



## **AELP Recommendations for the 2019 General Election Manifestos**

### **Young people matter**

In a post-Brexit world, Britain needs to train more home-grown talent to support economic growth. Apprenticeships offer a unique opportunity for young people to earn and learn and we should build on the game-changing introduction of the apprenticeship levy to enable employers of all sizes to recruit more apprentices from intermediate to degree level. Smaller businesses outside the levy's scope have traditionally been the bedrock underpinning the growth in apprenticeships and they deserve more support so that new opportunities are evenly spread across the country.

Too many school leavers still leave education with few qualifications and without any level of employability skills. Aspiring to raise the skill base of the workforce to high levels will only be achieved if there is the first meaningful rung on the ladder which apprenticeships and a rebooted traineeship programme can provide. The new government should be committed to a guaranteed government-funded legal entitlement for young people aged 16 to 19 to go on an apprenticeship programme with many more places at an intermediate level being provided for people of all ages.

### **Improving English, maths and digital skills**

Digital skills alongside maths and English should be the golden thread weaved through further education and skills provision, giving individuals the building blocks to improve work and personal prospects. We should build on the 2020 national digital skills entitlement by embedding digital skills in every apprenticeship standard, not just as a standalone qualification.

Most large employers as well as smaller ones are happy to recognise the attainment of applied functional skills in maths and English as an alternative to a good pass at GCSE. The new government should be ready to back their teaching in the workplace with the equivalent level of support which classroom provision enjoys.

### **Investment in adult education benefits the economy**

The devolving of responsibility for adult education should be maintained in the next Parliament and it needs significantly more public investment, particularly to address low levels of numeracy and literacy. The new government should work with employers, trade unions and training providers to transform the National Retraining Scheme (NRS) to really make a difference to the 1.5 million individuals whose jobs are at risk of automation along with supporting those trapped in low-level employment with little prospects. Traineeships have changed the lives of young people and the NRS should become a 'traineeship for adults'.

European Social Fund provision to enable unemployed people and people who need basic skills to secure a job should be replaced by a UK Shared Prosperity Fund of equal scale to support the most disadvantaged in our society.

### **Reducing reoffending**

We should build on the blueprint set out in the 2016 Prison Safety and Reform white paper to reduce the huge costs imposed on society and the taxpayer associated with persistently high levels of reoffending in Britain. More education, especially for numeracy and literacy, inside the prison gate is required and the law should be changed so that prisoners are included within the definition of employees for the purpose of apprenticeships when working on temporary release or within the prison to enable them to start a full apprenticeship.