

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

Issue 975, 29 May 2020

I am sure you will all know the news by now – after over 4 years I am leaving AELP. Firstly thank you to so many people who have sent me messages over the past 24 hours – very kind words all round. I should start by repeating the statement I made yesterday because it really captures everything:

“While I leave behind a great dedicated team and many incredible members at AELP, it certainly isn’t goodbye, and the memories will last for a lifetime! Indeed there is still much for AELP and me as CEO to do for the next three months. I am obviously very pleased to remain actively involved with AELP as a member and to participate in the new policy group.”

“It has been a fantastic journey for AELP and its members during a period for me that started a year before the apprenticeship levy’s introduction, has included many challenges whether they be AEB procurement, apprenticeships standards and assessment development, non-levy funding, or through to the battle for survival during the Covid crisis.

“There is never an easy time to leave a role like this but the opportunity to be part of the transformation of education delivery was too much to resist. I want to thank the AELP chairman, Martin Dunford, the AELP Board, the amazing AELP team, its members and stakeholders who have all supported AELP throughout the time I have been CEO, through a period of total transformation, and they have all made AELP what it is today. AELP has established the importance of apprenticeships, work based learning and independent training providers at the heart of employers and government thinking, although we will never have to stop reminding them of that!”

[The full press release is here.](#)

I can’t emphasise enough what an amazing sector and membership it has been to represent. It has been wonderful to be part of growing strength of AELP is its members, while not forgetting the challenges ITPs in particular face in the FE sector, somewhat highlighted over the past couple of months. The team we now have are fantastic and I have no worries about AELP continuing to go from strength to strength under the leadership of Jane supported by an amazing board and Simon whose “AskAshworth” has positioned him as the font of all knowledge and guidance relating to such a diverse sector. Indeed the AELP board really does reflect the diversity of size, types of delivery and different organisations in the FE sectors delivery chain. The Board’s decision to get even more involved in the policy work during this incredibly challenging period is a real credit to them and I look forward to still supporting them.



During the next three months as CEO, we will have dealt with the early challenges of Covid and the battles to get appropriate support and flexibilities for the sector (more below). And believe me, I won't stop fighting for what our membership deserves and needs. But from the summer we will be moving into a new phase of ensuring apprenticeships get the support they need, programmes are in place to support the unemployed and the displaced and we tackle the skills challenge as recognised by the Prime Minister yesterday. You will see from the press coverage ([FE week](#) and [TES](#)) that [the response from the DfE to our legal advice was limited](#) and didn't really answer the challenges made. The Labour Party has come fully behind AELP to support the case for supporting levy apprenticeships, with Rebecca Long-Bailey and Toby Perkins writing [an excellent letter](#) to the Secretary of State and Skills Minister. They didn't pull any punches and I look forward to seeing the DfE response and action.

The one area that is left other than the levy apprenticeships is study programmes. We have had further assurances that this is likely to be resolved very soon, so let's hope for an announcement that provides the support that is desperately needed for those learners who are some of the most vulnerable in the FE sector. I know we say it every week but it does feel like we are edging towards a resolution.

We are still seeing the flow of flexibilities come from the department and various agencies – and AELP continue to push for the full list we have had from day 1 of this crisis. We have been involved in so many meetings with so many agencies and the Department – always constructive, generally understood, but getting formal agreement is the real challenge. The EPA/functional skills sequencing flexibility was one of our earliest requests – great to see it finally come through, frustrating that it has taken so long.

PM's Liaison Committee Session

We are definitely moving into the future planning now (and the future feels like it is upon us already!). As we see lockdown lift slowly, as we see furlough being wound down we will face the true impact of the Covid crisis on our economy and especially on employment and skills. A great Prime Minister session yesterday, where the big fan of social justice and apprenticeships, Robert Halfon, got a commitment to the importance of apprenticeships particular for 16 – 25 year olds recognising the skills deficit in the country from the Prime Minister.

<https://www.tes.com/news/coronavirus-pm-i-will-look-apprenticeship-guarantee>

The PM "totally agreed" that apprenticeships would play a "huge part in getting people back on to the jobs market and getting them into work and we will look at anything to help people".

"We will be doing absolutely everything we can to get people back into jobs and I will look at the idea of an apprenticeship guarantee. It's something that we would have to work with employers to deliver and we would have to think of the funding for that."

Stephen Timms, chair of the Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee, pointed towards the future jobs fund. He asked if the prime minister agreed that "pretty radical measures" would be needed to tackle unemployment among young people.

Mr Johnson said: "That's why Rob's [Mr Halfon] idea of the apprenticeship guarantee is so attractive, because what we have done is put our arms around every worker and helped them keep their job but businesses may need support in the coming months as they get back on their feet in taking people on and we will need to think about how to help them.

"At the same time, let's face it, this country does have a skills deficit, we do have a productivity gap still and this might be the moment when we really start to try to tackle that and use this crisis to address some of these issues.

"I can assure you the chancellor and I and everyone are looking at this stuff every closely and wanting to come forward June, early July with much about how we get employment again and get the economy started."

You can't ask for a bigger commitment than that from the top. We have had really positive feedback from the Department, combined authorities and other agencies and organisations about our paper looking at the needs for employment, displaced and upskilling. [The paper is available here](#). It is already providing a great foundation for discussions about the future.

Priorities for Phase Two

So to be clear there are a number of things we are now focussing on as we move out of what I have called “phase 1” in the past. Here is a summary of the key ones:

- Getting the flexibilities agreed that ensure apprentices and other learners can continue and support new starts across all programmes as much as possible in what we know are going to be challenging times – especially for apprenticeship starts in so many sectors.
- Working on incentives and support to ensure there are more starts on these programmes wherever possible – both for young people and adults.
- Looking at what flexibilities and new ways of delivering have been introduced during the crisis and determining which ones should actually stay permanently in what will be the new normal
- Working with the government on boosting existing programmes (traineeships for example) as well as looking at new programmes to deal with the new challenges the inevitable recession and repositioning of the employment market will throw at us.

We are seeing great engagement with the Department and other agencies on these areas and once again it reflects the standing of AELP and its members with officials.

That’s it for now - Countdown 975. Plenty more from me over the next couple of months but sadly won’t be doing the intro for Countdown 1000 – so close! But, as I have said, The Skills Network are, and will remain, an active member of AELP, and I look forward to continuing to work with everyone in the future, but just with a different hat on!

Mark Dawe | Chief Executive | AELP

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Policy

New end-point assessment flexibility for calculated functional skills qualifications

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education is supporting a new temporary flexibility that will enable apprentices to take end point assessment (EPA) ahead of receiving their calculated functional skills qualifications (FSQ) later on in the summer.

With immediate effect as of 22 May 2020 and during the Covid-19 crisis, the IfATE is permitting the resequencing of the EPA process to enable gateway to be passed and EPA to be taken before the FSQ calculated result is received.

This will apply to:

- all apprentices due to take an FSQ test and receive a result between 20 March and 31 July;
- those apprentices that are deemed by their training provider to have the required level of functional skills and sufficient evidence to demonstrate this to receive a calculated FSQ pass;
- occupationally competent apprentices at gateway who are ready to progress to sit their EPA.

This change to the EPA process will only be applied to qualifying apprentices during the Covid-19 crisis. This measure will ensure that apprentices can continue with their apprenticeship and sit their EPA where possible. Apprentices will not be able to achieve their apprenticeship until after the FSQ pass is received and the apprenticeship certificate can be issued.

DfE Reminder: all new learners should be on apprenticeship standards from 1 August 2020

The DfE has reminded providers that all remaining apprenticeship frameworks will be withdrawn to new starts on 31 July 2020.

A full list of available standards can be viewed on the Institute for Apprenticeship and Technical Education's website. The DfE strongly encouraged providers to continue their preparations to deliver standards from 1 August, including working with employers to understand which apprenticeship standards are most suited to the occupational roles they need to fill at this time.

A variety of resources are available including:

- [resources and guidance](#) to support providers to prepare to deliver standards are available via the Future Apprenticeships offer on the Education and Training Foundation's website
- [a blog which contains case studies from employers](#) about standards they are using to meet their needs, including where there is not a direct standard replacement for a previous framework
- an ESFA webinar that provides support and guidance on how to prepare to deliver standards, including a case study from a provider that has already made the transition

ESFA launches European Social Fund provider relief scheme

The ESFA has launched an advance payment scheme, which requires European Social Fund (ESF) contractors to repay all advance payments received. Each contract will have a repayment plan commencing in October 2020.

To be eligible to receive funding from the scheme, the provider must have an ESFA ESF contract that commenced on or after 1 April 2019. Part 1 of the application will identify at an organisational level if they have a financial need to access the scheme. The provider must pass Part 1 of the application process.

In addition, applicants intending to seek support from this scheme must also meet the following requirements:

- Have delivered under the relevant contract during the 6 months ending March 2020 and submitted ILR/Supplementary data (where appropriate), in respect of this delivery
- Plan to deliver education, training and support under the contract during April, May and June 2020
- Have not furloughed the staff required to deliver the contract. However, the provider is eligible to apply to the scheme if it is their intention to take those staff off furlough to deliver the contract for the period in which they are applying for relief

Please note, government guidance states that when a furloughed employee returns to work, they must be taken off furlough. For the purposes of the scheme this means that any employee who will be involved in the delivery of the contract, must be withdrawn from any claim for furlough when they return to work. All employees engaged in the delivery of the contract covered by the scheme must be paid by the provider in accordance with their agreed contract of employment.

The ESFA reserve the right to check the provider's records submitted to HMRC to ensure no double funding is taking place. Where there is evidence of double funding, the ESFA will recover any funding paid under this scheme.

- Your eligible contract for services with the ESFA is not under notice of termination
- You will continue to submit claims for delivery through ILR and Supplementary data (where appropriate), throughout the period covered by the scheme

[You can read more about the scheme here.](#)

Guidance on keeping staff and learners safe

The country is now in the early stages of beginning to think about what is being called “the new normal” – the way that social and working practices will have to be conducted in an age where a vaccine or treatment for Covid-19 is either not widely available, or not available at all.

AELP has set up this page to give members a signpost to where they can find information that will help them to think about how their businesses will or can operate in the post-pandemic world. It gives links to guidance issued during the pandemic which can serve as the basis for all current actions and from which subsequent operations can be derived.

Content will be added to and reviewed regularly in line with guidance, but providers and others must come to their own decisions about which advice to follow and when.

[You can visit the page here.](#)

Guidance on supporting young people with SEND as colleges prepare for wider opening

The Department for Education published guidance on supporting young people with SEND as educational institutions prepare for reopening next week. It urges people to make sure that learners with EHCs should not experience any significant difference from their attendance compared to non-EHC learners, as well as ensuring your assessments should be appropriately updated.

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

Information: update on the subcontracting consultation

The publication of the government response to the [subcontracting consultation](#) that was held earlier this year will now be published in June, rather than at the end of May as originally planned.

Responses to the consultation were allowed up to the end of March, which was two weeks after the official closing date of 17 March 2020. This short extension was in recognition of the fact that at that time providers were urgently addressing issues relating to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Research and Consultations

AELP / UFI “SECTOR SHARE” – The place to go for online sector resources

With the current national emergency surrounding Covid-19 it has become an urgent imperative for teachers and trainers to make full use of digital resources to mitigate the current disruption to the learner journey as much as possible. AELP, working in partnership with Ufi, are looking to identify as many such resources as possible, presenting them for use by providers and employers, in an easily navigable web-based portal that is free to use across the sector...hence the name #SectorShare!

We will be adding additional information about each resource, so as well as links to resources that have been recommended by our members, you will find short descriptions, pricing, testimonials so you can quickly decide, at a glance, whether or not it will be useful to your own staff and learners, saving you valuable research time and money.

The site will be initially grouped by:

- Industrial sector (based on our current sector forum groups)
- A dedicated Maths and English section
- “Soft” transferable employability skills
- On-line platforms – functionality, pros and cons of each
- SEND and Assistive technology
- Safeguarding

This is not exhaustive, as the site will be developed over time and the more resources we add, the more outputs and functionality the site will gain.

An interim site is now available on the AELP website on [this link](#) (under the Resources and Information tab on the homepage) and the dedicated bespoke site will go live over the next few weeks.

We are looking to draw upon the expertise of our membership base and would very much welcome hearing from you about the resources and platforms you are currently using for your online learning. You might have also identified some gaps – tell us about those too and we’ll hopefully be able to help!

If you would like to contribute, please email resources@sectorshare.org.uk to arrange a suitable time to discuss this further.

West Yorkshire Devolution Consultation

In March 2020, West Yorkshire's council leaders secured a £1.8 billion-plus devolution deal for West Yorkshire, which will see more decisions about the region taken here instead of London and more investment for the things that matter to local people.

A public consultation is being held from 25 May to 19 July on the devolution deal and proposals for a directly elected mayor. You can respond in the following ways:

- Through the online survey at yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/WYdevolution
- By email to wyconsultation@ipsos-mori.com
- By calling the freephone telephone number 0800 141 3657
- By post using the freepost address: Freepost WY Devolution Consultation (no stamp needed)

[You can read more about devolution in West Yorkshire here.](#)

Ofqual response to the consultation on exceptional arrangements on awarding VTQs

Ofqual consulted from 24 April to 8 May on proposals for exceptional arrangements to award vocational and technical qualifications that could not be taken in the spring and summer of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The plans for awarding VTQs in 2020 include the following:

- providing a temporary extraordinary regulation framework for VTQs (known as the VTQ Covid-19 Framework) that sets out how awarding organisations (AOs) should calculate results, adapt or delay assessments.
- allow AOs to direct colleges and training providers on what evidence they should gather, consider, and submit when they calculate a grade.
- allow AOs to clarify which learners should receive a calculated result – and how it should be awarded – or be required to complete an assessment.
- allow AOs to access, adapt, or build the systems needed to issue results in the summer and adapt assessments where necessary

[Ofqual agreed to adopt the policy approach outlined in the consultation proposals](#), as well as taking into account feedback by providing [additional guidance](#) and strengthened requirements. It will also apply different approaches to different categories of qualifications, providing calculated results for progression to further education and adapted assessment to signal occupational competence where possible.

The Extraordinary Regulatory Framework governing these temporary arrangements, which came into effect on 22 May 2020, will also:

- incorporate further guidance and greater clarification for our expectations of how AOs manage equalities matters
- require AOs to take all reasonable steps to make autumn assessment opportunity available
- include further guidance on appeals – aligning to GCSE/A level approach where appropriate
- include statutory guidance regarding malpractice.

[You can read more about Ofqual's response here.](#)

IfATE consultation on changes to funding recommendation

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education is consulting on the process for how it recommends funding bands.

The consultation sets out a proposed core model and seeks views on two options for addressing differences in costs of teaching and consumables. The consultation is accompanied by an interim impact assessment of the current model and its options. The Institute has also published the Cost of Delivering Apprenticeship Standards report on its website.

[You can find AELP's response of the consultation here.](#)

Events

Vacancy: Chair of the Higher Level and Degree Apprenticeships Special Interest Group (SIG)

Val Braybrooks and David Willett have decided to step down as co-chairs of the Higher Level and Degree Apprenticeship SIG. AELP thanks Val and David for their contributions and impact in leading the conversation and developing an area, which is crucial for a growing number of our members.

This means that there are now up to two vacancies for the position of chair of the Higher Level and Degree Apprenticeship SIG. If you are interested in the opportunity, you can send an [application form](#) to gbuttironi@aelp.org.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.

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AELP Member Exclusive Meetings

Upcoming Sector Forums

All sector forum meetings are now being held on-line via GoTo Meeting or GoTo Webinar. See dates and booking info for future sector based webinars at the bottom of Countdown.

To register please email memberevents@aelp.org.uk or for any further information regarding any of our sector groups please email cswales@aelp.org.uk

Upcoming #aelpwebinars



In Conversation with Ofsted and Ask an Inspector

Friday, 29 May 2.00 - 3.00 pm BST

An opportunity for AELP members hear directly from Ofsted on their latest position during Covid-19 and latest thinking in regard to inspection and monitoring work along with the opportunity to ask questions about inspection and monitoring visit related topics.



[Register »](#)

Understanding the different forms of assessment involved in EPA

Tuesday, 2 June 10.30 - 11.30 am BST

End Point Assessment (EPA) is a very different approach to check the competency of learners across a range of knowledge, skills and behaviours considered essential for the role they aspire towards.

This webinar will look at the core components of EPA across the range of assessment methods and consider the factors that need to be taken into account when supporting learner preparation.

Content will cover what EPA methods are commonly being used; how to establish the methods that learners will need to prepare for, and the core expectations and; best practice in preparing learners for EPA.

[Register »](#)

Understanding Quality of Education

Wednesday, 3 June 10.30 - 11.30 am BST

This webinar will examine in detail exactly what each of these terms – curriculum intent, implementation and impact – really mean within the context of work-based learning. In doing so, we will endeavour to demystify the terminology around what are, to a large extent, some quite simple and straightforward concepts, many of which are not new within the world of education or inspection. We shall look at the interrelationship between each of them and exactly what inspectors are trying to get to the bottom of when evaluating your curriculum intent, its implementation and its impact on your learners.

We will look at what activities inspectors will carry out in respect of each of them and what questions they are likely to ask your managers, teachers, trainers, assessors, learners and employers. You will also gain a greater understanding of how 'deep dives' into curriculum areas are conducted.

[Register »](#)

Emerging good practice in the operational implementation of Prevent & the Statutory Duty

Thursday, 4 June 10.30 - 11.30 am BST

The webinar will focus on emerging good practice in the operational implementation of the Prevent Duty, with specific reference to the environmental challenges faced by training providers of all types, sizes & geographical coverage.

[Register »](#)

Praise and Feedback to Improve Performance in Learning Sessions

Tuesday, 9 June 10.30 - 11.30 am BST

This webinar is designed to help tutors develop their understanding of the importance of praise and feedback to achieve good and better learning outcomes. This includes one to one and group sessions.

[Register »](#)

Fast track – assessor to Trainer – Key skills and strategies to getting started.

Wednesday, 10 June 10.30 - 11.30 am BST

This webinar will look at the core components of EPA, needing to be taken into account when supporting learner skill development, throughout their programme; and the different approaches that will be needed to support learners in achieving successful EPA outcomes.

Content will cover what EPA means in terms of final assessment and how the information can be used to inform the required apprentice development; the different approaches and skills that will be needed when supporting learners on programme; and how to check when learners are ready for EPA.

[Register »](#)

Webinar Recordings on Demand

- Monthly CEO Member Updates
- Reasonable adjustments and learners with SEND
- Skills hidden in plain sight: An approach to engaging employers in productive work-based learning
- Preparing for closure of legacy Functional Skills qualifications
- Rapid tech deployment for remote apprenticeship delivery: part 1, your checklist
- Rapid tech deployment for remote apprenticeship delivery: part 2, deep dive follow up
- Managing the Mental Health of Your Home-Working Staff
- Visual Learning approaches
- Safeguarding in a Digital World
- Ofsted Nominee Training
- T Levels Update
- Subcontracting – all you need to know
- Reasonable adjustments and learners with SEND
- 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
- Managing Prior Learning
- Safeguarding and the preventing radicalisation
- The Initial Assessment All Teachers and Trainer should be doing
- Keeping Apprentices engaged
- Tendering 101 – How to identify and tender for the right opportunities
- Mental Health and developing Resilience
- Weekly CEO's COVID-19 Member Update
- Blended Learning Strategy – Part 1
- Adapt and future proof your apprenticeship delivery

- Learner Experience Design; virtual classrooms to creating content
- Effectively implementing the Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Creating a winning Study Programme offer and curriculum
- The F Word: Let's Talk About It
- Motivating yourself and others
- Covid 19 Webinar - Returning to work in the time of coronavirus
- Essential Digital Skills: Understanding the requirements for delivery
- How to make sure you are running great apprenticeship provision

[Register for recordings »](#)

[Suggest a topic »»](#)

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AELP Events & Webinars Calendar



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

MAY

29 May Webinar In [Conversation with Ofsted and Ask an Inspector](#) £0 Online »

JUNE

02 June Webinar [Understanding the different forms of assessment involved in EPA](#) £49 Online »

03 June Webinar [Understanding Quality of Education](#) £49 Online »

04 June Webinar [Emerging good practice in the operational implementation of Prevent & the Statutory Duty](#) £49 Online »

05 June Webinar [Chief Executive Officer's COVID-19 Weekly Member Update](#) £0 Online »

09 June Webinar [Praise and Feedback to Improve Performance in Learning Sessions](#) £49 Online »

10 June Webinar [Fast track – assessor to Trainer – Key skills and strategies to getting started](#) £49 Online »

12 June Webinar [Chief Executive Officer's COVID-19 Weekly Member Update](#) £0 Online »

16 June Webinar [Positive approaches to teaching and learning](#) £49 Online »

16 June Webinar [Designing & delivering effective Virtual Classroom \(Webinar\) learning sessions - Part 2](#) £49 Online »

17 June Webinar [Blended Learning Strategy Part 2 – Online Content Strategy and Quality Assurance](#) £49 Online »

18 June Webinar [Building personal resilience through change](#) £49 Online »

19 June Webinar [Chief Executive Officer's COVID-19 Weekly Member Update](#) £0 Online »

23 June Webinar [Functional Skills in Maths and English hints and tips and best practice](#) £49 Online »

24 June Webinar [Understanding data](#) £49 Online »

24 June Webinar [Keeping Apprentices Engaged...and Funded](#) £49 Online »

26 June Webinar [Chief Executive Officer's COVID-19 Weekly Member Update](#) £0 Online »

30 June Webinar [SMART target setting](#) £49 Online »

JULY

- 02 July Webinar [Getting Tender Ready](#) £49 Online »
- 07 July Webinar [Support in the effective delivery of the new functional skills](#) - English £49 Online »
- 09 July Webinar [Creative Assessment Methods for Learning Sessions.](#) £49 Online »
- 14 July Webinar [Support in the effective delivery of the new functional skills](#) - Maths £49 Online »
- 15 July Webinar [Blended Learning Strategy - Part 3](#) £49 Online »
- 21 July Webinar [Developing Mentoring Skills](#) £49 Online »
- 28 July Webinar [OTL Strategy](#) £49 Online »

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AELP Member Exclusive Meetings

JUNE / JULY

The following groups were already scheduled to be held via webinar and will be going ahead as planned:

- 01 June [Foundation Special Interest Group](#) Online »
- 03 June [Engineering, Manufacturing and Automotive](#) Online »
- 08 June [Logistics and Transport](#) Online »
- 17 June [Construction](#) Online »
- 24 June [Business Services and Management](#) Online »

- 01 July [Hospitality and Catering](#) Online »
- 02 July [Land Based](#) Online »
- 06 July [Financial, Accountancy and Legal](#) Online »
- 08 July [Health, Social Care and Early Years](#) Online »
- 15 July [Digital and IT](#) 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 (SIGs) and cswales@aelp.org.uk (Sector Forums).

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