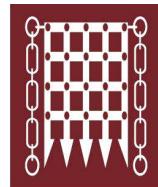


Westminster Employment Forum Apprenticeship Series:

Improving participation and diversity in apprenticeships - tackling skills gaps, raising awareness and supporting under-represented groups

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 26th April 2018

Venue: Royal Aeronautical Society, 4 Hamilton Place, London W1J 7BQ



**WESTMINSTER
EMPLOYMENT
FORUM**

Draft agenda subject to change

8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee

9.00 - 9.05 **Chair's opening remarks**

Baroness Berridge

9.05 - 9.20 **Addressing the drop in apprenticeship starts and responding to Brexit - priorities for policy**

Paul Warner, Director of Research and Development, Association of Employment and Learning Providers

9.20 - 9.35 **Improving accessibility - coordinating action among regional partners to support those from disadvantaged groups**

Anthony Impey, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Optimity and Member, Skills for Londoners Taskforce

9.35 - 9.55 Questions and comments from the floor

9.55 - 10.45 **Raising the profile of apprenticeships - careers advice, the apprenticeship 'brand' and raising employer participation**

In light of the 61% fall in the number of apprenticeship starts since May 2017 compared to the same period in the previous year, is additional training required to provide careers guidance staff with an understanding of labour market needs and the ability to negotiate with employers? With the Government's ambition to create 3 million apprenticeship starts by 2020 and reforms to apprenticeship funding - which now require small businesses to provide 10% of the cost of training an apprenticeship - what steps can be taken to encourage such employers to provide apprenticeship opportunities? Is the additional amount of funding provided to employers and providers who take on a 16-18 year old apprentice - £1,000 for each - sufficient to cover the higher costs associated with training younger apprentices? With various levels of apprenticeships - ranging from level 2 to level 7 - can the full range of apprenticeships be included under a single and clear apprenticeship 'brand'?

Brenda Cabras, Director of Employment and Skills, Prospects

Simon Hawthorn, Leadership Team, National Society of Apprentices

Ann Watson, Chief Executive Officer, Semta

Petra Wilton, Director of Strategy & External Affairs, CMI

Questions and comments from the floor

10.45 - 10.50 **Chair's closing remarks**

Baroness Berridge

10.50 - 11.20 Coffee

11.20 - 11.25 **Chair's opening remarks**

Kevin Cowley, Head of Apprenticeships Strategy and Delivery, Home Office

11.25 - 11.55 **Widening participation - increasing the number of apprenticeship starts by those from disadvantaged backgrounds**

Dr Neil Bentley, Chief Executive, WorldSkills UK and Member, Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network

Questions and comments from the floor

11.55 - 12.55 **Improving participation amongst under-represented groups - entry requirements, career progression and re-assessing Government targets**

As the Government aims to improve the proportion of apprentices from BME backgrounds by 20%, does greater focus need to be applied to supporting individuals to complete apprenticeships and progress to higher positions of employment? Following the recommendations outlined by the Paul Maynard taskforce, which assessed the actions that can be taken by government and employers to improve the accessibility of apprenticeships for people with learning disabilities, should the funding model for apprenticeships be altered to incentivise employers to recruit apprentices with a learning disability? In light of the Social Mobility Commission's findings, that certain subject areas tend to be biased towards a particular gender - with construction skills being biased towards men and health and social care towards women - how can gender bias be addressed, and how important is it to measure progress to encourage further change?

Peter Mayhew-Smith, Group Principal and Chief Executive Officer, South Thames Colleges Group

Iain Murray, Senior Policy Officer, TUC

Matthew Hussey, Public Affairs Officer, The Children's Society

Peter Finegold, Head of Education Policy, Institution of Mechanical Engineers

Beatrice Balreton, Policy Development Manager, Mencap

Aldaine Cohen, Apprentice Office Assistant, Mencap

Questions and comments from the floor

12.55 - 13.00 **Chair's closing remarks**

Kevin Cowley, Head of Apprenticeships Strategy and Delivery, Home Office

Thomas Overend, Associate Producer, Westminster Employment Forum