2019, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786465/apprenticeship_funding_rules_for_training_providers_August_2018_to_July_2019_version_2.pdf

22 Education and Skills Funding Agency, Apprenticeship funding rules for training providers, 2019, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786465/apprenticeship_funding_rules_for_training_providers_August_2018_to_July_2019_version_2.pdf

23 OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, Apprenticeship in England, United Kingdom, 2018, https://www.oecd.org/unitedkingdom/apprenticeship-in-england-united-kingdom-9789264298507-en.htm

24 OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, Apprenticeship in England, United Kingdom, 2018, https://www.oecd.org/unitedkingdom/apprenticeship-in-england-united-kingdom-9789264298507-en.htm

25 National Audit Office, The apprenticeships programme, 2019, https://www.nao.org.uk/report/the-apprenticeships-programme/

26 ESFA, Apprenticeship funding rules for main providers, 2019, https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules-for-training-providers/what-can-be-funded

27 ESFA, ESFA Funded Adult Education Budget Funding Rates and Formula 2019 to 2020, 2019, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/784250/ESFA_AEB_Funding_Rates_and_Formula_2019_2020.pdf

28 Doug Richard, The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, 2012, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-richard-review-of-apprenticeships

29 Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, Developing an end-point assessment plan, 2019, https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/developing-new-apprenticeships/developing-an-end-point-asse

30 Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, External quality assurance, 2019, https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/quality/external-quality-assurance/

31 Department for Education, National Achievement Rate Tables - March 2019, 2019, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/789589/201718_NARTs_MainText.pdf

32 Social Market Foundation, Making apprenticeships work, 2019, http://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Making-apprenticeships-work.pdf

33 Social Market Foundation, Making apprenticeships work, 2019, http://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Making-apprenticeships-work.pdf

34 HM Treasury, Budget 2018, October 2018, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/budget-2018-documents

35 Doug Richard, The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, 2012, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-richard-review-of-apprenticeships