

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

Issue 980, 02 July 2020

As always when I write these first few words my intention is to keep this short and sharp. You never know but, after more than four years, I might finally get there.

The long-awaited response from DfE on subcontracting came out this week with a clear desire to have more visibility and control, only supporting good quality subcontracting and reducing the volume over a period of three years. Our message hasn't changed really – the best way to reduce subcontracting is to procure more of the AEB directly to those that actually deliver. Broken funding systems lead to work arounds. And good quality – couldn't agree more. [AELP's simple guide](#) was published a long time ago about the expectations of a prime and subcontractor (including a capping of fees which they still shy away from!).

But to the main message this week – we are the main message! Skills, apprenticeships, traineeships, opportunity guarantee – we have the Prime Minister and the Chancellor talking about this as a key part of their messaging and fundamental part of the recovery plan – the PM's New Deal. And next week we expect the funding to follow up from the Chancellor.

First the Select committee, then Newsnight and the Sunday Times (very top of pages 2 and 3 in the business section):

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/coronavirus-leaves-under-25s-on-the-edge-52b08gmb3>

And the PM is now referring to an 'opportunity guarantee' for young people in the Mail and sounds very positive about apprenticeships and work placements. He talks about upskilling in work as well:

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8466783/Boris-pledges-billions-Britain-booming-says-bounce-forward-huge-revival-plan.html>

With more enquiries from the BBC and a range of other press outlets covering the story and approaching us, there is national interest and indeed support in putting the right level of investment to tackle the skills and unemployment challenge. AELP and its members have worked hard over the past few months, indeed the past few years to get to this position, so let's hope the Chancellor doesn't disappoint. Let's be clear, an apprenticeship guarantee for 16–24 year olds needs to be at least 50% of the apprenticeship minimum wage in the first year (roughly £4k) and, for those that go into a second year, 50% of the relevant minimum wage which would be up to £7,500 for a 24-year old on £8.20 an hour. There is no fudging this as anything less just won't have the impact and traineeship placement support probably has to be based around the apprenticeship minimum wage as well. This is where our cost of £3.6bn comes from. And let's not forget the £5bn of funding needed for the actual training. A rather important part of the jigsaw.



Robert Halfon continues to be a brilliant champion for skills, apprenticeships and the disadvantaged as demonstrated once again, this time on the Edge Webinar at the start of the week – thank you again Rob. There was a wonderful phrase he used about the need to blow away the “cobwebs of bureaucracy” in the IFATE and the ESFA. It reminds me of the FE Busting Bureaucracy Review led by Sir Andrew Foster before he did that other review – the review name escapes me at the moment. I sat on the review group with the great late Yorkshireman Frank McMahon – he certainly told it how it was. Anyway, I will never forget Sir Andrew’s line to us and indeed it could have been a one-line report. ‘The only way to get rid of bureaucracy is to get rid of bureaucrats. The more bureaucrats you have, they need to fill their time, justify their existence and prove their worth. The key way to achieve that is by creating bureaucracy that keeps them busy.’

I would like to emphasise this was Sir Andrew’s words, not mine. In actual fact, you will have seen on Friday we have a great new collaborative approach with the ESFA which is really exciting for AELP and its members. This is on top of great working with the other agencies and it feels like there is a real sea change in approach and attitude towards providers. In fact, we now have agreement that we will have a member webinar each month with each of ESFA, Ofsted, IfATE and Ofqual and then our usual monthly policy update. Not to be missed I would say!

Talking of Ofqual – congrats to Phil Beach on his new role – it has been great working with him and Ofqual have had a lot to do over this crisis. If, before he leaves, he could just sort out the extension of teacher assessed functional skills with month by month windows through to Christmas, and get the moratorium of new qualifications pushed back a year (currently right at the date when we will be looking to develop new quals for the unemployed) that would be swell. Phil is scheduled to speak at AELP’s online Business Recovery Conference on 9-10 September which is shaping up very nicely – see more below.

The Foster Review – that was the name – anyway as we enter into the latest in a series of FE reviews, I had a little read of Foster over the weekend (lockdown remember!). As well as a particular paragraph triggering the formation of the 157 group (now Collab – remember them?), it had some fairly sound findings – see how many you can tick off and how many are still relevant! <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5535/1/realising06.pdf>

I am not going to list the reviews before or since but start with this one and remind yourself what was said 15 years ago.

Let’s see what next week brings – everything crossed for once that the money follows the rhetoric.

Mark Dawe | Chief Executive | AELP

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Policy

“Build build build”: Prime Minister announces New Deal for Britain

Boris Johnson announced a “New Deal” putting jobs and infrastructure at the centre of his economic growth strategy. In a speech in Dudley, the Prime Minister underlined his commitment to ‘build, build, build’ in order to upgrade Britain’s infrastructure and skills to fuel economic recovery across the UK.

The Prime Minister announced £5bn of capital investment projects, supporting jobs and the economic recovery, including £560m and £200m for repairs and upgrades to schools and FE colleges to be respectively spent from 2020.

Recognising the crisis has driven job losses across the country, and many people are worried about their jobs and incomes, the Prime Minister announced action to support jobs and skills.

Johnson said:

“We will offer an Opportunity Guarantee so that every young person has the chance of apprenticeship or an in-work placement so that they maintain the skills and confidence they need to find the job that is right for them.”

In response, AELP chief executive Mark Dawe said:

“The fact that the Prime Minister sees work placements as a key part of a new opportunity guarantee for young people is an important step forward and we recently submitted at the government’s request what has been holding back the highly effective traineeship programme from taking off. We believe incentives for SME employers will be needed. On apprenticeships, we don’t believe that the floated £3k employer incentive is going to cut it. To meet a 50% wage subsidy, the subsidy for a young apprentice in their first year should be around £4k and up to £7.5k in second year depending on their age.”

While in the long-term the government must set a path to balance the books, the Prime Minister was clear that we will not do so at the expense of investing now in the productive potential of the economy, or at the expense of the resilience of the UK’s public services.

The Chancellor will provide an update on the economy next week.

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

ESFA publishes response to post-16 subcontracting consultation

On 30 June 2020, the ESFA published its response to the post-16 subcontracting consultation, which received significant interest and over 400 responses from across the sector. These are the key points to consider:

- The ESFA will require all providers to review their existing subcontracting activity and take steps to reduce it over the next 3 years to FY22-23. The ESFA will apply a cap on the volume of subcontracting and will take forward work this academic year with stakeholders to establish the right threshold for that cap and timescales for a staged reduction.
- Rationale for subcontracting – providers will need to publish this information for FY20-21. The ESFA expects it to be easy to navigate to from the front page of the organisation’s education and training web pages. The ESFA expects this information to be published by 31 October 2020.
- Subcontracting at distance – the ESFA will apply a differentiated approach in taking forward this proposal. From FY21-22, it will require prior approval for geographically distant 16-18 study programme provision.
- Capping provision – the ESFA will apply a cap on the volume of subcontracting and will take forward work this academic year to establish the right threshold for that cap and timescales for a staged reduction. The

ESFA will require all providers to produce a plan during the 2020 Autumn term setting out how they will achieve a reduction across this period. The ESFA will undertake a random sampling exercise of plans early in the 2021 calendar year.

- Whole programme subcontracting – by this the ESFA means where every element of each individual learner’s programme is delivered by the subcontractor. The ESFA will introduce the requirement for prior agreement for all 16-18 and AEB programmes that exceed a specified guided learning hours (GLH) duration, effective from FY21-22. Programmes below the GLH threshold will not require prior agreement.
- Volume controls on subcontractors – the ESFA will take steps to ensure large subcontractors are monitored and managed more effectively. It will reserve the right to convene a meeting with those directly funded providers that work with a large subcontractor, where it believes the risk to public funding to be too high, to consider what actions it might take jointly to mitigate the risk. The ESFA will monitor cases of rapid growth where a subcontractor is close to exceeding £3m threshold.
- Specialist provision – the ESFA will make this direct relationship between the specialist and the lead a requirement in FY21-22.
- Rationalising subcontracting rules – the ESFA will seek greater alignment of the rules and in FY21-22.
- Transparency in fees and charges – the ESFA will extend the requirement for providers to publish information about fees and charges retained to include 16-18 provision in FY21-22. It will expect providers to set out the full range of fees retained and charges that they apply including:
 - funding retained for quality assurance and oversight,
 - funding retained for administrative functions such as data returns,
 - funding retained for mandatory training delivered to subcontractor staff by the directly funded provider and any clawback for under-delivery or for other reasons.
- The ESFA reserves the right to challenge and potentially act with providers where they learn of cases where the funding retained exceeds 20% and offers little value.
- Subcontracting standard (kitemark) – the ESFA will develop a subcontracting standard for provider subcontracting across all funding streams, together with guidance, as well as the related assurance requirements and guidance, ready for the FY21-22 academic year.

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

Phil Beach to leave Ofqual in September 2020

Ofqual have announced that Phil Beach will be stepping down from his role as executive director for Vocational and Technical Qualifications to become chief executive of Energy & Utility Skills from September 2020.

South Yorkshire devolution deal unlocks new funding and powers

New powers and millions of pounds in new funding are coming to South Yorkshire this summer, as the region’s landmark devolution deal is agreed.

The order for the deal was laid in Parliament on 29 June, after letters of agreement were submitted by Sheffield City Region Mayor Dan Jarvis and council leaders in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The Deal will be approved in Parliament in the coming weeks with a statutory instrument being used to pass this into law. Following this, millions of pounds of funding will come to South Yorkshire.

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

Towns Fund

On 15 June 2020, the MHCLG launched further guidance aimed to enable towns to finalise their investment plans and work with MHCLG to agree their respective town deals.

It also sets out important information about interventions in scope, and the roles of different stakeholders in the process, and shows the path towards implementation of Town Deals.

1. The Secretary of State asked that we ensure Towns Fund gives a high priority to skills and, in particular, the role of FE sector providers in delivering those skills.
2. Skills Capital Projects are eligible for funding as an element of Towns Fund regeneration plans (Towns Deals).
3. Towns Boards will have started planning their proposals in November 2019, prior to the rapid change in context, economic outlook and the prospect of high levels of unemployment. Towns Boards may revisit and adapt their plans (list of project proposals) in the light of Covid 19 recovery priorities. This could increase the focus on skills initiatives which we would want to encourage.
4. Towns Fund is a separate fund from any other MHCLG Funds, Skills Capital or any FE Capital Funds. Towns Fund has its own criteria and decision-making processes.

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

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Guidance: End-Point Assessment Of Apprenticeship Standards

The IfATE has published updated guidance on how to approach decisions relating to end-point assessments (EPAs) during the current COVID-19 situation.

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

AskAshworth Blog

The newly redesigned AskAshworth blog will now be accessible only to AELP members, who will need just the email address of the main contact and membership number to access its content, additional email addresses from member organisations can be authorised on request.

Members can continue to enjoy the regularly updated blog at

<http://www.aelpaskashworth.org.uk/>



A trusted resource to get practical advice and support on Further Education issues, brought to you by AELP

Research and Consultations

Ofqual launches consultation on 2021 exams and assessments

Ofqual has published a [consultation on proposals designed to support students taking GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2021](#) – alongside [plans for other general, vocational and technical qualifications](#). In line with the Education Secretary's letter, Ofqual are planning for exams and assessments to be taken next year. We have been working across the sector to consider a range of possible measures to free up teaching time and, in limited subjects, allow teachers some choice in the topics they teach.

[You can respond to this consultation before 16 July 2020 here.](#)

ITPs workforce survey coming!

The Education and Training Foundation will be issuing a short survey next week asking about support needs for ITPs in the immediate post-lockdown phase and going forward. Please keep a look out for it in your inboxes and if you can spare 5 or 10 minutes to respond that would be hugely appreciated!

Events



Business Recovery
Conference

Headline sponsors



The AELP Autumn Conference
9 - 10 September 2020

The 'Business Recovery Conference'

WEBSITE NOW LIVE

Mayor Andy Street to speak at AELP Business Recovery Conference as website goes live!

The elected mayor for the West Midlands Combined Authority, **Andy Street**, has kindly agreed to speak at the **AELP Business Recovery Conference** which takes place online on 9-10 September.

The confirmation of his attendance comes as AELP launches the conference website to take registrations of interest for members and other stakeholders.

Other speakers already confirmed include:

- **Peter Mucklow**, Apprenticeships Director, **ESFA**
- **Matthew Fell**, Chief UK Policy Director, **CBI**
- **Kirsty Evans**, Acting Director of Further Education, **ESFA**
- **Rob Nitsch**, Chief Operating Officer, **IfATE**
- **Phil Beach**, Executive Director, **Ofqual**.

We expect more speakers to be confirmed shortly.

Across the two days, the event's main themes will be:

1. *Post-Covid employment and skills challenge*
2. *Re-engagement with young people and employers*
3. *Regulation and funding of the skills sector post-pandemic*
4. *Provider operational methodology in new circumstances: best practice*
5. *Ofsted's approach to inspection, Ofqual regulation and future of assessment*
6. *Role of data and research in supporting the recovery effort*

Sponsored by [Learning Curve Group](#) and [Cognassist](#), the **AELP Business Recovery Conference** is ideally timed to support providers as they work with employers, apprentices and learners to get the economy moving again.

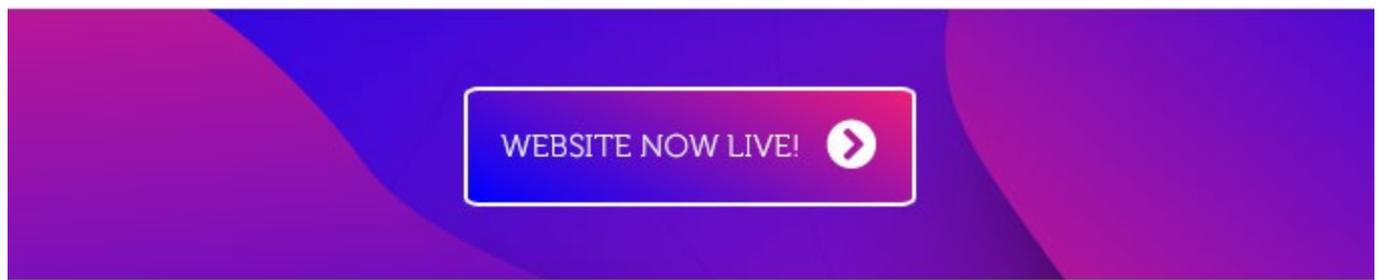
Conference fees:

The online ticketing arrangements will allow delegates from the same member provider to attend different sessions for a set fee. Each booking entitles up to 10 delegates from that organisation access to the Business Recovery conference.

AELP Member Rate: £100 + VAT

Non-Member Rate: £275 + VAT

Visit the conference [website](#) today and register your interest.



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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.

To register please email memberevents@aelp.org.uk

For any further information regarding any of our sector groups please email cswales@aelp.org.uk

Land-based Industries – 02 July, 10:30am – 12:00pm

This is an informal meeting being held via Go To Meeting. It is an opportunity for members offering provision in the land-based sector to discuss how the current situation is impacting on provision. The group have formed good links with IfATE and the trailblazer lead so it's a really good opportunity to feed in to discussions and be kept up to date in between meetings. Richard Pemble from Ofsted will be attending to provide a general update and Robin Jackson from Open Awards will be giving an update on an update on what flexibilities they have supported for CV-19, how they are continuing to input into this process and general themes found across the Land-based standards.

Financial, Accountancy and Legal – 06 July, 10:30am – 12:00pm

This meeting will be held via Go To Meeting. We will be hearing an AELP update from Mark Dawe, a NOCN update from Tom Burton and Neil Williams of Babington Group will be talking through a provider's perspective on how the current circumstances have impacted on provision at Babington and how they are now looking forward into the recovery phase. There will also be lot of opportunity for input and questions from other members.

Health, Social Care and Early Years – 08 July, 10:30am – 12:00pm

At this webinar, we'll be hearing an AELP update from Simon Ashworth, Chief Policy Officer and provider updates from Early Years (Ali Barford-Drew, Connect2Care) and Adult Care (Mary Holmes). Hear how the current situation is affecting delivery in both of these sectors (positive changes and challenges) and you will also have the opportunity to ask questions through a facilitated Q&A/Panel Discussion.

Creative and Design – 08 July, 2:00pm – 3:30pm

This sector has been hit particularly hard during Covid-19 therefore this is an additional meeting to have a very informal discussion with members on what the current issues and challenges are. This is small sector group but would certainly be of interest to any members currently offering provision in this sector!

Digital and IT – 15 July, 10:30am – 12:00pm

We have an exciting agenda lined up for this meeting with an AELP update along with input from Becky King (Microsoft) with their employer view of Post Covid-19 priorities and what they believe will be the priority roles, how they plan to address skills gaps and what this may mean for the sector. We'll also be hearing an IfATE/Trialblazer update from Helen Dalton. One not to miss for members working in this sector!

Logistics and Transport – 30 July, 10:30am – 12:00pm

This meeting was originally due to be held on 8th June but was postponed. Agenda/speaker details will be announced shortly.

Upcoming #aelpwebinars

aelp | webinars 

Planning an Effective Curriculum

Thursday, 2 July 2.00 - 3.00 pm BST

The session will explore the key components of what an effective curriculum might look like particularly for apprenticeship and adult provision.

[Register »](#)



What responses the government might have to rising unemployment

Wednesday, 8 July 10.00 - 11.00 am BST

As we come out of lockdown and government support programmes change, there is likely to be the largest growth in unemployment ever seen. There is already a prediction that 2.66 million people could be unemployed by the end of the year, a doubling of pre-pandemic levels.

Complementary for AELP members

[Register »](#)

Understanding unconscious bias

Wednesday, 8 July 2.00 - 3.00 pm BST

We will explore different types of unconscious bias and how to understand and challenge biases in others. We will share how you can manage your responses to your own biases and support greater self-awareness to enhance communication and relationships.

[Register »](#)

Creative Assessment Methods for Learning Sessions

Thursday, 9 July 10.00 - 11.00 am BST

The webinar is designed to help tutors develop creative methods to monitor learning and progress in their sessions. This includes one to one and group sessions.

[Register »](#)

In Conversation with Ofsted and Ask an Inspector

Thursday, 9 July 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.



Complementary for AELP members

[Register »](#)

Chief Executive's COVID-19 Member Update

Friday, 10 July 10.00 - 11.00 am BST

A weekly update from AELP's Chief Executive, Mark Dawe during the COVID-19 crisis.



Complementary for AELP members

[Register »](#)

Webinar Recordings on Demand

- Monthly CEO Member Updates
- 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
- Covid-19 Assessment Support
- In Conversation with Ofsted and Ask an Inspector
- Understanding Ofsted's "deep dives"
- Making learner induction fun and inspiring
- Understanding Ofsted's "deep dives"
- The Role of the Nominee
- Understanding the different forms of assessment involved in EPA
- Understanding Quality of Education
- Covid HR Surgery
- Fast track – assessor to Trainer – Key skills and strategies to getting started
- Building personal resilience through change
- Blended Learning Strategy Part 2 – Online Content Strategy and Quality Assurance
- Understanding Data
- Taking Digital & Social Media to the Next Level

[Register for recordings »](#)

[Suggest a topic »»](#)

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AELP Events & Webinars Calendar



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

JULY

- 15 July** Webinar [Blended Learning Strategy Part 3 – Digital Staff Skills Strategy & Quality Assurance of Blended Learning Delivery & Compliance](#) £49 Online »
- 15 July** Webinar [Comeback from Covid](#) £49 Online »
- 21 July** Webinar [Developing Mentoring Skills](#) £49 Online »
- 21 July** Webinar [Prevent - Post Covid](#) £0 Online »
- 22 July** Webinar [The Relevance of Learning Theories to Practical Teaching and Training](#) £49 Online »
- 23 July** Webinar [Chief Executive Officer's COVID-19 Weekly Member Update](#) £0 Online »
- 28 July** Webinar [Effective Observation of Teaching and Learning](#) £49 Online »
- 29 July** Webinar [Understanding Emotional Intelligence](#) £49 Online »
- 30 July** Webinar [Ofsted expectations regarding off-the-job training, progress reviews and assessment practice](#) £49 Online »

SEPTEMBER

09-10 September Conference [The Business Recovery Conference](#) £TBC Online »

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AELP Member Exclusive Meetings

JULY

- 02 July [Land Based](#) Online »
- 02 July [Third Sector Special Interest Group](#) Online (noon) »
- 06 July [Financial, Accountancy and Legal](#) Online »
- 08 July [Health, Social Care and Early Years](#) Online »
- 08 July [Creative and Design](#) Online »
- 15 July [Digital and IT](#) Online »
- 30 July [Logistics and Transport](#) Online »

SEPTEMBER

16 September [Hospitality and Catering](#) 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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