

**Westminster Employment Forum policy conference:
Next steps for apprenticeship quality and funding in England**

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 26th June 2025

*****Taking place online*****



**WESTMINSTER
EMPLOYMENT
FORUM**

Agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Lord Aberdare, Officer, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Apprenticeships
- 9.05 **Next steps for apprenticeship funding, quality and participation in England**
Alison Morris, Director of Policy, Skills Federation
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.35 **Adapting to the new Growth and Skills Levy, assessing changes in funding and improving employer engagement**
assessing reform to the Levy / implications for employer flexibility / strategies to maintain employer engagement and incentivising employers / assessing the impact on training providers and apprentices / financial support for SMEs and options for incentivising their participation in apprenticeships / options for improving employer confidence in apprenticeship frameworks and training outcomes / safeguarding against misuse of levy funds / priorities for channelling resources to essential skills / balance between apprenticeship and non-apprenticeship training / expanding apprenticeship opportunities for young people / considering the impact of funding distribution on different age groups
Claire Barker, Senior Policy Manager, Skills and Industry, Association of Colleges
Chris Rawlinson, Head, Learning and Development, DJH
Khadija, Youth Ambassador, Youth Employment UK
Gareth Thomas, Managing Director, Skills and Employment Support
Cathryn Moses-Stone, Head, Policy and Impact, Chartered Management Institute
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.35 **Chair's closing remarks**
Lord Aberdare, Officer, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Apprenticeships
- 10.40 Break
- 10.50 **Chair's opening remarks**
Pete Milsom, Partnerships Manager, Apprenticeships, UCAS
- 10.55 **Apprenticeship quality and standards**
managing the transition to Skills England and key priorities for maintaining standards / examining changes to English and maths requirements / assessing risks and benefits of shorter apprenticeships / improving completion rates and qualifications alignment
Robert Nitsch, CEO, Federation of Awarding Bodies
Simon Ashworth, Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Policy, Association of Employment and Learning Providers
Tom Richmond, Education Policy Analyst
Alex Stevenson, Deputy Director, Learning and Work Institute
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.55 **Key priorities for apprentice progression into higher education**
Pete Milsom, Partnerships Manager, Apprenticeships, UCAS
- 12.05 **Student participation, completion rates and improving outcomes**
latest thinking on underlying factors affecting completion rates / assessing strategies and best practice for improving retention / improving apprenticeship structures and requirements to meet employer needs / ensuring a positive experience for those in training / ensuring equitable access to apprenticeships / addressing the decline in participation among disadvantaged young people / engaging NEETs and the role of apprenticeships in the Government's Youth Guarantee / examining options for targeted strategies to support underrepresented groups in apprenticeship schemes / assessing outcomes and improving access to higher level apprenticeships
Mandy Crawford-Lee, Chief Executive, University Vocational Awards Council
Nicola Drury, Early Careers, Skills, and Apprenticeships Advocate
Richard Turner, Head, Apprenticeships, Graduates, and Industry Development, Network Rail
Sam Wilson, Director, Apprenticeships, Exeter College
- 12.30 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Employment Forum closing remarks**
Pete Milsom, Partnerships Manager, Apprenticeships, UCAS
Harry Nelson, Westminster Employment Forum