

Working with government and employers to develop policies and deliver high quality, learner centred, employer focused, demand-led skills development, valued by all.

### Issue 966, 25 March 2020

What a week. I am sure that sentiment is shared by everyone. All I can say to everyone is we are trying our best to get an understanding of the seriousness and urgency of the issue now – for all funding streams. Monday evening was, without a doubt, incredibly disappointing and caused great anger for me and everyone else in the sector. It is as if no-one had been listened to for the past month and stank of the past decade of bias against independent training providers.

I want to emphasise that we are fighting for all lines of funding. Sometimes apprenticeships dominate as it is incredibly complex but – whether it is AEB, ESF, Traineeships, Study Programmes, Devolved AEB – we are covering them all. Talking of devolved, at the moment MCAs seem to be leading the way in terms of providing guarantees of funding and I want to thank them for that – let's hope the DfE follows their lead soon! Perhaps the MCAs were happy to follow the clear and unambiguous guidelines (see more below) that the Cabinet Office has issued to all government departments and agencies in respect of their suppliers – something Sanctuary Buildings seems to be struggling with.

Hopefully everyone is keeping a close eye on our messages and tweets as we try and keep everyone informed of developments as it changes every single day. Another CEO webinar on Friday for anyone who wants to join – [details are here](#).

Everyone – and I am including all officials – is working incredibly hard, but it really feels like crunch time for the sector as a whole and the next week will determine whether we even have a sector in the future. The government needs to wake up and understand they need a strong ITP sector, especially when we start coming out of this crisis, let alone during it, as we try and support employers and individuals through an incredibly tough period. We are working around the clock to keep everyone informed, liaise with all the local networks and try and keep the momentum for change going.

So key highlights that I am sure you have all been aware of:

[AELP's latest summary of key asks](#) that was shared with all relevant officials on Friday evening.

This was followed by [the Minister's letter](#) and [further DfE guidance](#), I am sad to say for what it is worth, for ITPs and EPAOs on Monday evening.

[AELP's immediate response](#) definitely reflected the mood of every member I have been in touch with.

So, what have we been doing on Tuesday?



Firstly, we have picked the core high level arguments as to why funding all providers by profile across all funding streams using existing government budgets makes so much sense – for government, apprentices and learners, employers and communities.

AELP's lines are simple today and have been the basis of many conversations:

- Cabinet office procurement guidance has said that contracts should be honoured even if performance falls
- Colleges are being guaranteed funding and they are supposed to be independent providers as well.
- The budget is already committed in the DfE budget for 2020/21– this isn't new money.
- If the sector furloughs a substantial proportion of staff, it will cost the treasury 80% but if funding is maintained, providers will commit to not furlough staff relating to that delivery. Thus, the marginal additional cost to the treasury is only 20%.
- As providers cease trading or furlough substantial numbers of staff then apprentices, learners and employers who want to continue training will lose their provider – many of these are vulnerable and will be left with no support.
- Without action, significant capacity will be lost right at the point government will be looking to support the increased levels of unemployed and upskilling those in the workplace.
- With guaranteed funding there is a whole range of other support providers could be giving – supporting the training of new key workers, upskilling workers while at home etc – the value add would be substantially over the 20%.
- If nothing else, guarantee the next month's funding to allow time to sort through the details and how the model might work.

At the moment, we have a survey out to all members of AELP and local provider networks. It isn't perfect, you might have been asked all the questions already, but it is vital we have as many examples as possible of the impact of inaction. If you can follow the questions but our main goal is to understand the impact on you as a provider and on your apprentices and learners and the employers you work with. We will use the information anonymously.

[Details of the survey are here.](#)

Finally, we have sent out a draft letter for providers to send to your local MPs. Please add in specifics relating to your business and your learners and community and send it to your local MP as soon as possible. [Details of the draft letter are here.](#)

We have had a lot of questions – especially around furloughed apprentices – see below for our answer – but, in simple terms, if at all possible don't put them on a break and keep supporting them.

I could write a book on the last 7 days, but I am sure you will agree everyone's efforts need to be focussed on getting some common and financial sense applied before the whole sector collapses. Anthony Impey described skills provision as one of the vital elements of the nation's infrastructure – I couldn't agree more.

And finally thanks for all the kind messages about my son – today he is fully recovered and now we face the new challenge of a 15 year old bouncing around the house already going stir crazy while the nation is isolated! Tonight is a roast turkey which was spare from Xmas – who knew how useful that December stockpiling would turn out to be for the next few days. Merry Xmas everyone and I still believe we will get to the right place – I have to!

*Mark Dawe | Chief Executive | AELP*

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# Policy

## **Covid-19: AELP Guidance**

AELP has pulled together on this single webpage a set of resources to help support providers, their employers and their learners in the response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

[You can access our Covid-19 Guidance portal here.](#)

Since the guidance issued by the government and individual departments is often being updated on a daily basis, AELP will endeavour to update the information on this page as often as possible.

AELP members are contacting us and using social media to share how they are responding to the pandemic in terms of maintaining provision and assessment for their learners and protecting the livelihoods of their valued staff.

We are using this page to pass on 'best practice' and AELP intends to run webinars for the same purpose. Please continue to keep us informed about developments as they affect you and your learners and share any recommendations by emailing [apprenticeships@aelp.org.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@aelp.org.uk).

## **“Beyond the pale” - AELP response to DfE Covid-19 statement on apprenticeships and assessment**

Mark Dawe, chief executive of AELP, said:

“The omission of any DfE funding support for apprenticeships and other skills training goes completely against the assurance offered by the Secretary of State to the House of Commons last week. We are left to conclude that the government is not serious about apprenticeship training or any other forms of skills training continuing while the pandemic goes on or that it is very happy to preside over many independent training providers (ITPs) going out of business over the next three months.

“How are providers expected to implement the proposed flexibilities in today’s statement if they have vastly reduced income coming in? It is now a battle for survival. The majority of provider staff will be furloughed which means they will not be available to support the training of apprentices and other learners.

“Coming after Friday’s guaranteed funding support for mainstream FE provision, the DfE statement adds insult to injury. For example, it says that “Government policy does not allow payment for services in advance of delivery” and yet this is precisely what it announced for colleges on Friday. ITPs delivering adult education, traineeships and other forms of training have similarly been offered zero assurance by today’s statement.

“Then on apprenticeships, the statement goes further and lays down terms for clawback of funding from independent training providers if the crisis means that apprenticeships can’t be completed. Given that it is not their fault that they cannot gain access to apprentices or assess them, this is beyond the pale.

“Unless the government urgently rethinks its stance that it has had two weeks to think about, we are likely to see the start of the collapse of the training and assessment sector over the next week unless action is taken on funding, and those employers who want training and assessment to continue will have no place to go when this is over.

“Colleges only deliver 25% of apprenticeship training. This means that they are no position to rush in and fill the gaps that will appear in key sectors and in many towns and rural areas across the country, including the Red Wall areas, if ITPs, who deliver nearly 7 out of 10 apprenticeships, start going bust. Niche provision in sectors like textiles will also suffer very badly.

“Another important point on the quality of provision is that nearly all ITPs have made the transition across to the new apprenticeship standards whereas less than 6 months away from the switch-off of frameworks, many colleges are lagging in making the change.

“So employers looking to get back on their feet after the end of the pandemic will find that the apprenticeships that they want won’t be available to them. And soon that other oven-ready solution of EU migrant labour won’t be there either to fill the gaps.

“What about this year’s school-leavers aged 16 or 18? Where are the opportunities going to be for them if lots of apprenticeship training providers are no longer around?

“This is why any further delay on a funding support package for apprenticeships and ITPs is totally unacceptable.

“AELP has this evening demanded an urgent meeting with the Apprenticeships and Skills Minister. We also hope that MPs on the Commons Education Committee will be raising these issues with the minister when she appears before them on Wednesday.”

## Covid-19: DfE Guidance

The Department for Education (DfE) has published guidance for apprentices, employers, training providers, end point assessment organisations and external quality assurance providers.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ESFA is implementing measures to make it easier for apprenticeships to continue and complete in a different way, if they need to, or to break and resume an apprenticeship later when that becomes possible.

The DfE guidance includes information on:

- Applying the policy on breaks in learning
- Delays to end point assessment
- Alternative arrangements for EPA and EQA

The measures in the DfE guidance document include:

- encouraging training providers to deliver training to apprentices remotely and via e-learning as far as is practicable;
- allowing the modification of EPA arrangements, including remote assessments wherever practicable and possible;
- clarifying that apprentices ready for assessment, who cannot be assessed due to COVID-19, can have their EPA rescheduled;
- enabling employers and training providers to report and initiate a break in learning where the interruption to learning due to COVID-19 is greater than four weeks;
- clarification on how to record breaks in learning so that funding is not unnecessarily disrupted;

- confirming that, where apprentices are made redundant, it is DfE's ambition to find them alternative employment and continue their apprenticeship as quickly as possible within 12 weeks.

[You can read the full DfE Guidance for apprentices, employers, training providers, EPAOs and EQAOs here.](#)

## Covid-19: IfATE Response

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education has also published guidance outlining measures to respond to the unique set of circumstances, which resulted from the outbreak of COVID-19.

The IfATE states that every effort should be made to ensure that apprentices can continue with their apprenticeship and be assessed in accordance with current EPA plan and EQA requirements. Where this is not possible, training providers should first consider whether it is appropriate to extend the apprenticeship in order to reschedule the EPA.

Training providers and EPAOs should make every attempt to communicate as much as possible through this period to ensure apprentices are well informed.

EPAOs should continue to engage with their EQA Provider throughout the application of this direction and keep a specific log of any COVID-19 related actions, which should be available for review by EQAPs.

[You can read the full IfATE's guidance here.](#)

## Covid-19 and skills training: The three big things that need to happen now

AELP has submitted to the DfE and Treasury a list of major actions and other flexibilities which need to be taken to safeguard apprenticeship and skills provision during the pandemic. The three most important measures needed without any further delay are:

- Guaranteed programme income across all funding streams for all provider types (grant or contracted) until the crisis is over
- Removal of all observations for the end point assessment (EPA) of apprentices and replace EPAs with employer/provider assessment and professional discussion
- Apply the same treatment to Functional Skills as is being applied to GCSEs and A levels, i.e. it should be left to the tutor as to when the learner has achieved competency

[AELP has published a full checklist of more detailed requests for action, which you can view here.](#)

## AELP advice on providing training to furloughed apprentices

We have received a significant number of requests for advice on whether training can continue for apprentices who have been [furloughed](#) – i.e. where government contributes 80% of the apprentice's wages and apprentices must not undertake any work during that time.

In terms of providing ongoing support for furloughed apprentices this is what the [DfE guidance](#) released yesterday said:

*"Where apprentices are furloughed (granted a leave of absence) or placed on unpaid leave, or where the nature of their employment changes and no longer supports their apprenticeship, the apprentice, employer*

and training provider **should consider** whether a break in learning would be appropriate.”

Just to be clear the guidance does not say providers cannot offer training to furloughed apprentices. The AELP advice continues to be that providers should support furloughed workers and **only** resort to using a Break in Learning (BIL) if the apprentices doesn't want to undertake any training whilst they are temporarily stood down from work. Hopefully most furloughed workers will be keen to carry on and make use of this unproductive period. This is the advice we are giving and most providers we are aware of are taking until advised otherwise.

## List of 'key workers' and vulnerable children

The Cabinet Office has published a list of vulnerable individuals and key workers, whose children will still be able to attend school from 23 March 2020. This follows the announcement by the Secretary of State for Education Gavin Williamson MP that all schools and universities will close until further notice, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The guidance says that “many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home”, and that “every child who can be safely cared for at home should be”. It has also been confirmed that children will be eligible to attend school and college even if just one parent or carer is identified as a “critical worker”.

Key workers include the following professions:

- Health and social care professionals (e.g. doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, care workers, and other frontline staff)
- Education and childcare professionals (e.g. teachers, nursery practitioners, social workers)
- Key public service workers (e.g. justice system, religious staff, charities, undertakers)
- Local and national government workers
- Delivery workers of food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security workers (e.g. police, defence contractors, armed forces personnel)
- Transport workers (e.g. HGV drivers, train drivers, underground drivers)
- Utilities, communication and financial services

[The complete list of key workers and vulnerable children can be viewed here.](#)

## Sharing information on the Youth Futures grants programme

The Youth Futures Foundation has launched its rolling grants programme to help tackle youth unemployment. With a £90m endowment from the Reclaim Fund, they are inviting grant applications from organisations that work directly with young people (aged 14-24 years) who are either not in employment, education, or training (or are at risk of this) to improve their access to meaningful jobs.

Youth Futures want to partner with organisations that share their values and are committed to learning, investing in good practice and sharing what works to transform the youth employment landscape.

To find out more, visit their website: <https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/grants/>

## Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers league table launches!

Applications for a new league table of top apprenticeship employers have now opened!

The Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers rankings will celebrate some of the country's most outstanding apprenticeship employers and will assist potential apprentices, parents and careers advisers to identify the best apprenticeship opportunities with the highest performing apprentice employers in England.

These new rankings have been developed in partnership with High Fliers Research, who will independently assess and compile the new national leader board of top apprenticeship employers.

Apprenticeship employers in every industry and employment sector – from accountancy, fashion and law, to teaching, nursing and engineering – are invited to enter for the rankings. Entries for 2020 are open from today, with the results to be announced in the summer.

There are two apprenticeship employer categories for the 2020 rankings:

- Large employers – for organisations with 250 employees or more, that employ a minimum of 25 apprentices
- SME employers – for organisations with fewer than 250 employees that employ a minimum of 5 apprentices

The deadline for employers to submit entries is 5pm on Thursday 9th April. A follow-up telephone interview with each entrant will take place.

The employer data will then be independently verified and employers with the highest scores will be ranked. The final rankings will be announced this summer.

Employers can find out more by visiting [www.topapprenticeshipemployers.co.uk](http://www.topapprenticeshipemployers.co.uk)

# Research and Consultations

## Health & Science and Care Services route reviews

Due to recent events related to Covid-19, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education announced that the next route reviews would be Health & Science and Care Services with an expected launch date of Summer 2020. Due to the unforeseen circumstances that the Coronavirus has presented, and the impact of this review on key sectors, the IfATE took the decision to delay the launch of these Reviews until further notice. This will ensure they can engage effectively with those in the sectors delivering the apprenticeships. Further information will be made available in due course.

## Learner Satisfaction Survey 2020/21

In light of the current pandemic, the Department for Education will cease all research activity with immediate effect.

The DfE is looking to pick up the Learner Satisfaction Survey in 20/21, which will enable the sector to prioritise

effectively without any additional demands in such unprecedented times. The department is still working on the practicalities and will inform providers as soon as possible.

# Events



The banner features a blue and purple gradient background. On the left, there is a logo for 'AELP | 2020 conferences' consisting of three overlapping circles in shades of blue and purple. To its right is the 'NATIONAL CONFERENCE' logo, which includes a stylized rose icon. Below these logos is the tagline 'Levelling up skills' written in a cursive font. The main text in the center reads 'MONDAY & TUESDAY', 'OCTOBER 19 & 20', and 'NOVOTEL LONDON WEST' in large, bold, white capital letters. On the right side, there is an image of a smartphone displaying the conference information and a white conference badge with the same branding. At the bottom, there are four navigation arrows (three grey, one white) pointing right, followed by a prominent pink button with the text 'BOOK NOW!' in white capital letters.

**AELP | 2020**  
conferences

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**THE AELP NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2020 WILL CONSIDER WHETHER WE ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK IN RESPECT OF REFORMS TO APPRENTICESHIPS, TRAINEESHIPS, ADULT EDUCATION, ENGLISH AND MATHS, AND OTHER PROVISIONS.**

An excellent range of workshops, in addition to top-level representation on the plenary sessions, makes AELP National Conference 2020 another event that you cannot afford to miss!

## DELEGATE FEES

We are offering an **Early Bird Discount of 20%** off all delegate places booked before 5pm on Wednesday 29 April 2020.

**Full AELP Members are entitled to one complimentary place** for both days and with two days of networking, attendance at the AELP National Conference offers great value to AELP members and other stakeholders. Full Members taking advantage of their complimentary place may choose to book a different delegate for the second day. This has been incorporated into the booking journey.

Further details of our rates are available on the conference [website](#), including Associate Member Rates, and Non-Member Rates.

**BOOK NOW!**

aelp | member events



### AELP Member Exclusive Meetings

### Upcoming Sector Forums

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All face to face members meeting have been postponed but that we are currently reviewing alternative ways of delivering sector updates on-line and more information will be issued in due course.

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### Upcoming #aelpwebinars

aelp | webinars

#### Managing Prior Learning Effectively

Wednesday, 25 March 10.30 - 11.30 am GMT

The funding rules on prior learning need to be understood and managed in context by every training provider. The rules are not black and white so we will look at the different interpretations.

**Register »**

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**CEO Member Update**

Friday, 27 March, 10.00-11.00 am GMT

A **complimentary** update for members from AELP's Chief Executive Officer on key issues arising over the past month. This month's update will comprise updates on:

- ✓ Budget and Spending Round 2020
- ✓ New ministerial team and special advisors
- ✓ Apprenticeship reforms
- ✓ Subcontracting consultation
- ✓ IfATE funding bands consultation
- ✓ Devolution update
- ✓ Response to spread of coronavirus

[Register »](#)

[2020 Sponsorship Enquiry »»](#)

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**Succeeding at your short Ofsted monitoring visit for new providers under the EIF**

How to succeed at your first Ofsted monitoring visit as a new provider on ROATP

Tuesday, 31 March 10.30 - 11.30 am GMT

This webinar will examine the mechanics of an Ofsted short monitoring visit for new providers who have never previously been inspected. We will do this in the context of the Education Inspection Framework (EIF), introduced by Ofsted in September 2019. We will focus on the key 'game changers' that will dictate the judgements made about the progress you are making against each of the three/four mandatory themes that make up these inspections.

[Register »](#)

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**Managing the Mental Health of Your Home-Working Staff**

Keeping Your Staff's Well-Being Strong During Challenging Times

Wednesday, 1 April 10.30 - 11.30 am BST

With so many staff now having to work from home through the coronavirus pandemic, many people will suffer the psychological consequences of being away from their workplace. Social isolation, a lack of workplace routines and a loss of collective purpose can all have a detrimental effect on your staff's mental health. This webinar will offer a 5-angled model of positive mental health, to enable you to focus on managing your team's well-being remotely.

**Register »**

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**Preparing for closure of legacy Functional Skills qualifications**

Thursday, 2 April 10.30 - 11.30 am GMT

As we approach the closure of the legacy Functional Skills in maths and English at all levels it is important that centres ensure that they have arrangements in place that will minimise the disruption to learner's completion and certification. This webinar will provide all the necessary information to support a successful transition.

**Register »**

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**Chief Executive Officer's COVID-19 Weekly Member Update**

Friday, 3 April 10.00 - 11.00 am BST

An update from AELP's Chief Executive, Mark Dawe about COVID-19.

[Register your interest »](#)

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## Devolution Update

Wednesday, 29 April 10.30 - 11.30 am GMT

As we have passed the mid-year point for 2019/20 delivery of the devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB), this webinar will provide an outline of performance by area for each combined authority.

We will also look at future opportunities in the areas including progress known at this time on the North of Tyne Combined Authority's AEB Procurement and early thinking on devolution for the Sheffield City Region.

Also included will be a look at future skills devolution.

**Register »**

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## Webinar Recordings on Demand

- [Monthly CEO Member Updates](#)
  - [Skills hidden in plain sight: An approach to engaging employers in productive work-based learning](#)
  - [Visual Learning approaches](#)
  - [The Employer Provider for NHS members](#)
  - [Safeguarding in a Digital World](#)
  - [Ofsted Nominee Training](#)
  - [Monitoring and evaluating the learner journey](#)
  - [The Education Inspection Framework and SEND learners - improving the quality of your provision](#)
  - [Effective Corporate Governance in relation to the EIF](#)
  - [Developing Life Skills and Mental Toughness and why that matters](#)
  - [Weekly CEO's COVID-19 Member Update](#)
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## AELP Events & Webinars Calendar



Please [click here](#) to subscribe to the events mailing list

## MARCH

**25 Mar** Webinar [Managing Prior Learning Effectively](#) £69 Online »

**27 Mar** Webinar [CEO Member Update](#) £0 Online »

**31 Mar** Webinar [Succeeding at your short Ofsted inspection under the new Education Inspection Framework](#) £69 Online »

## APRIL

- 01 Apr Webinar [Managing the Mental Health of Your Home-Working Staff](#) £69 Online »
- 02 Apr Webinar [Preparing for closure of legacy Functional Skills qualifications](#) £69 Online »
- 03 Apr Webinar [Chief Executive Officer's COVID-19 Weekly Member Update](#) £69 Online »
- 07 Apr Webinar [T Levels Update](#) £69 Online »
- 09 Apr Webinar [Subcontracting Update](#) £69 Online »
- 15 Apr Webinar [Tendering 101](#) £69 Online »
- 16 Apr Webinar [Safeguarding- the role of the DSL](#) £69 Online »
- 23 Apr Webinar [CEO Monthly Update member exclusive](#) £0 Online »
- 29 Apr Webinar [Devolution Update](#) £69 Online »
- 30 Apr Webinar [Succeeding at your full Ofsted inspection under the new EIF](#) £69 Online »

## MAY

- 07 May Webinar [Powerpoint Skills](#) £69 Online »
- 21 May Webinar [CEO Monthly Update member exclusive](#) £0 Online »





### AELP Member Exclusive Meetings

## MARCH

- 25 Mar Special Interest Group Higher and Degree Level (London) » **POSTPONED**

## APRIL

- 08 April Sector Forum [Land Based](#) (Warwickshire) » **POSTPONED**
- 15 April Sector Forum [Health, Social Care and Early Years](#) (Sheffield) » **POSTPONED**
- 16 April Sector Forum [Digital and IT](#) (Manchester) » **POSTPONED**
- 22 April Sector Forum [Financial , Accountancy and Legal](#) (London) » **POSTPONED**

## MAY

- 20 May Sector Forum [Hair and Beauty Online](#) »

These events are complimentary for AELP members to attend.

If any organisations are interested in Sponsorship of our SIG and Sector Forum groups please contact [gbuttironi@aelp.org.uk](mailto:gbuttironi@aelp.org.uk) (SIGs) and [cswales@aelp.org.uk](mailto:cswales@aelp.org.uk) (Sector Forums).

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