



White Paper - Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth

Overview

The government's White Paper, Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth was published on the 21st January 2021. The focus of the paper is on the continued reform of the Post-16 skills offer.

The White Paper sets out a range of reforms to tackle skills gaps, to improve productivity and international competitiveness. The Government wishes to prioritise courses and qualifications that enable people to get great jobs, and wishes to place employers at the heart of defining local skills needs. The paper recognises that we do not have enough technicians, engineers or health and social care professionals to meet the country's challenges. The paper also recognises the pace of technological change and the role of further education in building an agile and adaptable workforce through a flexible skills offer. There are five key areas of focus:

- giving employers a greater say in the development of skills provision, by building on the Apprenticeship reforms and the national system of employer-led standards
- investing in and providing higher level technical qualifications (as a valuable alternative to a degree) – with progression from T Levels and Apprenticeships to enable a robust technical route that is comparable to the academic route
- a 'Lifetime Skills Guarantee' so that people can access training and learning flexibly throughout their lives, with improved careers support - from 12-16 week bootcamps to free qualifications for any adult without an existing full Level 3 qualification. This will include a 'Lifelong Loan Entitlement' from 2025, equivalent to four years of post-18 education – so it is as easy to get a loan for a higher technical qualification as a degree
- reforms of funding and accountability to simplify how funds are allocated, giving providers more autonomy whilst ensuring effective accountability, with a greater focus on outcomes
- supporting excellent teaching in further education through recruitment, retention and professional development and strong links between teaching staff and industry

The role of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) is reinforced in driving employer-led standards, alongside growth of Apprenticeships and quality traineeships, with greater flexibilities and sector specific routes. Transfer of levy funds will be made easier through a pledge and an online matching service. Consideration will also be given to different models of Apprenticeship delivery, including front loaded training, Apprenticeship agencies, and approaches to accredited prior learning. English, maths and digital training to meet employer needs and to



enable further study also features, with reference to the essential digital skills offer which launched in August 2020 and the DfE Skills Toolkit.

The government will expand the programme of Institutes of Technology programme to 20 IoTs (covering every part of the country) by the end of this Parliament, and continue to roll out T Levels with progression to higher levels through higher level and degree Apprenticeships and Higher Technical Qualifications (Levels 4 & 5) with a new approval system for these based on employer-led standards which will boost quality and support simplification. IfATE is planning a phased, multi-year roll out of approved Higher Technical Qualifications, with different occupation routes coming on stream over a four year period, with Digital being the first (applications launched in September 2020 for delivery from 2022). Work will be undertaken with OfS and Ofsted regarding a consistent approach to assuring quality.

Continued focus on providing clear information about careers outcomes through occupational maps, wage returns data and ensuring providers give pupils all information about all options, through a refresh of the information on the National Careers Service (NCS) website and a review of the alignment of work of the NCS and the Careers and Enterprise Company. A focus on careers advice in schools and colleges will continue with expansion of the Careers Hubs, continued investment in the Enterprise Adviser Network, continued focus on the Gatsby Benchmarks and high quality training for Careers Leaders. Increased enforcement of the Baker Clause will also be implemented to ensure that technical choices have equity with academic.

Continue to strengthen the governance of colleges and the ability of government to intervene where delivery is not effective or where it does not meet the skills priorities of an area, with strengthening of the powers of the Secretary of State.

Reference is made to the cross-government SEND review which is currently underway, which will consider the support needed for young people with SEND in post-16 provision.

What's new?

- Develop new 'Local Skills Improvement Plans', building on the work of the LEP and MCA Skills Advisory Panels, to shape technical skills provision that meets local labour market needs with pilot trailblazers in local areas, with Chambers of Commerce and other business intermediaries working with providers to co-create plans.
- Reference is made to the unique knowledge and capacity of Independent Training Providers (ITPs), particularly in the delivery of Apprenticeships and adult education and training. ITPs are encouraged to engage in Local Skills



Improvement Plans. The government will continue to focus on quality, with view to stopping poor-quality or financially inadequate ITPs from delivering provision.

- Strategic development funding in 2021/22 for pilots for colleges to reshape provision to meet needs of local priorities agreed with employers. This will include funds for proposals to establish pathfinder College Business Centres with FE colleges, to work with employers in a designated sector on technical skills, business development, enterprise and innovation. Funds include both capital and revenue and could include upgraded facilities and equipment, setting up a College Business Centre, or pump priming new provision.
- The new national Skills and Productivity Board will ensure government has up-to-date and expert advice on the labour market and national skills gaps – with Skills Advisory Panels in local areas feeding intelligence and local skills needs into the board.
- Implementation of reforms for higher technical education (Levels 4 and 5) with a new approval systems for employer led systems, driven by IfATE.
- Use the new £2.5bn National Skills Fund (NSF) to enhance funding to support adults to upskill and reskill, including an entitlement for all adults to achieve their first Level 3 qualification under the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, and a consultation on the Lifelong Loan Entitlement in 2021, with view to full implementation from 2025 following testing. The loan entitlement is intended to be flexible to enable Higher Technical Qualifications as well as technical and degree modules and part-time study and to help facilitate credit transfer across institutions, both FE and HE. An allocation of £43m will enable the expansion of digital and technical bootcamps from April 2021, building on the current pilots in 6 areas including Lancashire/Greater Manchester. The High Value Manufacturing Catapult's 'Skills Value Chain' will be funded and evaluated to see whether the approach can be used in other emerging skills areas such as net zero.
- The government will also consult on proposals for reforming the post-16 funding and accountability system – including approaches to simplification and streamlining of funding (following testing), potential for a multi-year regime, accountability and a shift of focus to outcomes and accountability structures aligned with the delivery of Local Skills Improvement Plans. The paper recognises that funding flows into adult education have become particularly complex and need simplifying. The government intends to establish a new funding landscape that clearly articulates the role of central government, MCAs and further education providers, ensuring funding is allocated effectively.



- There is brief reference to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Employment and Skills Programme, and provision of the 'first step' for the most vulnerable in society, with bespoke, locally targeted employment, social inclusion and skills provision to enable labour market mobility. Reference is made to aligning the funds with the overall vision for skills.
- The government will build on investments made to date in further education college estate and capital allocated to T Level providers, making available £83m in financial year 2021/22, recognising the growth in 16-19 year olds in the population and the need for extra space and capacity, as part of a £1.3bn 5 year Further Education Capital Transformation Programme.
- A national recruitment campaign will be instigated for teachers of further education with initial teacher education based on employer-led standard. This will include a focus on improving diversity of the workforce and attracting teachers with industrial backgrounds, with the introduction of new Workforce Industry Exchange programme and expansion of the Taking Teaching Further programme. Professional development and progression will also be improved.

Alignment with the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2021

The proposals align with the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework in:

- Driving the Technical Education Vision for Lancashire, with a focus on growth of Apprenticeships, the roll out of T Levels and progression to higher technical qualifications to drive up skills and productivity in Lancashire's industrial base.
- Continuing to building excellence in careers provision through the Lancashire-wide Careers Hub, whilst (tentatively) recognising the deficit for adults in regard to careers provision.
- Boosting digital skills at all levels and supporting the work of the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership, including essential digital skills, expansion of the Digital Bootcamps, flexible reskilling and Higher Technical Qualifications.
- Accelerating employer-led provision, driven by local business intermediaries through Local Skills Improvement Plans, building on the work of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Advisory Panel.
- The introduction of a Lifetime Skills Guarantee to enable adults to reskill throughout their lifetime to meet the needs of businesses and the local economy and improve their earning potential.



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