

Understanding Apprenticeships and the Proposed Reforms

A guide for training providers and
colleges involved with the delivery
of apprenticeships

Staff Handbook

Purpose of this guide

This guide has been developed to help all members of staff involved with the delivery and management of apprenticeships develop a greater understanding of apprenticeships, the proposed reforms* and subsequent implications.

In particular, its aims are:-

- To offer a resource for staff to use via internal communications for their CPD activity.
- To provide a series of templates that can be used by apprenticeship providers and update as developments take place with staff and employers.
- To provide a framework for developing a strategy and implement “Work in Progress” which enables training providers to meet the challenges of the proposed reforms.

*This guide reflects Government policy as of January 2015. As policy reforms are continuing to change, it is recommended that the latest guidance is referred to at all times. Links are provided as part of this guide.

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Overview of reforms

Introduction:

Apprenticeship reform

The future of apprenticeships in England implementation plan was launched in October 2013.

Based on the recommendations of the Richard Review of Apprenticeships 2012, the Richard Review made several key recommendations. In particular:

It places control of apprenticeships more firmly in the hands of employers, and ensures that all apprenticeships are rigorous and responsive to employers' needs.

The guiding principles of apprenticeship reform are that it:

- Places employers in the driving seat in terms of designing apprenticeship standards that meet their needs
- Secures more effective training by changing the funding to the employers
- Simplifies the current funding system
- Provides freedom and flexibility for employers

Apprenticeship reform: implementation plan

The current system of funding routed through training providers will change. Giving employers direct control of apprenticeship funding is a core and non-negotiable part of Apprenticeship Reform. It is central to driving the right behaviour in the system. At the time of this guide going to press the exact funding mechanisms and model for how this will work in practice are still to be determined. This will be part of further dialogue with employers and providers.

In place at present is a funding model that is being trialled with new employer-designed apprenticeship standards in the 2014/15 academic year and this trial will continue in 2015/16 to ensure that full learning can be gained from this model. Under the trial model, Government pays £2 for every £1 the employer invests in their apprentice's training.

The funding is to be simplified by having a limited number of caps on the public funding available per apprentice. Please see funding table in appendix 1. The timescale for this is that full funding reform will be implemented from 2016/7 and full standards reform will be implemented from 2017/8. Dual running will occur in the interim.

Apprenticeships in the future - guidelines

- should only be considered an appropriate path where substantial training is required to achieve this;
- Last at least 12 months with no exceptions;
- Include off-the-job training (though not necessarily 'off-site') that will make up 20% of the content;
- Be a new role (rather than an accreditation of skills achieved in an existing role);
- Be based on standards from 2017/18 that are designed by employers, replacing existing frameworks (Trailblazers in some sectors have been or will be developed before full implementation in 2015/16);
- Meet the needs of small businesses and be simple for them to access;
- Involve a regime of rigorous independent assessment, focused primarily on testing towards the end of the apprenticeship;
- The introduction of a grading system that recognizes full competence against the standard with at least one grade above to recognize exceptional performance.
- For apprentices that have not yet achieved level 2 English and maths, as a minimum they must for level 2 apprenticeships, achieve level 1 English and maths and take the test for level 2. For level 3 to 7 apprenticeships, achieve level 2 English and maths.

Apprenticeship reform: at a glance changes.

As a quick guide there is a single page guide that shows the key changes between existing frameworks and Trailblazers. Please see Appendix 2 for this.

What is the content of a Trailblazer?

The content for a Trailblazer can be divided into two;

- The standard, and
- The assessment plan

The standard

Short, concise and clear

The apprenticeship standard is concise (typically one to two sides of A4) and written in clear and simple language.

Full competence in an occupation

The apprenticeship standard describes full competence for a specific occupation.

Employer support

A wide range of employers, including smaller businesses, have been involved in developing the standard and have signed up to it.

Stretch

The standard is sufficiently stretching that a new entrant to the occupation will require at least one year of training to meet the standard.

Professional registration

Where professional registration exists for the occupation, the apprenticeship standard provides the individual with the experience they need to register for this.

The overarching body that holds the legal responsibility for professional registration (e.g. Science Council, Engineering Council) should support the standard.

English and Maths

For apprentices that have not yet achieved level 2 English and maths, as a minimum they must for level 2 apprenticeships, achieve level 1 English and maths and take the test for level 2. For level 3 to 7 apprenticeships, achieve level 2 English and maths.

Qualifications

The apprenticeship standard specifies all qualifications must be achieved by an apprentice. Where these are specified they will be a pre-requisite to taking the end-point assessment.

Qualifications included in apprenticeship standards should meet one of the following criteria:

- a) Required for professional registration (example evidence would be a letter from the relevant professional body).
- b) Legal or regulatory requirement (example evidence would be the detail of the legislation or regulations where the requirement is made).
- c) The qualification acts as a licence to practise.
- d) The qualification is used as a hard sift when applying for jobs in the occupation related to the standard and without it an apprentice would be disadvantaged in the jobs market.

Grading

The apprenticeship will be graded with at least a pass to demonstrate full competence against the standard.

At least one grade above to recognize exceptional performance

Grade applied to the whole apprenticeship or as a minimum applied to the endassessment.

Assessment plan

All assessment plans have to be developed once the standard is in place. These are available on the apprenticeship website (www.apprenticeships.gov.uk) but an example is contained in Appendix 4. (Aerospace Fitter).

Funding of Trailblazers

(Please refer to Appendix 1 where the funding table has been reproduced)

Observations are that the funding of Trailblazers is heavily weighted to supporting the SME market, and those apprentices who are 16–18. The emphasis is on achievement and the rate or price of training is negotiated employer by employer by the provider.

In addition to the core funding available, three incentive payments will be available to employers (subject to eligibility) and are as follows:

A payment when an apprentice successfully completes their apprenticeship worth between £500 and £2,700 depending on which cap the standard fits under.

A payment for small businesses (those with fewer than 50 employees) worth between £500 and £2,700 depending on which cap the standard fits under. This will be payable when the apprentice has been learning for three months and is in recognition of the additional costs that small employers can face when taking on an apprentice.

A payment for any employer taking on a 16–18 year old apprentice worth between £600 and £5,400 depending on the cap. This payment is intended to reflect the fact that such apprentices will require a greater level of supervision, guidance, education and induction in the workplace. It will be payable in two parts – half after the apprentice has been in learning for three months and half after the apprentice has been in learning for twelve months.

Employers are free to use the additional incentive payments as they wish to meet the broader costs of providing an apprenticeship. This will need to be analysed over a number of apprenticeships delivered currently to see what the implications of this are. For example, if an employer recruits someone who is 19+, they lose the incentive payment, and this may have an impact on whether they will have to pay additional sums of contribution beyond the negotiated rate.

English and Maths

Where identified as a learning gap for the apprentice, the government will fully fund English and Maths training at level 1 and level 2 at the rate of £471 per level and subject. This funding is outside the core government funding for a standard. This funding be routed directly to the the training provider.

Learning support funds are also available to support the apprentice where there is an identified need.

Trailblazer assessment:

In principle, this is as follows:-

- ⅔ of assessment at the end of apprenticeship*
- ⅓ in duration (by training provider staff)
- Independent testing centres for final test/assessment
- 20% off the job training
- Assessment plan for Trailblazer covers what is required

*With some Trailblazers 100% of the assessment is at the end of the apprenticeship.

Strategic considerations

What are the implications of apprenticeship reform and what do we need to consider to ensure success in this new environment?

Going forward, there are some key questions to be asked:

- How will apprenticeship reform affect us as a training provider?
- How will this change our business operations as a training provider in the future?
- What will be our future direction?

This section begins to introduce key questions that will help you look at apprenticeship reform as part of a longer term strategy. The four elements used here are:

1. Long term simple goals
2. Thorough analysis of the competitive market
3. Objective appraisal of resources
4. Effective implementation

Following this section, the handbook begins to look at some of the operational considerations. They have been designed to help you to explore the wider aspects of reform for your business operations. Clearly all training providers involved with apprenticeship delivery are different and have their own specialisms and market areas. For example, as a single sector/occupational provider, there might be less to consider as opposed to a multi-occupational provider. However, the guide has been put together in order to help you use all or some of the content provided here.

Strategy

In general, successful strategies tend to combine the four principle elements as outlined on page 9.

Unless there is clarity and consistency over the goals you want to achieve, strategy will be unable to provide any clear direction.

Thorough analysis of the competitive environment

This involves a critical understanding of its business and the marketplace, its needs, the gaps present or to be created.

Objective appraisal of resources

Recognition of its key resources and capabilities. These can include for example, reputation, brand name, ability to motivate employees, management of customer and supplier relations, management and control of quality and costs.

Effective implementation

Even the most brilliant strategies are useless unless they are implemented effectively. Whilst the strategy may be simple, the expression Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance still holds. Effective implementation requires leadership, organisational structure and management systems which induce the commitment and co-ordination of all employees and the mobilisation of resources to fulfil the strategy.

Looking at each element there are some questions that will be helpful in developing your strategy going forward. This process will also help to identify risks.

1. Long term, simple goals

Key questions that might be part of developing your goals could be:

- What is the big picture and aim of apprenticeships with your business?
- Is this as responsive as it should be in the next 1–5 years? Where do we want to go?
- If not, what do we need to change?
- Offload certain sectors, introduce others?
- Strategic partnerships or alliances considered?
- The pricing model: more for large employers, less for smaller?

2. Thorough analysis of the competitive environment (i.e. the market place and what makes up that market).

Key questions here include the following for consideration:

- What do you consider are the skills needs across your market area for the next 1–5 years?
- What Labour Market Information (LMI) sources do you use or have access to? (possible sources include: Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) skills analysis, regional and local Chamber employer market intelligence, specific sector analysis, Sector Skills Council (SSC) reports, RCU Research Consultancy, British Chamber of Commerce and intelligence gathered from staff are all important).
- Partly as a result of the above, are there gaps in your delivery area and any opportunities for growth?
- How do we currently serve that need (what is the current offer)
- What is the quality of the offer from your competitors?
- What is current market share of each framework or occupational area?
- What are the links to any higher education provision that you offer or are involved with?

In addition to these there are further considerations:

2. Your customer base:

- Who is in your customer base (large/small employers, tried and trusted sectors/industries, feeder schools/colleges/academies, young and older people etc.)
- In all cases how much is repeat business, how much is new?
- How do apprentices see you and what is the view of apprenticeships by young people?
- How many might be attracted to apprenticeships in the future if more was known about them?
- How could you increase this awareness?
- What is the view of parents of apprenticeships?
- Are there myths that need to be bust and how can this be done? (tried and well known examples include “slave labour”, “those with limited potential are the ones who end up doing apprenticeships.”)

2. Employers

- How will you maintain and retain customers?
- What do they think about your business?
- What else could your business offer and do they know this?
- What are key issues from employers? Those publically documented include some of the following:
 - Not having a skilled staff in either replacement or new/recruitment source
 - People (young and older) entering the work place who are not work ready and lack employability skills
 - Young people's lack of knowledge of the sector they are entering and what that means for them
 - Qualifications not relevant to their workplace or sections of qualifications not relevant
 - Career paths not necessarily identified with employers.
- Why have apprenticeships? – If they didn't have apprentices what would they do?
- How much does it cost them to get involved, and have they conducted any return on investment?
- Will they pay and what would they pay for?
- Would employers do more?
- Would they like to get involved more in terms of training their workforce and how could you help them if appropriate?
- Is there a use for other funding such as the Innovation Code.

Employer forums

It is considered good practice to set up employer forums where you can invite them in to attend as a group and ask their opinions and test their knowledge of what is happening and what that means for them.

Experience from this project has shown that those employers who have attended employer group sessions, for example, have appreciated the sessions for a number of reasons including knowledge of what is proposed on apprenticeship reform, testing what the college has done well and what it could improve upon to offer added value. Please see the section on employer engagement for further information on what this project has identified as good practice.

2. The future apprentice; current dimensions

Will your future apprentice be the same “type” as now?

The aspiration is for a Trailblazer apprentice to achieve a standard at level 3. This provokes further questions:

- Could your current cohort achieve?
- Has the apprentice the capacity and potential to achieve this standard?
- How will the apprentice be assessed?
- What characteristics do you assess currently?

It is worth doing some analysis on your present cohort and start to look at additional dimensions that could include some of the following to ensure you understand the potential of your existing cohort.

- How many apprentices currently move from L2-L3-L4?
- How many early leavers do you have?
- Are the majority of your apprentices with SMEs?
- Have you undertaken a SWOT analysis on each framework?
- How many of your apprentices are currently undertaking English and Maths?

Consideration should be given to the role of Traineeships with some of this process as it may help provide a basis for part or all of the assessment process you employ.

2. Identification of opportunities to develop more effective apprenticeship pathways for young people –

This section looks at the “offer” that you make as a provider, the offer made by the employer and the career path that develops along the way.

This is a key issue and the more that can be done to promote clear pathways the greater the opportunities created.

Similarly, the value of your employer base in helping to do this will be considerable. They will be able to advise on how they can help develop this with you for young people.

This also relates to the initial discussion with the employer and the question: What is the purpose of the apprenticeship?

As a training provider, a big part of the offer is how you can contribute presently to career pathways and how you could develop that pathway for the young person. Could you begin to offer Apprenticeships at a higher level?

As a provider offering higher education, how might this be aligned to a career path for attracting a vocational route from 16 onwards?

Would you consider working in partnership with other providers as part of developing the career pathway? You may have an excellent reputation and quality offer at intermediate and advanced, but lack experience of higher level apprenticeships.

2. Identifying opportunities to increase the number of atypical learners supported into apprenticeships

This group is defined as those who would perhaps consider

- a) an academic route to employment,
- b) those who leave school at 16 and follow vocational qualifications full time and enter employment or pursue further academic study after that,
- c) those who go straight to work and by pass any training even though eligible for an apprenticeship.

Issues faced historically with apprenticeships by training providers include negative press coverage and the perception of parents and teachers that career pathways and job opportunities can only be achieved though eligible for an apprenticeship. In response to this:

- There are opportunities to develop guides or use those developed by industry bodies and Sector Skills Councils that specifically focus on the opportunities that apprenticeships can open doors to and the salaries that can be earned.
- Where possible ask employers who can spare the time to come into schools for visits and explanations of their industry/sector and how they started and where they are now.
- Consider using apprentices as Ambassadors as a means of spreading the message into schools, youth groups and community centres. This is particularly effective when using apprentices who have progressed through the framework levels.
- Case studies are a great way of promoting what an apprentice has achieved and use the local press to promote you as much as possible.
- Tracking your leavers and keeping in touch with them to see how far they have advanced in their respective careers and encourage further training and development.
- Using ex pupils of schools who might have decided that apprenticeships are the best option for them and allowing them to explain what made them choose an apprenticeship.
- Conducting informal sessions with learners on what would make them consider an apprenticeship.

3. Objective appraisal of resources

3. Revenue and costs

Revenue (generated from apprenticeships)

- How much revenue is currently generated from apprenticeships offered?
- Do employers contribute currently to training costs, and if so, why?
- How is this made up (Skills Funding Agency, National Apprenticeship Service, employer contributions?)
- Does the income generated cover all costs of apprenticeship delivery involved?
- What is included in apprenticeship delivery? (See below)
- Is this seen as a separate revenue stream or part of others?

Costs of delivery in all aspects

Analysis of costs has four main purposes:

1. To assess the current costs of delivery and identify what is generating income and that which is not, and
2. Gives an indication of how the costs compare to the price bands set as Core Government Contributions; i.e. can you deliver within the cost bands that you will have to operate in?
3. It forms the platform from which all staff and particularly those involved in engaging employers will be able to make their offer from and negotiate a win- win situation.
4. Identifies direction of travel with your apprenticeship standards offer in the future; some may be too expensive or non-income products, and you may consider offering others.

3. Quality and delivery

- How do we currently assess the quality of the product we offer?
- Do we do this on regular basis?
- As mentioned as part of understanding the customer base, does it involve our customers? (Employers, apprentices, schools, parents, for example)
- What will be the Trailblazer standards of quality/benchmarks and what standards will you need to be put into place? Also, will they be the same for all or vary?
- How will you deliver possibly two curriculums concurrently for one occupation and will there be a resource cost to this?
- How flexible can the training be made? Can you, if requested by an employer, offer roll on roll off and at any time of the year, if not why not? Does this present a problem to you? What do your employers say about the current arrangements you offer?
- Can you deliver what the employer wants for their business?
- How will you measure progress?
- The development of Maths and English: what does the standard say should be the requirement?
- Assessment of Maths and English how does this fit in?
- Further stipulation in certain standards requires the apprentice to have GCSE at C+ as part of entry. What will this mean to recruitment and selection for employer and training providers and who they select?

NOTE: where there are Trailblazers to be introduced some or all of the questions raised above should help you determine what this means to your organisation and help remove potential hurdles to getting it right.

Both you and the employer will need to have confidence that the apprentice has both the potential and the capability to meet the standard.

3. Staff development: are your resources fit for purpose?

The key issue here is asking what this means on your human resources, and what this might mean for continuous professional development, for example:

- Sales and marketing: what will be the new approach?
- Sales training and development tools
- Training delivery for staff: apprenticeship standards and assessment plans
- Can multiskilling be introduced to any part of the process if not done already?
- Other areas need support?
- Staff development budget?
- Knowledge on reforms
- Information: how is information going to be passed on to your staff?

3. Resources of your employer base

The key question here is what will help your employers with Trailblazers (and wider training). Essentially, what is the capacity of your employer to undertake some or all of activity around the following?

- Training
- Assessment
- Recruitment
- Administration
- Cash flow and payment options

Also what do they currently deliver for you as part of the arrangement. If not already used this can become part of an organisational needs analysis or training needs analysis when first meeting employers and discussing their apprenticeship roles.

4. Effective Implementation

Having undertaken some or all of the above you are then in a position to move forward. Some of these elements include:

- Do you have the right organisational structure and leadership in place?
- Is there consideration given to technology in delivery and also time consuming management systems?
- Are the staff and other resources in place?
- When will this be implemented?
- Monitor, review and evaluate.

Operational considerations

Operational considerations have been developed around the need to understand issues that are faced by your business on a day to day basis.

Appendix 3 attempts to illustrate operational considerations to be taken into account as part of a process. Whilst not exhaustive it provides a starting point combining operational and strategic considerations:

- What do your staff know and what is their understanding of apprenticeship reform? This in turn leads onto staff development needs as part of CPD or recruiting policy in the future
- Costs of delivery.
- Curriculum development for Trailblazers and what is involved.
- Costs to employers of having an apprentice and looking at the return on investment.
- The effects of drop out.
- Developing a brand.

What do your staff know and understand about apprenticeship reform?

The process of change with apprenticeship reform has been quick and the effects on staff can be considerable. Equally, the reform proposals have created a plethora of papers and responses to apprenticeship policy alongside emerging funding guidance.

Part of this project explored and tested existing knowledge of the reforms and also identified gaps in knowledge and understanding.

In order to develop the guide and establish baselines of present knowledge and understanding, staff were invited to take part in a survey that aimed to demonstrate key areas of interest in the reforms and knowledge of gaps for management consideration.

A case study is available with this resource and provides a detailed summary of the themes covered in the survey and the findings and subsequent conclusions and recommendations.

Operational considerations - know your costs

The principle behind apprenticeship reform is that there is a price for training and what that contains has to be negotiated and agreed with the employer. Adding to this, the implication is that it is possible that you will negotiate a different price per employer for the same apprenticeship.

The key is to know what the baseline cost is to deliver this apprenticeship and in particular;

- £ How much does it cost to deliver each apprenticeship?
- £ What is profitable and what are the profit/surplus margins?
- £ Is your current offer viable and can you deliver this under the funding bands given?

It is not only the costs of training that should be considered with this. You will potentially offer a range of services to employers as “part of the service” which may or may not be factored in as a cost as they are considered “free”.

These are also a cost and should also be considered as part of a potential offer or at the very least what you may have to consider charging for: What does a current framework cost to deliver includes a wider look at costs with each part the process. Each organisation will be different but it might include some or all of the following;

- Training delivery
- Assessment
- Verification
- Registration
- Travel/sundries
- Recruitment and selection
- Materials and capital
- Heating, lighting
- Staff time in support and administration
- What costs are going to increase?

Also, what does it cost to deliver organisational /TNA and recruitment for and on behalf of employers?

- Time taken to undertake TNA
- Who does this? How much are staff paid?
- How many a week/month?
- Is there an ideal time length or number of visits per employer?
- How many visits?
- Aftersales/support service?

How much does it cost an employer to employ an apprentice?

It is useful to carry out this exercise if this has not been undertaken already. The more you can factor in employer involvement and understand their challenges the better it will be to create a joint “package”.

- Apprenticeship wages/salary
- Add on contributions (NI etc.)
- Supervision time
- Mentoring time
- Loss from the workplace for off the job training
- What is the return on investment?

Loss of time, money and resources could all be implications if the right apprentice is not in place.

Curriculum development: key considerations

Trailblazers are made up of a two page standard and an assessment plan. This forms the basis of how curriculum will be developed with each. It will be necessary to study and understand these in detail and to see how they can be mapped across current apprenticeship delivery, or whether new appropriate curriculum and training delivery methodologies will be required. For example, it may well be useful to consider the role of ICT and social media in developing delivery. Other considerations could include:

- What will need to be developed as part of the new Trailblazer?
- What are the costs of development?
- Resources available and needed both capital and revenue?
- What additional staff skills and knowledge are required? Or, do we need new skills sets to deliver this?
- What will be the offer to the employer?
- What does/will this cost to deliver?

What might be the consequences of apprenticeship drop out?

Current apprenticeship delivery requires getting the right apprentice in the right opportunity. Trailblazers are no different in this and the model places considerable emphasis on the ability to get the selection process right. Here are some pointers:-

- Look at early leaver /dropout rate (what is the % or number and why?)
- How can this be improved?
- What initial assessment processes are there in place?
- Maths, English
- Do you undertake occupational testing/aptitude tests in each sector framework that you deliver? Have they helped?

Drop out example: key reasons (engineering)

- Apprentices recognised that they were struggling to meet the standard required and so dropped out.
- Despite keeping a close watch on their young apprentices, employers report that there were occasional examples where apprentices possessed the ability required but failed to adapt to the world of work (e.g. high absenteeism, poor time-keeping, failure to attend college).
- Relatively low wages paid over the initial period of training meant that apprentices were drawn to higher paid jobs elsewhere.

Net Costs of Modern Apprenticeship Training to Employers. Terence Hogarth and Chris Hasluck Institute for Employment Research 2008.

Assessing return on investment (ROI)

ROI is a term that is worth looking at further as it provides a way of demonstrating the worth of something to a business. It can also then be used as part of a marketing tool and strategy going forward. There is a sample of one contained in appendix 5 for information.

There are various aspects to this;

- How much time and resource spent before apprentice is operational and “profitable”
- Recognition from company that apprenticeships work
- Sector training and recruitment costs reduce?

Developing a brand

Branding of a product or service that employers/schools and potential applicants understand will be the ultimate aim.

Possible employer brand considerations could include:

- What are we good at?
- What will employers want?
- What are the issues for them? (money/time etc.)
- Opportunities for increased or added value offer.
- What other sectors might we want to get involved with (HLAs and HE, for example).
- Employer dialogue will be essential as part of this development and is a further reason for getting your employers involved as well as other user groups that you think would be interested.

Employer engagement and employer workshops

You may well have existing mechanisms in place that involve employers and these should be used to discuss the implications of apprenticeship reform and how you, as a provider, can help and support them.

If currently you do not, then they are well worth considering. Experience from this project has shown they are an excellent way of eliciting information in an informal way.

This has proven a very valuable exercise and should be promoted as good practice and beneficial for a number of reasons:

- It has demonstrated employer/customer service is being practiced
- Time has been allocated for employers to talk about their issues and ideas and allow them to steer the debate/discussion.
- They are a great way to discuss how you perform as a training organisation and discuss how you might develop your offer
- How you can both improve working together
- The opportunity to discuss what apprenticeship reform means to them in a relaxed and informal basis.

Key elements suggested here of what makes for a good forum are;

Invite employers from sectors: whilst not imperative, this project has developed groups based on sectors which was found to be very useful as all in the room have a specific focus.

Identify key staff to attend: this does not only include delivery staff but get your SMT to attend as it shows you are taking this seriously.

A presentation on who and what you are and what else you offer: employers may only know you for what you deliver to them and not the full range of skills provision.

The use of a facilitator: it is not necessary but it makes the event a “neutral” one and the facilitator can help to provoke questions that might otherwise be awkward or can probe further where needed.

Time and place: consider when your employers can attend (sessions were undertaken in the morning and in the evening based on availability).

Key themes that were explored included a review of the whole of the training and recruitment process by the college and highlighting issues at each stage, with the overall prompt being what could improve this and also what they thought was good practice at the moment. Prompts included:

- Recruiting: how do you get involved?
- What makes you use the college and why?
- Would you use any other provider? If yes, why?
- Do you know who else is offering this type of apprenticeship training?
- What about the quality of the training (and could this improve?)
- What do you value most about the college and how supportive are they to you and your apprentice?
- What about the standard of customer service, and
- Would you consider meeting again in 3–4 months as part of a similar or wider group?

This last question proved worthwhile as it confirmed continued interest and desire to get involved.

Key findings from the sessions conducted are included in Appendix 6.

Employer handbook

We have developed an employer handbook as part of the staff guide and materials provided here. This provides a comprehensive resource to be used by all training provider staff as a one place information base to be issued to employers.

It can be adopted in full or parts as a booklet as the sections are aimed at covering every aspect of apprenticeship recruitment and training process. It is aimed at helping employer facing staff to take new employers through a step by step “induction” and ensuring you support the employer at every stage of the process. It has also been designed to provoke assessment of your current activity, and what you might need to consider developing, particularly following any employer workshop activity.

Appendices:

1. Funding table
2. At a glance changes
3. Key considerations on process
4. Assessment plan
5. Return on investment
6. Employer workshop information

Useful links

<http://www.aelp.org.uk>

<http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-colleges-providers>

<http://feweeek.co.uk>

https://www.aat.org.uk/sites/default/files/assets/The_Value_of_Apprentices.pdf

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/366063/bis-14-p194b-Guidance-for-developers-of-apprenticeship-standards-and-related-assessment-plans.pdf

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Glossary

AELP: Association of Employment and Learning Providers

BIS: Department for Business Innovation and Skills.

CPD: Continuing Professional Development.

ETF: Education and Training Foundation

LMI: Labour Market Information/Intelligence.

LEP: Local Enterprise Partnership. Voluntary partnerships between local authorities and businesses set up in 2011 by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation within the local area.

National Apprenticeship Week: A nationally allocated week in the year to celebrate and promote apprenticeship activity

RCU Consultancy: provide Research, Consultancy & Market Intelligence to the Further Education & Skills Sector.

ROI: Return on Investment. A term used to describe a metric to measure, per period, rates of return on money or resource invested in an economic entity in order to decide whether or not to undertake an investment.

SFA: Skills Funding Agency

SME: Small Medium Enterprise. In Europe, there are three broad parameters which define SMEs: micro businesses have up to 10 employees; small enterprises have up to 50 employees; medium-sized enterprises have up to 250 employees

SSC: Sector Skills Council. Formed and charged with taking the lead for the skills and productivity drive in industry or business sectors recognised by employers.

Appendices

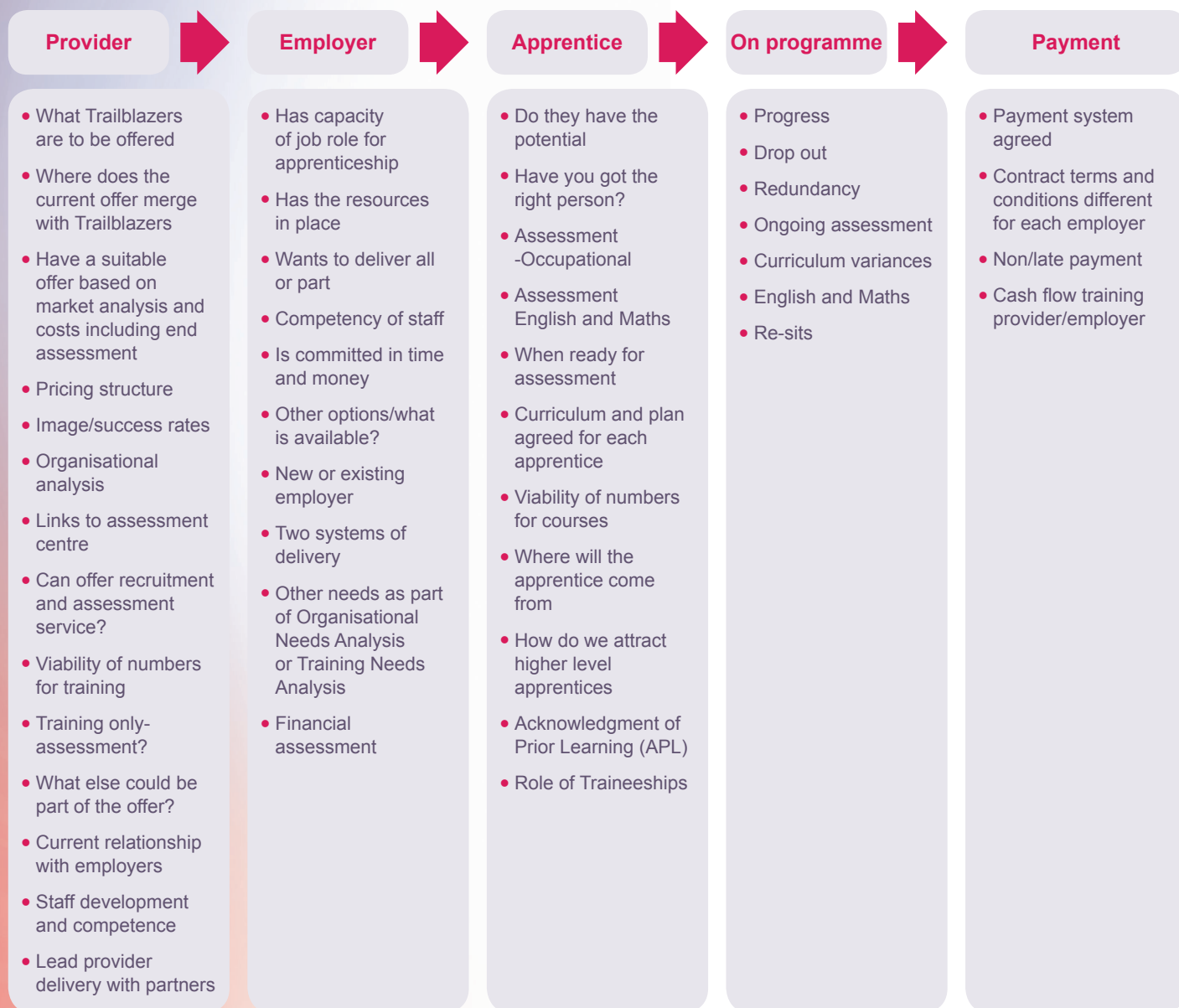
Appendix 1: Core Government Contributions (CGC)

	Government Contribution	Employer Contribution	Employer Incentive Element				Provider element*
Band	66%	33%	16–18	Small Firm <50	Achievement	Total Element	English and Maths
5	£18,000	£9,000	£5,400	£2,700	£2,700	£10,800	£471
4	£8,000	£4,000	£2,400	£1,200	£1,200	£4,800	£471
3	£6,000	£3,000	£1,800	£900	£900	£3,600	£471
2	£3,000	£1,500	£900	£500	£500	£1,900	£471
1	£2,000	£1,000	£600	£500	£500	£1,600	£471

Appendix 2: At a glance changes

Current	Proposed
Framework	
Developed at: – Intermediate (level 2) – Advanced (level 3) – Higher (level 4+)	Standard (2 pages per framework) Developed by employers. Currently being developed through a series of Trailblazers. (Minimum level set to meet the standard from Trailblazers developed thus far is 3 with a minimal at level 2).
Funding	
Through Training Providers based on rates agreed. Provider receives funds for delivery and completion and delivery of English and Maths Funding currently is: – 16–18 fully funded – 19–24 50% funded – 25+ predominantly employer funded	Funding will be routed through employers and utilising PAYE system/another model is proposed that looks at using an apprenticeship credit system. For every £2 invested by Government, employer will contribute £1 (cash). Funding offered is contained in capped rates. (See Separate sheet). Funding for training is negotiated by employer and provider. Additional payments are made for employer recruiting 16–18, under 50 staff and achievement by apprentice of the standard can be used as employer contribution. English and maths paid to provider. First Trailblazers will be in operation 2014–5.
Where Trailblazers have been introduced a dual funding system will operate but funding via new system initially routed via providers.	
Assessment	
Ongoing assessment via training providers and qualified assessors and trainers	Majority (2/3) end of apprenticeship assessment by external/independent assessment unit.
Grading	
Generally none at end of framework but can vary dependent upon what qualifications make up the framework	The apprenticeship will be graded with at least a pass to demonstrate full competence against the standard. At least one grade above pass to be introduced to recognize exceptional performance.
English and maths	
Funding through training providers and attainment via GCSE and Functional skills	Still funded through training providers. GCSE emphasis with Level 2 being the ambition - this will depend on each new standard developed.
Duration	
Funding dictates 12 months	Minimum 12 months.
Off the job	
Varied and in some instances not necessary as can be obtained on the job	Minimum 20% off the job.

Appendix 3: Some key considerations on processes



Appendix 4: Assessment plan criteria example (Aerospace Fitter)

1. Range of methods	Incorporates practical test, employer approved project work, presentation, written and multiple choice tests.	6. Grading	Knowledge will be graded pass, merit, distinction and this will appear on the Apprenticeship certificate.
2. Independence	Qualifications within the standard independently developed by awarding organisations. Professional body independently assesses all apprentices at the end.	7. Affordability	This model is affordable within the funding model being piloted for 2015 for Trailblazers. Engineering Technical a cost of £40 for Engineering Technical assessment.
3. Consistency	Employers have charged three awarding organisations to work together on a singleset of tools to ensure consistency.	8. Manageability	The Trailblazer group are working with three assessment organisations and three professional bodies to ensure sufficient capacity.
4. Validity	Assessment methodologies chosen by experienced companies to test full competence and run by recognised awarding organisations.	9. Professional body recognition	This has been developed in partnership with and signed off by three institutions - IMechE, IET and RAeS.
5. Synoptic	Assessment at the end of both the foundation and development phases look back across the full range of skills and knowledge. Professional bodies take a synoptic view to ensure fully rounded professionals.	10. Assessment largely at the end	Whilst there will be ongoing assessment during the apprenticeship, the majority (65%) of formal assessment will be in the development phase, culmination in the employer endorsement.

Appendix 5: Return on investment example template

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total £
Average wage of apprentice (wage paid either by employee or training provider in each year of the apprenticeship)				
Productive contribution of apprentice (percentage of the tasks of the fully experienced worker that apprentice can undertake)				
Fully experienced workers' wage				
Employer costs				
Wage costs (total wage costs of apprentice)				
National insurance contributions (employer NI contributions)				
Supervisory costs (amount of time spent supervising the apprentice, such as providing on-the-job training)				
Training manager (amount of time spent by Training Manager or equivalent either delivering training, organising off-the-job training, plus administrative activities related to apprentice)				
Production line staff (amount of time staff in departments spend assisting apprentices)				
Other staff				
Training costs (expenditure on training whether on the job or off-the-job)				
Other costs (other costs reported by respondents e.g. tools, books, etc.)				
Total				
Employer benefits				
Productive contribution (percentage of tasks of the fully experienced worker the apprentice can complete multiplied by the fully experienced workers' wage).				
Other income (funding provided for training of apprentices supplied by SFA /Training Providers etc.)				
Total				
Cost-benefit (total costs minus all benefits)				
Total (excluding apprenticeship funding)				
Total (including apprenticeship funding)				

Appendix 6. Employer workshops

Employers were invited to attend a workshop based on both “getting to know you” and to ensure that as a College they are valued as a service provider and how this relationship could be improved.

A presentation was offered on what the college offered in their occupational sector which also provided some valuable knowledge as they were not aware in certain instances of what was on offer as part of wider skills and could be improved.

As part of the presentation a brief overview of apprenticeship reform was provided. This was designed to make employers aware of what was going to happen and test understanding. From those employers who attended, all knew very little on this.

The next part of the session was deliberately delivered in a round the table discussion and in an informal way with the opportunity to ask questions and get answers and opinion on a range of themes.

This approach proved useful and successful. The use of a facilitator (compere) to help lead the discussion was a useful part of this process.

Rapport during the sessions developed over time (each was two hours) and the informal setting allowed employers to spend as much time as they liked on the themes being discussed with prompts applied to illicit particular points of interest.

Key findings

Key findings included a lack of awareness on apprenticeship reform,

Key messages from the sessions included the need to support employers all the way through the recruitment selection and training process, maintaining regular contact and in particular, what they needed to do at the start of their involvement in apprenticeships were very important.

Another key finding was that the use of mentoring support was seen as a useful training facility that they would benefit from.

The groups formed here stated they would like to meet again not only for further information but to explore further ways of joint working which would be an agenda you can agree on but might well start to talk about some of the themes and subjects raised here.

If you decide to hold them, they have been found as a valuable asset but will need to be resourced and maintained as part of the business development experience linking back to service design.

