



Association of  
Employment and Learning  
Providers

# **AELP Submission: #88**

## **Tackling the Barriers and Turbocharging Traineeships**

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## Tackling the Barriers and Turbocharging Traineeships

### AELP recommendations:

1. **Turbocharge growth funding** – Revamp the current approach to growth. The process needs to be much more constant and fluid (rather than fixed windows or lagged) and be able to respond to demand by participants and employers.
2. **Standardise the offer** – Currently traineeships unhelpfully operate under two separate funding streams which is a legacy from EFA/SFA days. This is a barrier and adds complexity. Our recommendation is that if a provider has an existing direct contract for adult traineeships they should be allowed to deliver traineeships to young people and vice versa arrangements.
3. **Relax eligibility criteria** – Allowing flexibilities to offer traineeships to be offered to learners with an existing level 3 qualification, but **only** if extra funding is made available to cover this and this does not displace or to the detriment of priority learners without an existing level 3 qualification.
4. **Publicity campaign** - A campaign for more public support and backing from Government about the value and role for Traineeships in the FE system.
5. **Tell providers about the new success measures** - Publicise the revised success measures which have forced many providers to shy away from the programme
6. **Allow more providers direct access** - More engagement and access to direct funding for Traineeship subcontractors who are being stifled by funding routed through prime providers and new subcontracting rules.
7. **Incentives for SMEs** – Consider an incentive payment for SMEs who take a trainee on a work placement and then subsequently employ them for a sustained period.
8. **Flexibilities to work placements** – Waive the current funding rule to identify the work placement “within 4 weeks of programme start.” Consider alternative arrangements or definitions for work placements to widen the scope, such as volunteering or a simulated environment – whilst ensure the ‘work placement’ aspect is still robust, meaningful and worthwhile.
9. **Programme duration** – Consider flexing the current 6-week minimum duration period, allowing a “fast-track” route to allow learners a shorter intervention and quickly progress into a positive destination.
10. **Carry-over unused funding from FY19-20 to FY20-21** – Allow a degree of transitional protection of contract values due to a Covid-19 to support confidence for providers to continue to deliver from actual position in terms of capacity and infrastructure, not an artificial one created by Covid-19. Providers would then get caught in the growth cycle as start to ramp back up to a steady state and offer the growth on top.

### **Barriers identified inhibiting participation and success**

#### *Barriers for Providers:*

- A key challenge still resonates around the need for flexibility of the current funding system on which Traineeships is based. This includes accessing more timely growth and navigating between different rules and funding requirements for traineeships for young people and adults.
- The need to address the ongoing perverse measures of the ESFA which penalise providers through their QAR data even when trainees are progressing into outcomes as defined as programme goals, such as employment, an apprenticeship or further education/training. Although these have reworked with the Traineeship Advisory Group the actual new measures have yet to be published in the ESFA Business Rules so no-one knows about them or can refer to them...

- Traineeships used to share the platform with Apprenticeships as the government's flagship Skills programmes. Publicity and public support for the programme has dwindled dramatically. All the focus has been on Apprenticeships and now T-Levels. Since 2017 the number of providers has grown, but many will not even be aware of Traineeships.

#### *Barriers for Learners:*

- There is low awareness of Traineeships amongst young people, with starts also highly dependent on referrals from providers or Jobcentre Plus (JCP).
- Referrals from Jobcentre Plus are limited and issues still remain in regards being on a Traineeship impacting unemployed learners' benefits linked to the "16-hour rule."

#### *Barriers for Employers:*

- For employers, the case study of Halfords was provided at the event where Halfords had pulled out of the programme after bad publicity and PR relating to offering unpaid, but high quality and valuable work experience – a valid point which was also raised was this concern is just as valid as for the new work placements on T-Levels.
- There is low awareness too amongst employers and providers can then find engaging employers difficult, ultimately a challenge around low brand awareness.

### **Background**

In August 2013, the government introduced Traineeships for 16 to 24 year-olds in England. Traineeships are designed to enable learners to progress rapidly to employment, an Apprenticeship or progressing into further education. Traineeships are comprised of three mandatory components:

- A work placement,
- English and maths,
- Work preparation training

Lasting up to 6 months (extended due to Covid-19 to 12 months), traineeships are designed help young people who want to get an apprenticeship or job but don't yet have appropriate skills or experience. Who are traineeships for? The target group for traineeships are learners who are:

- Aged 16-24.
- Who are not currently in a job and have little work experience, but who are focused on work or the prospect of it.
- Who are qualified below a full Level 3.
- Whom providers and employers believe have a reasonable chance of being ready for employment or an Apprenticeship within six months of engaging in a traineeship.

### **Performance data and trends**

The latest figures for the first two quarters of the 2019/20 academic year published in [April 2020](#) show that Traineeship starts have decreased to 8,400 from 8,800 starts reported at the equivalent point in 2018/19, a fall of 3.8%. Under 19s account for over four-fifths of traineeship starts (80% – 6,800 starts).

Traineeship completion rates: The completion rate for traineeships started between 2014/15 and 2018/19 has increased year-on-year. Traineeships that were started during the 2014/15 academic year saw a completion rate of 66.5%, rising to 79.1% of those started in 2017/18. Latest provisional figures for traineeships started during 2018/19 show a completion rate of 79.4%, though this will be an under-estimate since some completions will not yet have been recorded in the ILR at this point.



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