



### **Prospectus published for new Apprenticeship Application Support Fund for young people**

Young people who have struggled to get on to an apprenticeship via the government's Apprenticeship Vacancy service are soon to receive support from a new Apprenticeship Application Support Fund.



*This project funded by:*  
**National Apprenticeship Service**

Training organisations are being invited to bid to run projects around the country designed to increase the quality and success rate of applications for apprenticeship vacancies made by young people between the ages of 16 and 20.

The Apprenticeship Application Support Fund is being managed by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) on behalf of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) from whom £450,000 of funding has been made available. Bids must be of £25,000 or above in value and as a guideline only, 8-10 bids around the country are expected to be successful.

The basis of the project is to ensure that every young person applying for an apprenticeship, particularly those using the AV system, have every support to ensure that their applications present their capabilities and potential in the best possible light.

In the current ultra-competitive youth employment market, apprenticeships are seen as a valuable commodity by both young people and employers alike, yet often the application process itself can be the major stumbling block. The new fund intends to start the process of looking for innovative ways of addressing this common pitfall to ensure that those who are best placed to use their vocational talents are able to do so in fulfilling and sustainable apprenticeship-based employment.

Criteria for successful bids include:

- optimising information and advice services available to users of the Apprenticeship Vacancy (AV) system

- Complementing choice and diversity agendas within apprenticeships by improving access to and developing application support services for under-represented groups, e.g. learners with disabilities
- extending existing good practice by encouraging partnership, collaboration and consortia approaches
- encouraging innovation and the development of creative solutions by the sector in addressing identified issues of concern regarding the quality of apprenticeship applications.

Bidders are also encouraged to set out how solutions could be sustained beyond the life of the grant funding.

Of most interest will be projects that impact directly on learners and employers utilising the AV system, although the fund managers will also consider projects that incidentally affect wider apprenticeship applications. Projects in priority occupational areas to engage hard to reach and disengaged groups of learners and new employer links will also be of particular interest.

Paul Warner, AELP's director of employment and skills, said:

“It is important to recognise that solutions will not be ‘one size fits all’, and therefore we are keen to receive bids which encourage new ideas and new approaches. In particular we would be interested to look at how under-represented groups in apprenticeships could be better supported in the application process.”

The lead bidder for any submission must be entered in their own right on the SFA's Register of Training Organisations as at September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012. The deadline for receipt of bids is October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012. Successful bids will be announced at the end of November 2012 with a view to the projects running until a final evaluation in June 2013.

A prospectus for the Apprenticeship Application Support Fund is available for download at: [www.aelp.org.uk/topics/details/aasf/](http://www.aelp.org.uk/topics/details/aasf/).

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#### **Notes to editors**

##### **1. About the Association of Employment and Learning Providers**

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) represents the interests of a range of organisations delivering state-funded vocational learning and employment placement, including in excess of 70% of apprenticeship training in England. The majority of its 600 member organisations are independent providers holding contracts with or through the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), Department of Education (DFE) and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for the provision of a wide-range of work-based and work-related learning. Amongst its members there are also a number of consultants, regional networks, and FE colleges in membership, alongside well over 50 charities, giving AELP a well-rounded and comprehensive perspective and insight on matters relating to its remit. More information is available at: [www.aelp.org.uk](http://www.aelp.org.uk).

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