

City & Guilds Group

Industry Skills Board

Making Apprenticeships Work

– A reflection on practice

March 2019



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Foreword

City & Guilds Group and the Industry Skills Board (ISB), are delighted to present our second Making Apprenticeships Work report. Since our first report in October 2015, a lot has changed - apprenticeship frameworks have steadily been turning off as new standards are introduced; a whole new way of assessing apprentices' competency has come in with the introduction of end point assessment and the Institute for Apprenticeships has launched and already broadened its scope to become the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE).

The intention behind our first report, and indeed the formation of the Industry Skills Board (ISB), was to look at how apprenticeships should be designed and delivered to best suit apprentices' and employers' needs, leading to quality outputs and a quality experience. We are delighted that throughout a rapidly changing policy and skills landscape, the ISB has continued

to meet regularly and remains no less committed to ensuring that apprenticeships and the broader technical, vocational education system delivers the best outcomes for both apprentices and UK plc.

Some of the recommendations in our first Making Apprenticeships Work report, including calling for an independent employer-led body to

oversee apprenticeships and the creation of standards more clearly linked to occupations, have been adopted by Government. However, we are still a long way from a system that is fully functional and truly employer-responsive and our second Making Apprenticeships Work report aims to bring the focus back to what makes a quality apprenticeship and use the proposed framework as a method of ensuring the wider systematic approach to addressing and measuring quality.

Through a series of case studies and action plans, we have revisited the fundamental questions around how to ensure a quality experience for apprentices and employers, using and adapting the quality framework apprenticeship model we created in our first report.

Our reflections and recommendations have been developed out of years of experience

in different sectors, and a recognition that we need a long-term sustained approach. In the current climate of economic uncertainty the right investments in education and skills become even more critical, and we cannot afford to let this opportunity slip through our grasp or focus on the wrong measures. It is our hope that this review contributes in some way to the ongoing evolution of a world class apprenticeship system in the UK.

The ISB and City & Guilds Group believe that apprenticeships must be viewed as an important tool for employers to develop their skills and talent pipelines, and by potential apprentices as a great way to enter and progress in the workplace. Our report includes nine recommendations for Government, the IfATE, employers and apprenticeship providers that, if acted on, will help to further develop the world-class system we so desperately need in this country.

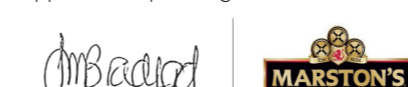
Andy Smyth
City & Guilds Group Industry Skills Board
Chair



Lizzie Crowley
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
Skills Adviser



Joanne Bradford
Marstons
Apprenticeship Manager



Nicky Taylor
Moy Park
Head of Talent & Employee Experience



Kirstie Donnelly
City & Guilds | Digitalme | ILM
Group Managing Director



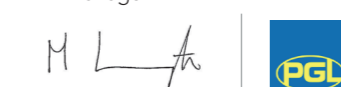
Mark Maudsley
GTA England Ltd
Chief Executive Officer



Warren Page
Xtrac Ltd
Apprenticeship Manager



Mark Lavington
PGL Travel
HR Manager



Karima Khandker
Heathrow
Head of Heathrow Academy



Jane Hadfield
Health Education England, NHS
National Senior Programme Manager – Apprenticeships



Mike White
Royal Bank of Scotland
National Apprenticeship Manager



Kathryn Porter
Hilton
Director of Youth Strategy EMEA



Scott Bell
Laing O' Rourke
Head of Apprenticeships



Anthony Impey
Optimity
Founder





Introduction and reflection

1.1 Apprenticeships in 2019

Our initial report in 2015 predicted a bright future for the role of work-based learning and the resurgence of the ‘apprenticeship model’ as a valid and robust training and accreditation solution across a broad spectrum of occupations. Since the introduction of the Levy in 2017 apprenticeships have, as we suggested, enjoyed a higher profile than in recent years. There is still strong cross-Party support and a belief they can deliver productivity gains and reduce skills shortages and youth unemployment, although the emergence of Standards in England is now at odds with the other UK Nations where Frameworks and NOS have been retained. Such divergence is less than helpful for learners or employers, but policy-makers remain stubbornly blind to the potentially negative impact on employer investment and workforce development. Despite such niggles, the growing profile of apprenticeships should certainly be viewed with optimism.

The general public and learners are now more positive about apprenticeships. Back in 2015 the picture from a Demos survey¹ was very different, while the vast majority of parents thought that apprenticeships were a good thing, only 32% said that they would want their child to undertake one. Given the parallel evidence from the Government and in wider research projects indicating that young people who take apprenticeships will earn more as a result, and enjoy high job security, this was a worrying attitude², but it is pleasing to see that evidence is starting to sway opinion in this respect.

At the same time, Government set substantial manifesto targets to grow apprenticeship numbers, especially for young people. City & Guilds Group and the ISB were keen to stress at the time that

quantity alone was never the right measure of a successful apprenticeships system that would deliver demonstrable employment and productivity gains. It is worth reflecting that Government itself is increasingly acknowledging that this was never a meaningful metric to judge the success of their apprenticeships interventions.

We therefore set out to answer two facets of a fundamental question:

How can we implement and build on the current apprenticeship reforms and put quality at the heart of apprenticeships so as to reach a position where;

- a) A similar number of young people choose an apprenticeship route as those that choose to pursue higher academic education, and realise the benefit of doing so.**
- b) Employers and employees choose the use of apprenticeships as a key method of entry level recruitment and existing workforce training and development.**

Future workforce skills demands and career progression require both elements of this question to be addressed, and we believe that quality apprenticeships are the answer to both challenges. However, care should be taken that one does not dominate at the expense of the other.

In 2015, only 32% of parents said that they would want their child to undertake an apprenticeship.

¹ The Commission on Apprenticeships, Demos, March 2015

² Returns to Intermediate and Low Level Vocational Qualifications, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, September 2011

1.2 About the report

The City & Guilds Group works in the UK and around the world to help people get into a job, develop on the job and progress into the next job. It is an independent body and remains a charitable trust with a broad interest in doing the best for employers and the public. In recent years City & Guilds published two reports: *Sense and Instability*³ (concerned with achieving stability and ending the ever-changing skills policy landscape) and *Remaking Apprenticeships: powerful learning for work and life*⁴. The original *Making Apprenticeships Work* report built on their content and messages and the need for the ongoing challenge and critique of our skills strategy and policy remains as important today, perhaps more so, than it has ever been.

This latest version of our *Making Apprenticeships Work* Report seeks to revisit our proposed quality framework and four years on review, to what extent, the principle of a common framework remains critical to ensuring learners experience a high quality apprenticeship programme. We have also consulted again with employers and providers to help us validate or amend the quality framework and reflect on how the implementation of a common framework is enacted in practice. With the proliferation of new End-Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs), External Quality Assurance Organisations (EQAOs) and the fluctuation in the private training provider market due to changing roles and contractual arrangements, we believe the need for a common and consistent quality framework is now more critical than ever before.

This report has been produced in consultation with the City & Guilds' Industry Skills Board (ISB). A group comprised of employers directly involved in the delivery of apprenticeship, (see pages 2 and 3 for membership) and supported by the City & Guilds Group. The report is drawn from case studies based on ISB members' direct experience. Over the last four years, they have addressed the question set out above and developed a recruitment and training strategy for their business growth with a strong focus on quality. This report seeks to provide a straightforward review and set of actions that should be accordingly taken by Government, employer groups and employers, as well as by the City & Guilds Group. The ISB and the City & Guilds Group do not wish to be signatories to proposals aimed only at others. Rather, we are committed to leading by example and taking action in order to bring about long-term, sustainable solutions for the good of learners, organisations and the economy as a whole.

The ISB believes that long term success will be predicated on changes and actions related to implementation of policy, not further wholesale change of policy. It is also the view that consistent and rigorous adoption of a common quality framework will help reduce the bureaucracy and load for all involved in delivery. This is where the recommendations of this report are concentrated.

1.3 The report remit

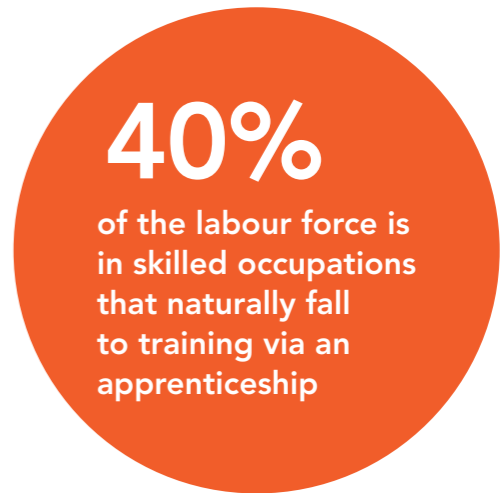
Government, employers and general stakeholders want to achieve growth in apprenticeship opportunities for young people, and for these to offer a route to a sustainable career and afford broadly the same economic returns as full-time higher education (HE) does. It is also true that the same group wish to see apprenticeships act as a catalyst for on-going engagement with staff development as upskilling or reskilling programmes. We have always maintained that this can only be achieved with a strategy based on quality as well as quantity. The report therefore seeks to deal with both but focus in on the role of the quality framework as the driver for all else, regardless of age or occupational sector.

Previous research and reviews identified that approximately 40% of the labour force is in skilled occupations that naturally fall to training via an apprenticeship. It is also noted that the breadth of applications and routes we are seeing emerge for development of standards may well be increasing perceptions around what roles can be addressed through an apprenticeship approach.

It is still a sensible long-term aim to increase the proportion of young people entering apprenticeships by age 24, but also to recognise that the emerging demands for a longer working lifetime and multiple careers also switch the focus onto those who require upskilling or reskilling within the existing workforce.

In the same way that Government failed to recognise what quality really means by using set timeframes it's important that employers don't make the same mistake in terms of the support that they provide to existing employees – this can fundamentally undermine the quality of the delivery and learning experience

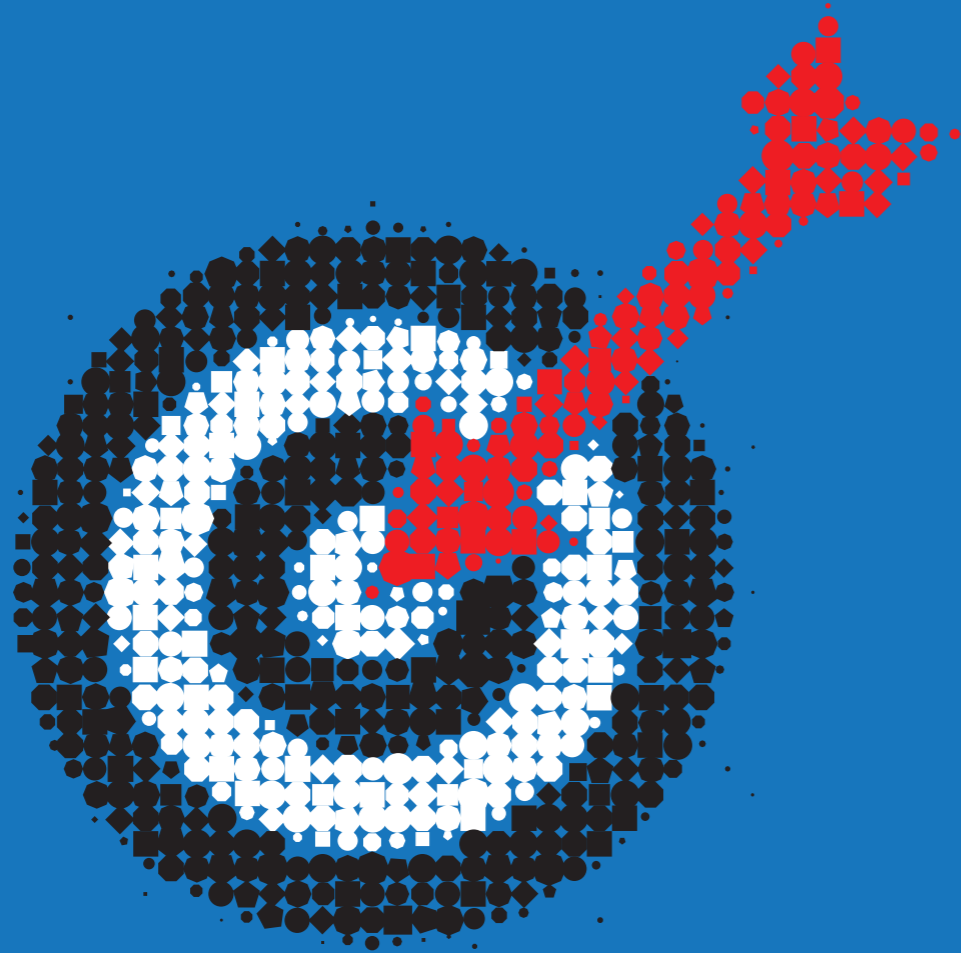
We believe that apprenticeships are becoming a sustainable and universally respected high-quality and high volume route to excellent careers. This ambition can be further enhanced if a small number of policy changes and practical operational matters continue to be addressed and refined.



³ *Sense & Instability*: three decades of skills and employment policy, the City & Guilds Group, October 2014

⁴ *Remaking Apprenticeships: powerful learning for work and life*, the City & Guilds Alliance, December 2014

2



Putting quality at the heart of apprenticeships

2.1 What is quality in apprenticeships?

Real growth in sustainable volumes of apprenticeships can only be secured through a strategy with quality at its heart. Quality leads to confidence in outcomes and a desire to continue investment in apprenticeship style recruitment and training. The report has revisited the original suggestions for what would really achieve actual and perceived quality as the central theme in apprenticeships. The first report identified these as:

- recruitment into apprenticeships that are intrinsically demanding and worthwhile
- training and learning programmes that use a range of effective methods and are built on the support of highly skilled adults in the workplace
- high expectations and standards built into a demanding assessment at the end of the apprenticeship
- progression opportunities that display the potential career routes beyond the initial apprenticeship.

A model for these four components of quality was developed based on the lessons from Remaking Apprenticeships⁵, the experiences of ISB employers, and the then direction for travel for Government apprenticeship reforms. Future supplements to this report will contain a set of case studies taken from ISB member employers, Group Training Associations England (GTA) and SME sector bodies

such as the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB). Both the ISB and the City & Guilds Group note that it is imperative that high quality providers should be encouraged to stay in the sector but swift action should be taken to those who are habitually classed as unsatisfactory.

It is hoped that the quality framework could be used as a benchmark for Ofsted reviews and help to ensure the analysis was tightly aligned to the needs of the learner and industry.

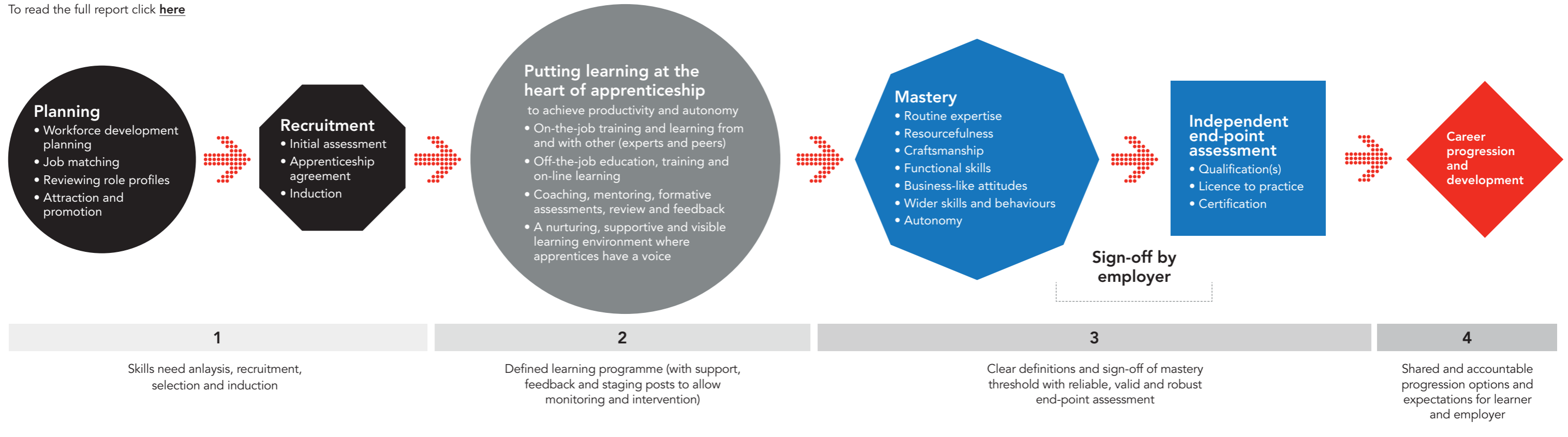
The main focus of this report is to share practical experience of how employers have sought to implement and, where necessary, adapt the quality framework across the occupational sectors and levels in which they operate. The quality framework diagram is presented on the next page. For simplicity we have refined this into four main stages of focus as outlined below:

1. skills need analysis, recruitment, selection and induction
2. defined learning programme (with support, feedback and staging posts to allow monitoring and intervention)
3. clear definitions and sign-off of mastery threshold with reliable, valid and robust end-point assessment
4. shared and accountable progression options and expectations for learner and employer.

⁵The City & Guilds Alliance, December 2014

Refreshing the Making Apprenticeships Work quality framework

To read the full report click [here](#)



2.2 Recruitment into demanding and worthwhile apprenticeships

The ongoing challenge is: 'How do we make sure that apprenticeships are demanding and worthwhile?'

The DfE and IfATE policy (adopted for the new Standards⁶) of a single apprenticeship for a single occupation, hoped to address this issue, but in some cases has led to an atomistic approach to 'company job role' Standards. This has resulted in many Standards with too narrow a focus for wider adoption and little chance for career progression and transition throughout a sector. The current review of Standards must seek to address this as a matter of urgency or too many Standards will remain without learner starts, providers or EPAOs to deliver end-point assessment.

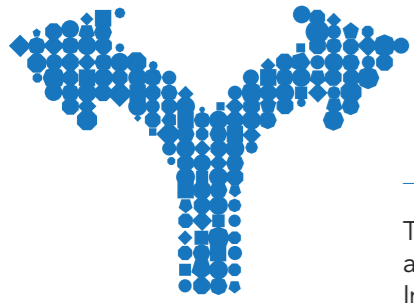
It was hoped the policy would result in a wider range of apprenticeship occupations at all levels being offered to young people from the start of their training, either directly or via progression pathways. In turn, it could have resulted in an increase in applications from young people from a wider range of abilities and social backgrounds. Unfortunately, it is clear that too much Government intervention has led to a suppression of entry point Level 2 standards and could lead to a proliferation of higher level Standards in some overly narrow occupational routes that serve the needs

of relatively few employers. This may occur where some occupations have become overly sectorialised rather than remaining suitably generic and therefore applicable and accessible to a wider employer base.

Apprenticeships are now appropriately offered as new jobs or workforce development roles and these cover a wider range of occupations and programmes. This means that the apprenticeship offer to young people could improve substantially, both in perception and reality. Continued focus here can provide a highly positive move in the right direction in terms of careers advice and guidance. We would also encourage a drive to secure a wider range of opportunities and rationalisation of fragmented Standards as a result of the review of the early work of trailblazer employer groups.

Different roles with different employers within the same occupation can have very different skills and knowledge requirements. This will always create a tension within the creation of an underlying 'standards-based' curriculum that supports as many employers as possible but this is at the heart of effective and sustainable apprenticeship design. We need to strengthen the occupational profile component of the Standards to provide a clearer definition of what the role entails and help employers to map their workforce needs to appropriate options. Skills, knowledge and behaviours are a design focus of most Standards and have been emphasised by DfE and IfATE, but the underlying broad occupational role definition has not been and remains weak in some Standards. It may help here to focus on the purpose of roles rather than any attempt to define them through specific responsibilities.

⁶ New apprenticeship standards developed by employers, SFA, November 2014



The review highlighted the five areas below as key to ensuring an effective Recruitment/ Induction stage of the Quality Framework.

1. Duration to match the occupational training needs

The minimum 12-month duration has been introduced as a way of bluntly trying to ensure the requisite skill level is developed by the apprenticeship. It was a welcome introduction to ensure that apprentices received adequate induction and support during their training but should not be seen as a uniform target for all occupations.

Employers should give careful thought to the job role specification and expectation for content, form and duration of their apprenticeships to allow sufficient time and support of a quality programme. As stated earlier, setting a fixed minimum duration is a crude and inadequate method of dealing with quality. It can lead to problems for seasonal employment in the tourism sector where high-quality, intensive apprenticeships have been delivered over more than one season, with a view to a return to employment and training the following year.

The Government has already committed to reviewing these issues and it is crucial that employers are able to base their apprenticeship programmes on a model that suits them, rather than funding rules or provider annual contracts. Our view is that it could be dealt with either by allowing national employer groups to propose shorter chunks of non-consecutive durations with safeguards for very exceptional circumstances, or by changing ESFA rules regarding breaks from training. Flexibility in this regard would be particularly beneficial to employers whose workforce returns year-on-year, but we also recognise that

the Treasury and the DfE must remain vigilant of the misuse or abuse of state funding and so a degree of safeguards remain in place until confidence and trust can be established. There is perhaps an opportunity to consider revised phasing of the funding towards the end of programmes to encourage support towards completions as opposed to starts.

2. Recruitment and selection

IfATE committed to producing a definitive list of apprenticeship titles and these should always be used when describing and advertising vacancies. The Standard should therefore always be immediately available as a description of the occupation. Our case study interviews highlighted how important it is that the job role specification matches the chosen apprenticeship offer. This is vital in ensuring that the expectations of learner and employer are likely to be met on completion of the programme. It also helps to provide suitable training and learning experiences that will prepare the apprentice for the end-point assessment and transition into the workforce as a productive employee. Many of the case studies suggested this was one of the most important stages of a successful apprenticeship and time should be devoted to getting this step right. It was noted however that the exact details and approach to recruitment and selection may differ across levels and occupational standards – this was true both across different companies and within the same company. The ISB is in broad agreement on this point that it is in the interests of the public purse to invest time and effort here, as getting this right raises achievement rates and helps to ensure ongoing professional progression.

3. Initial assessment

This can now be carried out based on the Standards, or on the relevant National Occupational Standards (NOS) if more detail is required. This will need to include a thorough approach to assessment (and sometimes accreditation) of prior learning, which is especially important for apprentices who have completed related vocational courses in further education (FE) and have a substantial body of related knowledge and skills. It will also be highly relevant to members of the existing workforce who are recruited onto upskilling or reskilling apprenticeship programmes. At present, there has been relatively little evidence of attempts to align such initial assessment with reduced rates for training but this is something that Government is looking into. The additional trade off could be potentially shorter apprenticeship programmes where such evidence was identified through valid initial assessment. Initial assessment should then result in an individual training plan which will go on to inform the training and learning programmes, which may in turn be aligned with a lower rate of training funding. It should be noted that it would not be appropriate to adjust the shape of end-point assessment as that must still aim to judge workplace proficiency and competence.

Particular concern was noted with regard to achievement of Level 2 maths and English as a requisite component for achievement of the final apprenticeship. Whilst accepting of this position for younger learners, many companies are questioning the requirements when applied to older learners who may have gained relevant maths and English qualifications decades ago. It was felt that there should be more latitude for the employer to make this decision as part of the gateway sign off step.

4. The Apprenticeship Agreement

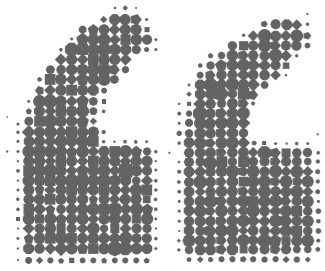
It is important that this has now become a three-way agreement between employer, training provider and apprentice. Examples of good quality apprenticeships have such agreements in place and they form an essential commitment between employer and apprentice. Evidence from case studies suggest they are a key element in securing the early loyalty of an apprentice who values the indication of supported learning and intended employment destination if successful. Across the review group there was a preference that apprentices should be permanent employees rather than fixed-term for the duration of the apprenticeship. This might be an area to consider for incentivisation to enable more apprentices to remain in employment post completion of training.

5. Induction

This was already a well-established component of quality apprenticeships programmes, especially for younger new entrants to the workforce, but has become more employer-driven now. Evidence from the case study reviews suggests that it is again an activity that will vary in terms of execution dependant upon the level, occupation and size of company. It is clear however that all quality apprenticeships exhibit this quality, not only for the apprentice but also for provider staff and mentors within the company.

Getting the recruitment and selection process right raises achievement rates and helps to ensure ongoing professional progression





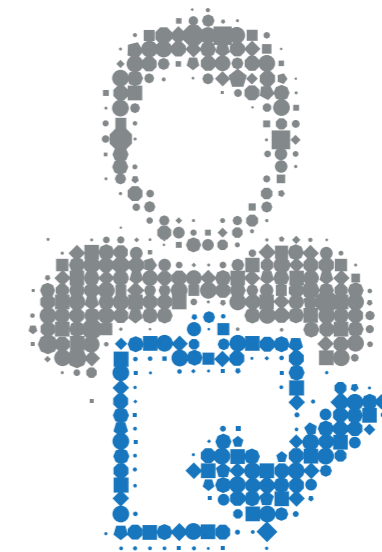
In practice: Recruitment into demanding and worthwhile apprenticeships

Employer

- Heathrow, Hilton, RBS, Laing O'Rourke, Xtrac and HEE all see apprenticeships as a key part of their workforce recruitment and development strategy. They run a variety of recruitment campaigns using their own website portals for consistency but supporting this through use of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), local newspapers and increasingly reaching out to schools and colleges.
- Marstons have started running a series of work experience programmes for younger age group (14+), with the aim of introducing them to the range of jobs/roles in the business.
- Laing O'Rourke, Xtrac, Heathrow and the GTAs recruit apprentices directly onto Level 2, 3 and Higher Level programmes but noted that entry requirements do vary across occupational roles and levels.
- RBS does not ask for age at application stage, no min qualifications and does not require a CV so candidates are assessed purely on their suitability for the programme. This is a change in mind-set for hiring staff who were used to recruiting people with previous work experience or qualifications.
- Heathrow Employment & Skills Academy works in partnership with Heathrow employers to support and complement their people strategy by sourcing suitable candidates, succession planning, developing, up-skilling and inducting their teams.
- Xtrac's induction includes a parents' evening and factory tour.
- Hilton run quarterly recruitment campaigns. They partner with Careers in Enterprise Company and often attend sessions at local schools to inform students and their parents of the various career pathways within Hilton.
- Laing O'Rourke, Xtrac, Marstons, Hilton, and the GTAs use various specialised assessment techniques, as well as interviews to select for abilities and soft skills.
- RBS has a two day induction programme that all apprentices go through when they first enter the business.
- Health Education England (HEE) work closely with Trusts as they undertake service transformation programmes, looking at their anticipated workforce needs and how apprenticeships can help provide workforce supply. HEE will broker partnerships to help to widen participation. They have developed the HASO toolkit (<https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/toolkit/>) for employers and work closely with NHS career departments.
- Optimity uses a community 'sponsor' for each apprentice and operates a pre-employment programme.
- All ISB employers recruit externally onto their apprenticeships but are also starting to adopt internal staff development programmes since the introduction of the Levy. In RBS existing staff apply through their internal Professional Career Development Programme (PCDP).
- The age profile of apprentice applicants is starting to change from what was mainly 16 and 21.

Provider input

- Gen2 has a full time school engagement officer who would typically undertake 100 school engagements per year and they make increasing use of a social media presence to reach applicants, with over 8,500 followers on Facebook.
- Intequal also looks to link in to any local programme that an apprenticeship could become an outcome from, such as traineeships.
- Gen2 run a full recruitment service for their employer partners. This involves all aspects of recruitment from marketing through to a 5 day induction session.
- Intequal engages with employers at every stage of resourcing candidates. They speak to employers before any recruitment activity to find out exactly what technical skills, behavioural competencies and specific needs they may have. This is factored into the advertising and recruitment process. Microsoft uses its brand to operate a common programme across its provider suppliers/partners.
- For Derby University and the NHS recruitment is a joint process. They do the shortlisting of candidates and interviews together – a good model that they're all happy with. Advertisement is through the NHS website, dealt with by the NHS and induction is a shared activity.
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2.3 Training and learning programmes

The City & Guilds Alliance's 2014 report *Remaking Apprenticeships*, written by Professor Bill Lucas and Ellen Spencer of the Centre for Real-World Learning at the University of Winchester, provided deep insight into the wide range of learning methods for apprenticeships. The ISB supported its conclusions then and it is encouraging to see that actions related to them are integrated into the action plan (see pages 32 - 37) and reflected in many of the case study review conversations.

Learning methods for apprenticeships remains a neglected area of national action and policy. Too often the simple rhetoric is to classify the process as training rather than learning. In one sense this is true but it may underline a belief that deeper and broader development and understanding is a paradigm only associated with academic disciplines. Training suggests a narrow construct aimed only at skills and often a superficial level of understanding and application. We would suggest that the term learning better encapsulates the development journey expected from a quality apprenticeship where skills, competence, knowledge and understanding are developed through observing, doing, discussing and reflection.

The term 'learning' encapsulates the development journey expected from a quality apprenticeship where skills, competence, knowledge and understanding are developed through observing, doing, discussing and reflection

The old Specification for Apprenticeship Standards (SASE)⁷ set out requirements based predominantly on the number of Guided Learning Hours (GLH) required in qualifications for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)⁸ and on the rules for delivery. Yet there is no overall learning framework for apprenticeships since the drive to remove qualifications and there remains no policy on aspects including workplace mentors or the training of trainers, as there was in the past. The only policy on learning inputs is that defining the minimum proportion of GLH that must be off-the-job, set at 20%.

Even here many of those interviewed felt the expression of dedicated time to real learning was too blunt an expression and could be nuanced. Many felt it would be more appropriate to monitor that at least 20% of work time was dedicated to learning new skills and knowledge separate from routine work tasks. Many felt this would give the employer, provider and apprentice more flexibility to address where and how those dedicated development activities could be covered.

This removal of embedded qualifications and a directive that an apprenticeship must not be referred to as a qualification has led to some perverse outcomes from the Trailblazer Standard design process.

In reality the Standard outlines the aim of a curriculum, there is a minimum period of study, an independent external assessment and a certificate is issued on completion – it is a qualification in all but name and it would be helpful to consider its elements in this way. The removal of qualifications has meant that providers and employers have often struggled to recreate the learning and development plan that would sit alongside a unitised curriculum structure. This challenge is not insurmountable and many are now incorporating 'on-programme' solutions developed internally or sourced from providers and EPAOs.

The emphasis on guided learning, along with an approach to funding, qualifications and quality assurance steered by Ofsted's requirements for colleges and training providers, has seen an unintentional but gradual shift towards a system that acts and responds as if the college or training provider is providing the apprenticeship.

Yet in reality the employer provides the vast majority of the content and support of any apprenticeship (regardless of business size) and is supported by their chosen provider. It is clear from the case study reviews that the provider still has an important role to play in delivery and support of an apprentice, but the definition of roles and responsibilities has seen a welcome drift towards primary ownership by employer. This appears to be a common theme of quality apprenticeship experiences but is perhaps worthy of further attention in future studies. There is no doubt that the introduction of the Levy, greater employer ownership of purchase and revised contract arrangements have seen a changing dynamic between employers and providers. It is clear that one solution does not suit all arrangements but further studies might seek to draw this out for further clarification, explanation and ease of understanding.



If the aim is to promote and return to a more employer-led approach to delivery, then, in addition to funding and inspection reform, the employer also needs to be in the lead for definition of training and learning that meets their job role and skills needs. There is evidence that responsive providers are working through and in support of employers, rather than directly and separately with apprentices, as was often the case in the past.

We are however seeing that SMEs are struggling to find apprenticeship support opportunities as providers are reluctant to customise learning programmes for such small numbers and/or the Standards they require do not have provider or end-point assessment support. There should be some concerted effort put into exploring new models of support for SMEs and potentially additional incentives in place to allow the overall system to respond to their needs in a sustainable way.

Essential components of quality training and learning programmes include:

On-the-job training and learning from and with others (experts and peers):

We still believe this is the most important component of any apprenticeship. A reminder of the extensive range of effective workplace learning methods from *Remaking Apprenticeships* is reproduced in (Box A), and further reinforced by some of the review group by reference to the Charles Jennings model (70:20:10).

Learning methods that work

- Watching
- Imitating
- Listening, transcribing and remembering
- Trial and error, experimentation or discovery
- Deliberate practice
- Drafting and sketching
- Assessment for learning
- Teaching and helping
- Conversation
- Reflecting
- Being coached and mentored
- Real-world problem-solving
- Making
- Individual or collaborative enquiry
- Thinking critically and producing knowledge
- Competing and Games
- Simulation and role play
- In virtual environments
- Seamlessly blending virtual with face to face

(Box A)

In practice: On the job training and learning

Employer

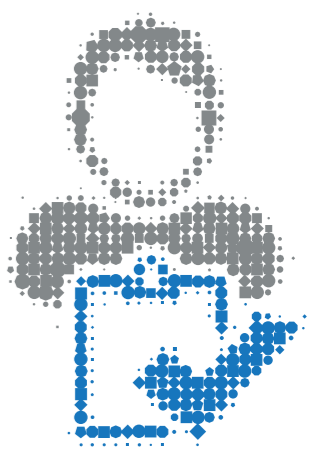
- All ISB employers and GTA providers see on-the-job training/learning as central and as constituting most of the apprenticeship.
- Microsoft facilitate networks and online forums for their providers.
- Xtrac have developed their own model for the apprentice training and learning programme. Their long-standing provider buys into it and they also promote the model to other companies via an industry association.
- Hilton structures on-the-job training through a blend of methods including Hilton's own training platform.
- Xtrac and a number of GTA apprentices experience all departments as appropriate to the level and occupation. Xtrac Engineering apprentices on-the-job training consists of a first phase of 16 months completing qualifications and gaining work experience across 11 departments. For the second phase they specialise in a role within a chosen department.
- Optimity uses mentor/apprentice agreements to shape programmes.
- Marstons work very much in partnership with providers and have jointly designed their offering from level 3 to 5 – with the introduction of new academies.
- At Laing O'Rourke and Marstons the supervisor or line manager is ultimately responsible for the apprentice, and much emphasis has been placed on ensuring that support is there for both.
- RBS map the standard to the apprentice role to ensure that the apprenticeship outcomes meet the workplace objectives. It works with its provider partner to weave company values into the content to ensure it is all aligned and branded.

- Hilton has always been party to the development of new apprenticeships, in content, learning and delivery.

- At Heathrow, EPA is embedded throughout the whole programme.

Provider input

- HEE – encourage employers to engage with the programme and build a partnership with providers. Providers strengths may be in training delivery, learning facilities etc and employers will focus on knowledge, skills & behaviours they need and how quickly they will get return on investment and see contributing productivity.
- Gen2 designs the initial phase with employer input (e.g. best in class Health & Safety) – when the learner goes to the employers' premises to develop their skills further, it is critical that the learner has access to the right learning opportunities to become competent – Gen2 advises employers on the journey and supports them and the learner during that time.
- Derby University produces a competency document for each apprenticeship that outlines everything they need to cover from health and safety and includes all modules covered through the programme. They require apprentices to do a self-assessment at the start of the programme and develop a plan for what they're going to achieve.
- In Nursing, there's a requirement for students to have work based experience in other environments outside of their own organisation, so Derby has been the gatekeeper to check that trainees are getting that experience and enable apprentices to have that conversation with their employer.



Coaching, mentoring, formative assessment, review and feedback:

There has been some confusion about the place of formative or continuous assessment in new apprenticeships outside of qualification structures. This form of assessment is critical to embed understanding and progress and should be based on the new Standards (and NOS if more detail is required) including 'behaviours'. The role of a mentor or coach should not be underestimated though and many employers that we interviewed recognised that not all occupational experts are good mentors or coaches, and vice versa. Quality apprenticeship programmes recognise this challenge and often have checks in place and/or training programmes for mentors/coaches to ensure that consideration and commitment has been given to these important roles. It was again an area that employers said may differ in approach depending on level and occupational role, and this is perhaps to be expected. It ought to be possible for the majority of formative assessment to be delivered by employers in future using simple tools and techniques. The City & Guilds Group remains committed to developing these in support of improved 'on-programme' support.

In practice: Coaching, mentoring and formative assessment

Employer

- All ISB and GTA provider/employers use line managers, mentors and apprenticeship programme managers to coach, assess and provide feedback.
- At Laing O'Rourke; 4th year apprentices help train 1st years.
- Marstons run 4 – 6 weekly face to face reviews between trainer, line manager and apprentice, which helps with mentoring and ensuring apprentices are on track.
- Many employers now offer specific training to Line Managers to develop skills such as mentoring and coaching.
- RBS apprentices have a buddy who is an existing apprentice that has been on programme for at least three months. The buddy will contact the new apprentice ahead of their start date to introduce themselves and answer any questions.
- Hilton runs webinars for all mentors and line managers who support apprentices.

Provider input

- Intequal uses specialist assessment tools to determine if apprentices have any special needs that are not declared. They then profile particular strengths and weaknesses to aid them in giving the most appropriate support.
- Providers work with employers is increasingly formalised. Many partnerships now sign a contract for every apprentice and agree to their obligations in terms of time commitment, off-the-job learning, mentoring.

A nurturing, supportive and visible learning environment where apprentices have a voice:

This is still seen as particularly vital by ISB members, who overwhelmingly feel that young apprentices change the workplace for the better and that adults almost automatically create a very supportive and 'parental' environment for them. *Remaking Apprenticeships* also deals with the need for visibility of the learning processes, as suggested in research by John Hattie⁹. Trade Unions should also be a component of the apprentice voice, where appropriate.

Findings from our review suggest that it may often be easier to create a nurturing and supportive environment for younger entry level apprentices where their age and relative inexperience can trigger such a nurturing reaction. The greater challenge might lie within programmes aimed at developing the existing workforce through upskilling or reskilling programmes. Careful consideration then needs to be given to how they are supported in ways that do not come across as overly patronising or on occasions too visible to colleagues. Since the Levy introduction, this has been a growing area of focus because most companies are limited on how many new entrants they recruit and they are now seeing the value of developing their existing workforce as well as attracting new talent. Whilst it is hoped that one approach does not dominate the other, both are vital and valid uses of apprenticeship programmes and crucial to the future prosperity of the UK.

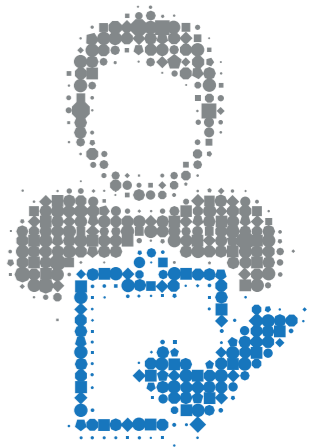
In Practice: Nurturing, supportive and visible learning environment

Employer

- All ISB and GTA provider/employers examples referenced the need to create a supportive, nurturing, parental environment.
- Many employers now run an 'Apprentice of the Year' award, and some providers hold 'graduation' ceremonies at regular points in the year.
- Marston's work with providers that have online apprenticeship community platforms and a telephone counselling service for work/personal issues.
- RBS frequently seeks feedback from its staff through employer surveys and makes changes to apprenticeship programmes according to feedback.
- Hilton have created a LinkedIn group and Instagram page for apprentices to share their experiences.
- Heathrow has a dedicated team of trainers, assessors and mentors that have an in-depth knowledge of the Heathrow environment.
- In the NHS, nursing associate apprentices will have a supervisor who will work alongside the apprentice and a line manager. Within the hospital there is also a clinical educator in a supportive workplace role.

Provider input

- Intequal experienced staff offer targeted support especially to smaller employers where they have mentors new to apprenticeships or new to line management.
- Gen2 conducts Learner Voice sessions on a regular basis and all apprentices have the opportunity to express concerns at formal and informal review meetings.

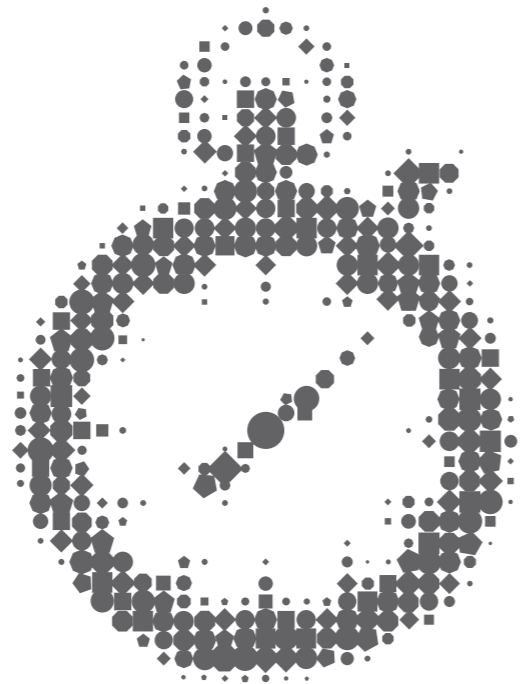


⁹Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement, John Hattie, 2009

Off-the-job education, training and online learning:

The minimum requirement for the new Standards is 20% of learning time. To an extent there may be no need for any specific requirement for this – what matters is that the apprentice can pass end-point assessment, not how and where learning occurs. However it is important to use the most efficient, effective and cost-effective delivery methods and in setting the minimum requirement it helps to ensure that due attention is given to and set aside for learning and reflection. There are broadly three situations that tend to produce a higher input of off-the-job education and training:

1. The need to acquire an extensive body of theoretical knowledge (as distinct from 'can do,' which is better acquired in the workplace).
2. A need for formal practical training inputs to cover skills that are either absent or infrequent from the workplace, or that are difficult to deliver safely in the workplace.
3. Maths and English (and other required functional literacies). It should be noted that although mandatory to complete or have an exemption from, this area isn't levy funded and doesn't count towards the 20%.



In practice: off-the-job training and learning

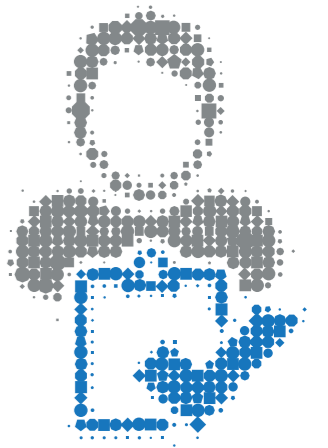
Employer

- Many employers still value qualifications and embed them into on-programme learning. Where qualifications are embedded, businesses tends to front-end the off-the-job learning so they develop basic knowledge ahead of the on-the-job learning.
- Providers delivering the Microsoft branded programmes offer flexibility in delivery through a variety of training methods, including traditional classroom, e-learning and residential 'immersion'.
- GTA apprentices typically spend the first year in off-the-job training and then closely integrate on and off-the-job training. William Hare Ltd find that front loading the off the job training is crucial for occupations that then involve work onsite.
- Xtrac utilises college day-release, supplier-led training and in-house workshops.
- At Marstons and RBS off-the-job training is an area that line managers lead on, supported with workshops. Access to it is not an issue but recording and monitoring it can be.
- Hilton apprentices attend masterclasses, workshops and sessions delivered by L&D coaches and trainers throughout the journey. Apprentices are encouraged to undertake cross training to give them exposure to other parts of the business.
- Most providers offer access to online platforms with access to resources, for example CIPD membership for HR & L&D programmes and the DHL work experience website for logistics apprentices are all part of how blended programmes are delivered.

- At Heathrow, any in-house training which is specific to the business they are working with, is mapped to the standard, and integrated into the learning so that it feels like a seamless single journey for the apprentice.
- GTAs closely integrate on and off-the-job training so that these complement and reinforce.
- RBS – All off-the-job learning delivered by the provider is web-based through a mix of webinars, audio files, virtual learning, mock exams.
- Xtrac requires apprentices attend college one day a week for 36 weeks to undertake their qualifications and functional skills classes as required. These are supplemented with supplier-led training, and internal workshops on topics such as health and safety, measurement, materials and external training courses off-site such as gear design and manufacture.

Provider input

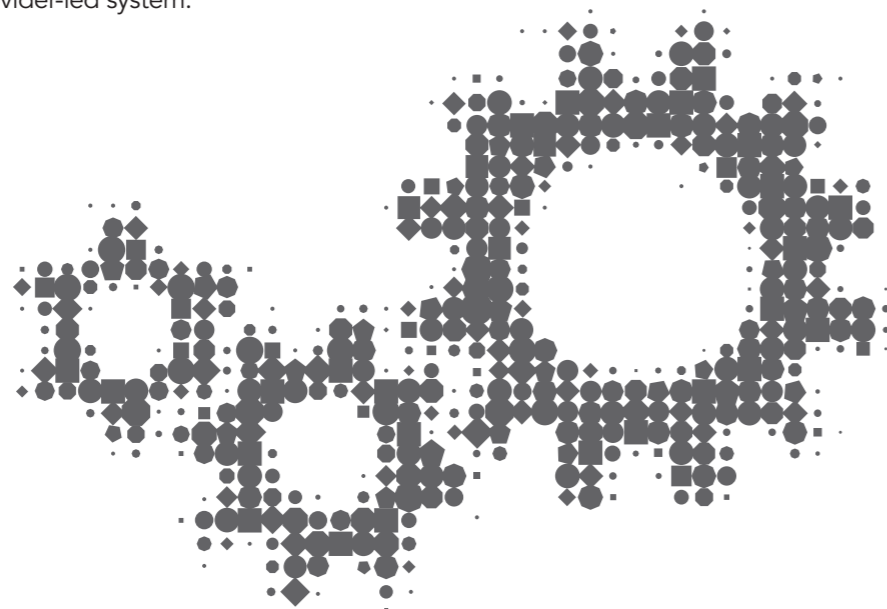
- Derby University – Apprentices come to one of two sites and attending University is important as it gives apprentices a sense of pride and builds their learning confidence. Most is classroom or facilitated learning.
- Intequal have key staff called Pathway Planners who work directly with apprentices and ensure programmes meet the employer needs and any specific requirements.
- Derby University (school of allied health and social care) have apprentices nursing associate, assistant practitioner and nursing degree apprenticeship is coming soon. All embed foundation degrees.



Real experience, practice and problem-solving to achieve productivity and autonomy:

Achieving the overall outcome of autonomy (the capability to work productively with minimal supervision) is especially key and remains the main ambition of a successful apprenticeship programme. With the minimum duration coupled with demands of end-point assessment new apprenticeships are generally taking longer to complete before employers will sign-off apprentices as ready for EPA. Case study reviews suggest that where the apprenticeship is truly employer-led, this has always been a feature of a quality programme as there are not the same incentives to 'fast track' to completion as might be found in a provider-led system.

We still feel that the end-point assessment should reflect full productivity and autonomy. Where productivity is particularly important, we had hoped that it would be explicitly built into the Standards or Assessment Plans but this has not been given as much attention as it could have. This is perhaps a reflection on the early insistence that Standards and Assessment Plans must only be developed by employers with Government agency support. The omission of providers and awarding organisations from this process has been an unfortunate oversight and it is pleasing to see that there is now growing recognition of the need for a more collaborative approach.



In practice: Real experience, practice and problem solving

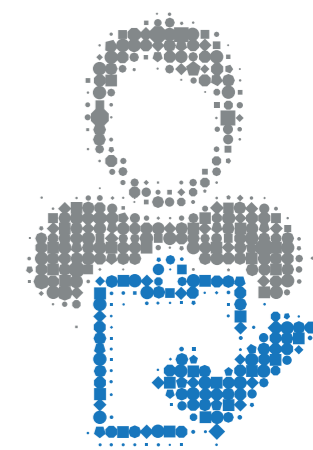
Employer

- ISB and GTA provider/employers focus on real experience with problem-solving and mistakes to achieve full autonomy and productivity from apprentices. All felt this was a fundamental element of the authentic apprenticeship programme
- At RBS the line manager (working in conjunction with the learning provider) is responsible for ensuring the apprentice is given full exposure to the real job to get them ready for their permanent job at the end of the programme.
- It is common across all programmes for apprentices to be treated in the same way as other staff members in terms of their relative pay, their performance rating etc. The key incentive is a permanent job offer if the apprentice completes their programme satisfactorily.

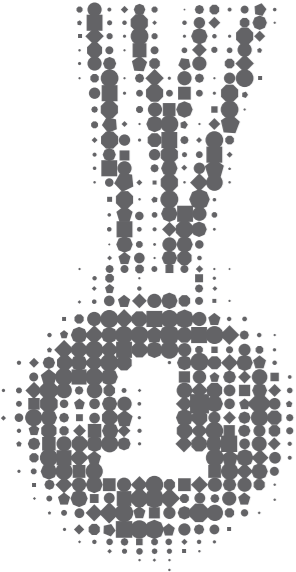
- Marstons are measuring productivity through a new health check process implemented by one of their providers. A 'Theory of Change' impact model is also being implemented to measure the ROI and success of their Academies
- Xtrac aims to make the best products possible for its customers so encourages its apprentices to think about improving productivity, quality, accuracy and technology. Each department has a skills matrix which is updated every four months and makes a vital contribution to an apprentice's portfolio of evidence as it clearly shows their progress.

Provider input

- Intequal works closely with employers and line managers to find suitable genuinely motivating projects so that apprentices can see themselves proving their own abilities through their work. Both parties confidence of transferable competence is also then increased.



2.4 High standards of assessment and performance



Mastery

This rather traditional word was used in the original action plan, as we lacked a modern equivalent that conveys the same meaning as powerfully. The learning outcomes were taken from Remaking Apprenticeships, but we added 'behaviours' because this is the term used in the new Standards, and employers feel such qualities are extremely important. We also included autonomy as a specific outcome given that we assert that this capability is essential if learners are to become truly productive employees.

The City & Guilds Group remains committed to developing tools, techniques and support services to assist in the delivery and assessment of these learning outcomes, and to designing and measuring end-point assessment that truly reflects 'mastery' and autonomy. The term continues to be debated, as does the concept of competence, but for us remains the benchmark by which quality apprenticeship outcomes should be judged.

Sign-off by the employer

We are only now seeing the first waves of new end-point assessment playing through the system and so it is perhaps too early to judge how well the sign-off step correlates with end-point achievement. Some trends however are emerging. In many cases

the sign-off has become a three-way agreement between indication of readiness by learner, promotion of such by provider and validation by employer/mentor. This triangulated view seems to work best when completing the sign-off stage and provides the broad reassurance that all involved feel the apprentice is ready to undertake end-point assessment. We see this as an extremely positive driver for quality.

Independent end-point assessment

This is a critical feature of the new system but as yet still relatively untested. The City & Guilds Group always intended to use assessors drawn from employers' and providers' staff and other available freelancers. In some cases this has proven easy to do and in other areas there are real challenges in securing sufficient numbers of experts who have the right combination of assessment knowledge and workplace competence. It is also clear that securing time and commitment from key individuals at the rates available within the funding bands is not always achievable. We see the independent assessor role as sitting at a higher level than that of trainer, coach or assessor in the current system and perhaps closer to the status of an Ofsted inspector (albeit with a different set of skills). ISB members feel it is crucial that assessors have the highest levels of up-to-date occupational competence, whereas competence as an assessor is something that can be trained for. This remains an ongoing challenge for providers, employers, EPAOs and the IfATE and one that is being addressed through innovative consortium approaches.

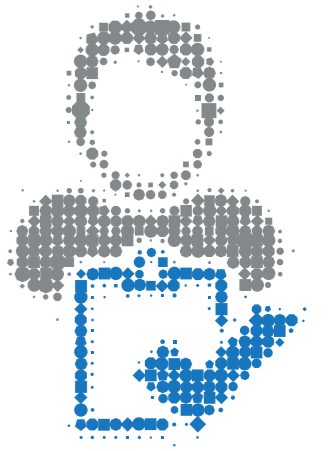
Certification

ISB members felt that it was very important that a certificate be issued for the apprenticeship. The City & Guilds Group can do so for end-point assessment but not for the overall completion of the apprenticeship. The DfE believes that this must be the role of IfATE which is unfortunate as the new organisation has little experience of this function nor awareness of the importance of providing high quality secure certification services. It was hoped that a similar model to GCSE and A-levels might be adopted whereby trusted EPAO brands would also provide the certification service for their learners and thus manage the costs and credibility of the end certificate to learners and employers. This remains a missed opportunity in the current apprenticeship reform programme and simply passes on unnecessary costs and bureaucracy to IfATE with no discernible brand value for stakeholders. It is therefore debateable whether this can be viewed as value for money.



In practice High standards of assessment and performance

- ISB and GTA employers all highly value autonomy, 'soft skills', craftsmanship, knowledge /product knowledge and business-like attitudes. These features are as true for customer service roles as for practical roles.
- Optimum apprentices specialise in certain programmes to help ensure a mastery of depth.
- At RBS as part of business-like attitudes, they focus on being customer-centric, proactive, problem solvers.
- Many ISB and GTA employers have not yet had practical experience of the new EPA models. There is however general agreement in the value of EPA / External validation as it is really important to maintain the independence and external confidence in the system. The consensus was that it helped to generate value in the programmes and increased the sense of reward on successful completion.
- Hilton conduct practice assessments throughout the learner journey as well as mock assessments to prepare the apprentices for EPA.
- At Higher Levels, where a foundation degree is part of the apprenticeship, there is a view that EPA is seen as a box ticking exercise. Some employers are concerned there may be no value as the value still lies in the degree. The degree and the apprenticeship are still regarded as two different entities.
- At Heathrow and Hilton, once all performance criteria is checked and met in terms of readiness, the apprentice, tutor and manager agree that the individual is ready for EPA.



2.5 Career progression and development expectations

ISB employers felt strongly that every apprentice should embark on continuing training and development once they complete their apprenticeship and that this would fit naturally into their existing arrangements for Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

However further reflection on this ambition suggests that all progression options should be tailored to organisational and learner needs. In some sectors (e.g. engineering) there is a clear career path in terms of both progression at work, and training and qualifications. **Such career progression pathways should ideally exist for every sector where progression is possible, including to professional status where this is a desirable outcome.**

It should also be possible to allow periods of consolidation and return on productivity investment to be woven into career paths so that expectations for career development match value to both employer and learner. If this were available, then young people seeking an apprenticeship would see not only the Standard describing the occupation they are entering, but also the future possibilities for their career and the value they can offer the organisations that have invested time and energy into their development.

Some new Standards include qualifications as mandatory, while others do not, meaning the end-point assessment will in effect become the qualification. There remain some concerns here in relation to the progression of apprentices upwards and sideways where the body of knowledge they acquire builds up and becomes a passport to new career routes, access to higher level accreditation and potentially to HE. Although conventional qualifications are recognised across qualification and professional frameworks, it will take time for apprenticeships to acquire such currency. Employer groups should be encouraged to consider these issues carefully and include qualifications and apprenticeships within 'career progression pathways' that incorporate both compulsory classroom-based education, apprenticeships and higher level accreditation – from Level 2 to 6 and above. The City & Guilds Group's intention will be to offer qualification options wherever there will be demand from employers and apprentices and to support the development of 'career progression pathways' in conjunction with employer groups.

Since 2015, 58% of RBS apprentices have already been promoted

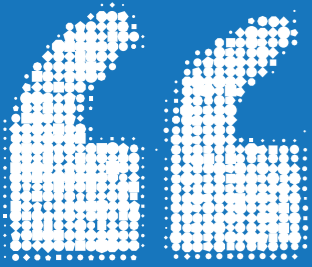
In practice: Career progression and development

Employer

- Employers feel that apprentices should continue to develop and all have mechanisms for this, but it is also clear that they welcome periods of transition where a tangible return on the apprentice productivity can be realised before further progression is undertaken. This could be broadly described as the consolidation and return phase and evidence suggests it is also welcomed by some learners.
- GTA apprentices have a 60% progression to technician and/or professional levels. William Hare Ltd produce a career progression plans for all apprentices with the company.
- At RBS 58% of all apprentices that have started since 2015 have already been promoted into a role above their apprenticeship destination role.
- At Laing O-Rourke career and development opportunities will vary depending on role and level of entry but options are discussed on completion of apprenticeship programmes.
- Heathrow Academy objectives are to support skills development and reduce local unemployment.

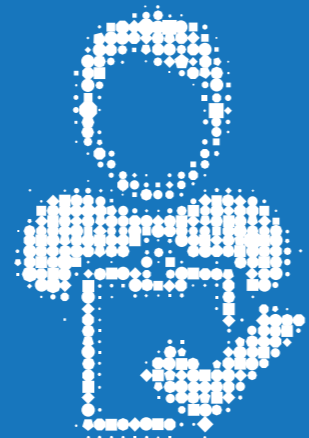
Provider input

- Through Gen2 most apprentices will go on to HNC and possibly degree level study. Career progression is very important in the engineering sector.



Results in practice: Putting quality at the heart of apprenticeships

- The indication is still that completion of apprentices in the businesses run by ISB employers ranges from 85% to 100%. Apprentices in general stay longer after their apprenticeships than other employees and so it would appear that loyalty is an incentive for company investment.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that job satisfaction can be enhanced for adults in mentor and training roles for entry level jobs because they take pride in seeing young people come through and support the company in its decision to deliver apprenticeships. This may also be seen even in peer to peer roles as employees see it as a legacy to their careers and experience – often expressed as ‘wanting to give something back’ to the industry.
- From the original study in 2015, TUI evidence suggested apprentices perform on average 17% better against key performance indicators and stay longer than other recruits.
- RBS has seen an increase in retention rates. Over 80% of apprentices are still working for RBS and 58% have been promoted from their original role. Performance rating of apprentices is higher than the business average and they also report huge savings to the business in not having to re-recruit and re-train personnel.
- The view from other employees is that apprentices create innovation and can provide a fresh approach to review and improve processes.
- Heathrow Employment & Skills Academy currently operates at an average rate of 85% of placing people into jobs in comparison to the national rate of 14% placing it way ahead of any comparable programme targeting unemployed candidates.
- Apprenticeships can also be a way of driving change in the gender mix for given roles, either as part of entry level recruitment campaigns or as a result of repurposing existing roles in a changing workforce.
- Research by Microsoft indicates added value for businesses of nearly £37,000 per year per apprentice, and an average increase in apprentices salary vs what they would earn if they hadn't joined the programme of 31%.
- Optimity a small to medium business is achieving 20% annual growth, driven partly by apprentice recruitment, training and input.
- A feature common in employer feedback was that apprentices were often promoted or progressed faster than other staff and businesses reported significantly higher productivity amongst apprentice-trained staff.



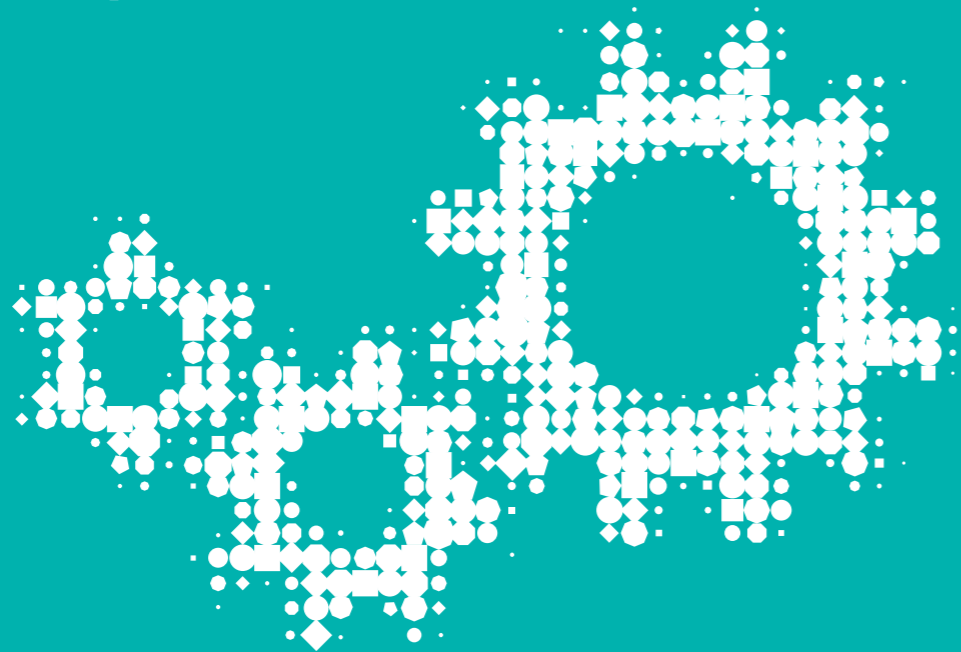
When employers take ownership of apprenticeships and use a consistent quality framework to shape their delivery and support mechanisms, they are able to gain real value as a result. Apprentices enjoy their programmes and go on to thrive by taking advantage of the opportunities ahead of them. Employers enjoy a host of benefits including improved performance and productivity outputs and a healthy and robust talent pipeline that brings fresh thinking to challenge the usual norms. Providers grow strong and sustainable relationships based on trust and the clear expectations set out in the quality framework, leading to increased scale and effectiveness of operations.

We all need to invest more time and energy to ensure that all programmes are shaped with the highest standards of training, support and achievement in mind.

Andy Smyth, Chair of the Industry Skills Board



Putting quality at the heart of apprenticeships: action plan



Component of quality

Putting quality at the heart of apprenticeships

Implications

A replicable model to ensure confidence in the inputs and outputs associated with an apprenticeship programme.

Action: Employer groups/ governance bodies

- Consider adoption of a training/learning and assessment framework within a sector.
- Ensure due consideration is given to the relationship between design and delivery of a curriculum/standard and the assessment plans. This should involve input from both provider and AO expertise and form part of the IfATE sign off process.

Action: The City & Guilds Group

- Evaluate and promote the quality framework model to increase the profile of training and learning practices and their relationship with assessment and high quality outcomes.
- Develop the concept of a 'City & Guilds and ILM apprenticeship framework' based on the quality model.

- Investigate and take on board lessons from other countries using the City & Guilds Group's international work as the basis.
- Research and review the content of apprentices Individual Training Plans (ITPs) and seek to promote their use within the Quality Framework.

Action: Government/others

- Develop policies in support of quality, training and learning in apprenticeships
- Adopt a suitable overall quality training, learning and assessment framework for apprenticeships to be used as the basis for consistent External Quality Assurance Organisation (EQAO) practice.
- Develop the Ofsted inspection framework to focus on this same model.
- Base success rates for new Standards on achievement of end-point assessment measured against entry for this (early leavers monitored separately) and not on starts alone.
- Include aligned occupation in sustained destination outcomes from apprenticeship and FE courses as a measure of impact and quality.



Component of quality

Recruitment into demanding and worthwhile apprenticeships

Implications

Ensure the role is clearly defined, aligns with the chosen standard and there is a demand. Then ensure time is taken to ensure the candidates are the right fit for those expectations, so both sides can commit to a successful outcome.

Action: Employer groups/ governance bodies

- Leverage the potential advantages of single occupation focus for each apprenticeship to develop a wider range of opportunities but ensure these do not become too fragmented or company specific.
- Review occupational profiles and strengthen if necessary to ensure they allow career progression and transfer within industry sectors.

Action: The City & Guilds Group

- Support employer/provider groups to develop tools and techniques for business engagement, role mapping and recruitment.
- Produce sector 'Skillscan' type tools that are both online and paper based for use by prospective learners, providers and employers.
- Develop tools for review and recognition (and accreditation) of prior learning related to prior full time vocational programmes and/or career experience.

- Work with sector groups and Careers Hubs to define 'Career Progression Pathways' for all occupational routes.

Action: Government/others

- Keep to approach of an employer driven sector wide apprenticeship model so that a wider range of opportunities will be available to all learners.
- Maintain a list of all apprenticeship occupations linked to Standards, Standard Occupational Classifications (SOC) and NOS, to help ensure an element of pan-UK applicability.
- Continue to produce clear guidance on occupational levels and work with employer groups to define entry level and career progression pathway expectations.
- Continue to drive for a wider range of apprenticeship opportunities across all sectors and relevant levels. Ensure such opportunities are widely promoted and remain accessible to as many learners as possible.
- Allow some flexibility in the apprenticeship offer regarding breaks in training for seasonal apprentices or age and stage of learning.

Component of quality

Training and learning programmes

Implications

Better consistency and quality of apprenticeship experience through clearly defined roles, responsibilities and on-programme models of delivery.

Action: Employer groups/ governance bodies

- Adopt appropriate policies on mentoring and actions on workplace learning and formative assessment to support sector employers.
- Instigate approaches to developing, monitoring and evaluating methods of training and learning.
- Ensure the relationships between training providers and employer mentors is clearly understood and each has their role to play in learner development.

Action: The City & Guilds Group

- Develop/modify qualification specifications and support materials and guides for mentors and workplace trainers that align with apprenticeship Standards.

- Develop guides for employers and providers on apprenticeship training delivery in the workplace (including behaviours) and how best to align with Individual Training Plans.
- Develop formative assessment tools (which can be used by employers) based on a Standard and NOS to help with recognition of prior learning and tailored programmes.

Action: Government/others

- Put focus and incentives for training and learning, especially workplace learning, at the heart of apprenticeship policy.
- Develop overall policy that supports, develops and recognises skills required for workplace training and mentors.

Component of quality

High standards of assessment and performance

Implications

Achieving better reliability and validity of judgements around workplace competence and raising the standards of achievement overall.

Action: Employer groups/ governance bodies

- Ongoing independent employer driven governance structures to oversee quality and maintain industry standards and expectations.
- Build reflection on learning outcomes, productivity and autonomy into Standards review.
- Monitor and raise standards over time as required by industry workforce skills needs.

Action: The City & Guilds Group

- Develop supportive materials and guidance on the learning outcomes, autonomy and 'mastery'.
- Ensure that the learning outcomes are reflected in formative and end assessment solutions.
- Drive up standards with industry governance and collaboration with other registered Assessment Organisations.

- Continue to promote the value of policies on assessment independence as a key driver for quality in accreditation systems.
- Develop tools to support employers/ providers in formative assessment and recording achievement as a means of tracking progress towards Gateway employer sign-off.
- Expect to see evidence of provider and employer sign-off before engaging in end-point assessment.
- Grow the end-point assessment service using highly occupationally competent assessors.
- Explain and promote the role of industry recognised Awarding Organisation certification as part of the value to learner and employers.

Action: Government/others

- Ensure funding system does not pressure providers to shorten duration and allows for a period of consolidation after final payment and before end-point assessment.
- Define clear policy on independence of assessment from delivery of training.
- Ensure funding bands recognise the relationship between training and assessment duties and do not lead to pressure to cut corners to squeeze price.

Component of quality

Progression and development expectations

Implications

Making it clearer for all occupational careers what the likely and most beneficial routes are for learners. This should be laid out with no prescribed view about the overall duration of that learning journey, but mindful of minimum expectations for each step.

Action: Employer groups/ governance bodies

- Define career progression pathways for all sectors and occupational groups and ensure that they are promoted into the school and FE system.
- If qualifications are relevant to incremental career progression and professional recognition, make sure they are included as part of the Standards offer and part of the assessment plans.
- Set expectations for workforce talent acquisition and development that match labour market needs and expectations for the sector.

Action: The City & Guilds Group

- Assist employer groups and professional bodies with the creation and promotion of Career Progression Pathways
- Support Government departments and agencies with the achievement and tracking of progression targets
- Assist with promotion of apprenticeship options and evidence of value to all stakeholders.

Action: Government/others

- Ensure that apprenticeship options are given equal status and promoted to all learners.
- Allow employer groups to set qualifications requirements (as recently adopted).
- Track participation and achievement and work with organisations (such as AOs) to help evaluate the value and impact of apprenticeships.
- Ensure the metrics for monitoring are meaningful (eg quality/impact metrics and not volume/quantity of starts alone).

4



Conclusion and recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

This remains a pivotal moment in the history of modern apprenticeships. The ISB and the City & Guilds Group believe there is now an unrivalled chance to ensure businesses, young people and the existing workforce are equally well served by the system. As this report has set out, small tweaks and actions by relevant parties in the implementation of policy on quality, standards and recruitment could have a significant impact on the positive impact for learners, organisations and the economy overall.

Our report includes several action plans setting out steps that should be taken by employers, by the City & Guilds Group and by Government and its agencies, aiming to drive-up quality, enhance commitment from businesses and public sector managers and widen access to apprenticeships.

In addition to the action plans, we have identified nine concrete recommendations that can and should be taken in the coming months and years by employers and the IfATE to build on the reforms and make apprenticeships work for all. These do not cover all aspects of apprenticeship policy, and there is certainly scope for further reform with regard to apprenticeships for the 25+ age group where often the full shape and size of an apprenticeship programme does not meet the workforce development needs of an employer. This is where we believe some ongoing review of flexibility in use of the Levy would be welcomed although it is clear that there remain tensions around the collection of the levy and its allocation to DfE apprenticeship budgets.

That said, we believe apprenticeships can go a long way to achieving quality in skills learning and assessment. There is still no clear directive on application of a model like the quality framework, but we are clear that with some policy changes and a re-think of certain operational aspects, apprenticeships are becoming a well respected and successful tool in meeting current and future employer needs, helping young people progress towards meaningful employment and addressing the reshaping of existing workforce that the 21st century demands.

4.2 Recommendations

1. Adopt and embed a common quality framework to drive inspections and regulation

IfATE (DfE) should adopt policies and an overall quality framework for the components of a quality apprenticeship, with Ofsted, ESFA and EQAO inspections based on the same common criteria. In tandem with this IfATE (DfE), employer groups and the City & Guilds Group should put training and learning (especially workplace learning) at the heart of policy and service focus for apprenticeships. Employer groups and collective assessment organisations should advocate use of new governance arrangements to drive up and monitor standards, but in a consistent way.

2. Review and rationalise focus and purpose of the Standards

IfATE (DfE) should hold to its policy on a single apprenticeship for each occupational area but review the granularity of the Trailblazer Standards outcomes, whilst continuing to encourage a wider range of apprenticeships to be developed and offered.

3. Explore greater flexibility in shape and duration of programmes

The ESFA should modify arrangements for breaks in training so that apprentices in high quality seasonal industries can continue their training on return and also review other occupational sectors where some flexibility in rules would be appropriate. Employer groups and providers should continue to offer and promote different mixes of training and learning models to enhance employer choice and allow employers to take on more or less of the training and learning as suits their needs. It should continue to be possible for employers to subcontract to providers and to develop the best ecosystem of employer/provider relationships to support and deliver quality apprenticeship outcomes.

4. Ensure high quality in assessment plans and retain expert independent judgements

The end-point assessment for an apprenticeship Standard should reflect full productivity, autonomy and mastery and not deviate from this aim. The independent assessor role should remain a cornerstone of the new system. End assessors should be highly occupationally competent but employer groups must be required to ensure there is sufficient sustainable commitment to supply in the system before new Standards are signed off.

5. Review and refocus meaningful measures for impact and success of the programme

The Government should seek to include sustained and aligned occupational destination outcomes from apprenticeship and FE courses as a key measure of quality and impact. Success rates for new Standards should be calculated based on achievement of end-point assessment measured against entries for assessment, with early leavers monitored and evaluated separately.

6. Increase promotion of apprenticeship opportunity in schools and recruitment channels

The Government should work to reach the point where apprenticeships are fully integrated into workforce recruitment and development and so become a normal entry route into all public sector employment. Action should be taken to increase the awareness and availability of 16 and 17 year-olds for the core apprenticeship trades and disciplines.

7. Facilitate advance visibility of and access to apprenticeship offers

A UCAS-style operation should be considered to strengthen advance notice and access to apprenticeships where academic season access to programmes is sensible, but this should be mindful of the rhythm of financial year rather than academic year as a point of transition. Government, DfE and IfATE should encourage and incentivise providers and employers to increase the proportion of apprenticeships offered as vacancies and potentially use work experience or industry placements as a way of providing advance awareness of potential recruitment options.

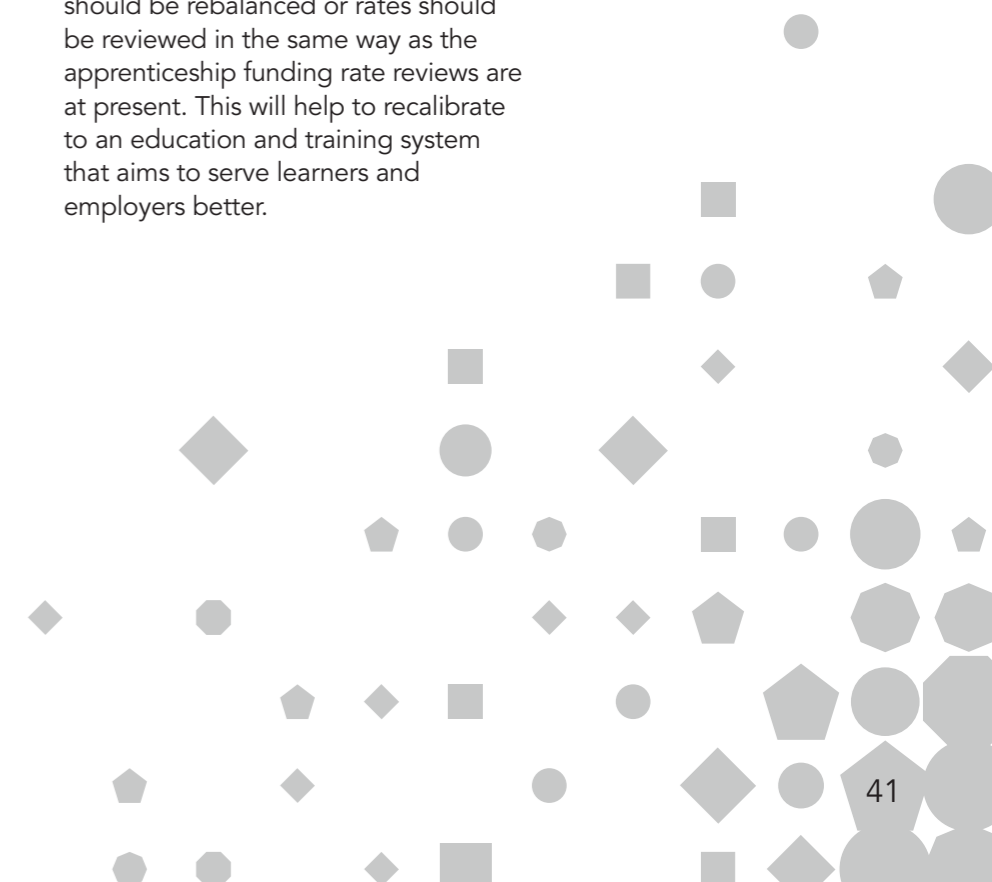
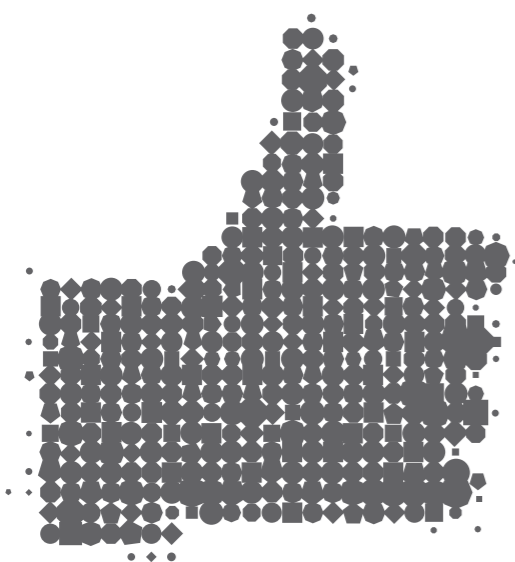
8. Conduct research into employer engagement and decision making regarding apprenticeships

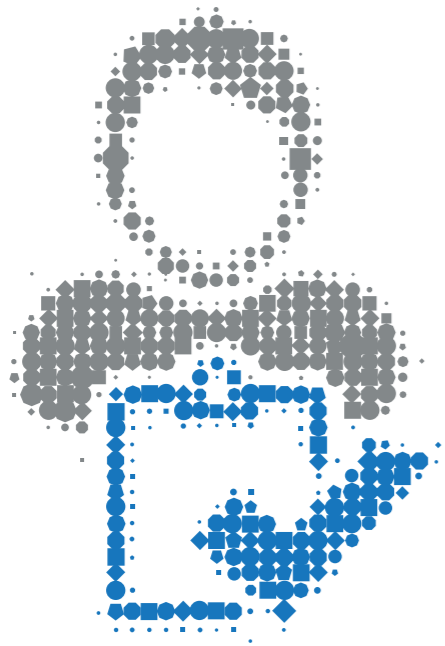
Further research should be done to understand the challenges and motives for three groups of employers:

- Employers that are unsure about becoming an employer provider – exactly what is it that worries them?
- Employers that are actively taking on apprentices – to better understand the benefits they anticipate and realise.
- Employers that have written off the levy – why exactly is this?

9. Perform a holistic review of funding across DfE budgets to focus on employability outcomes

Funding to all providers and establishments should be controlled and managed based on the impact the courses and programmes have on job destination and future career opportunities. Where the evidence doesn't demonstrate value for the public purse, or personal investment, then overall national budget allocation should be rebalanced or rates should be reviewed in the same way as the apprenticeship funding rate reviews are at present. This will help to recalibrate to an education and training system that aims to serve learners and employers better.







City & Guilds Group
1 Giltspur Street
London, UK
EC1A 9DD
www.cityandguildsgroup.com

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