

**gWestminster 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**

Draft 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**
Senior academic
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **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
Senior representative, employer
Senior representative, consultancy
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.20 **Chair's closing remarks**
Lord Aberdare, Officer, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Apprenticeships
- 10.25 Break
- 10.35 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.40 **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
Senior representative, FE
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.30 **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
Pete Milsom, Partnerships Manager, Apprenticeships, UCAS
Richard Turner, Head, Apprenticeship Delivery, Network Rail
Senior representative, FE
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 **The future of apprenticeships in England - key priorities for policy**
Senior representative, policy
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Employment Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Employment Forum