

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

Issue 984, 30 July 2020

Welcome to this week's Countdown!

Even under normal circumstances, July and August are a strange time for our sector, with the holidays starting just as many young people begin to think about their first steps in post-compulsory training and employment opportunities. This year however, the sector is not only facing up to this happening just when the economy has almost completely stalled – the shocking but unsurprising statistics about apprenticeship starts in May is evidence of that - but we are gearing up for the new apprenticeship incentives from 1st August designed to try and do something about it; the Kickstarter scheme, expansion of Traineeships, and the prospect of other significant procurement exercises are all hovering into view. Certainly over this summer, almost everyone will be spending their work time trying to find ways to mitigate the impact of lockdown just gone, and trying to prepare for a “new normal” – whatever that may look like – in the weeks and months ahead.



AELP will of course be here to support all of you over that period – the Board and the Senior Management Team will be out there as much as ever, making sure that government and its agencies don't lose sight of the importance of the sector and the vital contribution that you will be making to revive the economy. With that in mind, our **Business Recovery Conference** planned for 9th and 10th of September could not be coming at a better time as our agenda planning is engaging with some very senior officials and is focused on what our sector knows is important and wants to hear about as we head into the crucial autumn period of 2020. If you haven't booked your place yet – and remember you can get up to 10 of your staff signed in for each booking you make – then you really should as this could be a pivotal event for our sector in recovering from all that we've just been through. Make sure you have a look at the [article a little further down](#) and we look forward to seeing you online!

It was good to see so many members tune in to last week's member exclusive session with the ESFA, delivered by Jonathan Childs, talking about the Government's Economic Statement and the new Plan for Jobs. This was the first in a series of webinars we are running with the ESFA to help keep members informed and the next webinar is on the 14th August themed on Traineeships, which members have told us is an area they want to find out more on and will be looking to get involved in moving into the Autumn.

Elsewhere it has been a relatively quiet week policy-wise; we have cleared up some confusion regarding what was being paid for under the 16-19 Tuition Fund, and untangled some points about redundant apprentices – details of both of these are below in the Policy section. We also have a couple of surveys out at the moment that are looking at various aspects of how you all coped with lockdown and what your support needs are going forward – a few minutes of your time to fill in these would be extremely valuable and much appreciated, the

details of which are in the [Research section below](#).

On a personal note, Mark has had his last day at work at AELP. I am sure I speak for all of you in extending our thanks for the tremendous work that he has put in during his tenure. Although these are challenging times, I am really excited about our prospects going forward. I have been meeting key people and organisations to build even further on the fantastic work AELP has been doing over the last few years. I even managed some (socially distanced) real-life meetings which felt like a novelty! Thanks for all the good wishes I've received, I'm very grateful.

Jane Hickie | Managing Director | AELP

[Back to Top](#)

Please click on the header links to jump to section

[Policy](#)

- 60% fall in apprenticeship starts in May
- ESFA procurement for 19-24 AEB Traineeships
- Incentive Grant Payments for redundant apprentices
- 16-19 Tuition Fund clarification
- Vacancy: Chair of AELP Higher Level and Degree Apprenticeships Special Interest Group (SIG)
- Apprenticeship Service error messages
- Government launches new Queen's Award for Enterprise category to promote social mobility

[Research and Consultations](#)

- Learning the lessons of lockdown
- Ofsted seeking volunteer pilot organisations
- What are your workforce development needs?

[Events](#)

- Website now taking bookings! AELP Business Recovery Conference, 9-10 September 2020
- How to keep learners engaged and progressing in a mixed delivery model
- AELP Member Exclusive Meetings - Upcoming Sector Forums
- Upcoming Webinars
- Webinar Recordings On Demand

Policy

60% fall in apprenticeship starts in May

[DfE data released yesterday](#) shows a 60% year-on-year drop in apprenticeship starts for the month of May, with 22,300 starts in May 2019 dropping to 9,000 in 2020. Young people appear to be the hardest hit as starts for those aged 16 to 18 plunged by 79 per cent, and starts on level 2 apprenticeships by 74%. The data also shows that starts have continued to fall by around half since lockdown started in March.

DfE's statisticians note that final data will not become available until later in the year, and say that "at this point it is unclear what the true number of starts in the affected period was or if the level of reporting at this point in the year has been affected by the lockdown".

ESFA procurement for 19-24 AEB Traineeships

The ESFA have confirmed they will shortly be running a procurement opportunity for providers to access funding for 19-24 AEB-funded Traineeships. They will be seeking providers with the capacity to start providing high-quality Traineeships quickly through a ringfenced contract for service.

[Further details available in the ESFA announcement on this link.](#)

Incentive Grant Payments for redundant apprentices

A number of members have asked whether employers taking on displaced redundant apprentices can receive the new hire incentive grants.

We have done some digging and can confirm that employers who take on redundant apprentices who started their apprenticeship prior to August 2020 are in scope for the new incentive payment. However, how much of it they receive depends on how far the apprentice was through their programme when they started with the new employer.

There is more information on this in the employer version of the FY20-21 ESFA funding rules but a fuller explanation can be found by members on our [Ask Ashworth](#) blog.

16-19 Tuition Fund clarification

Last week the ESFA announced additional funding for one-year for all 16-to-19 providers to mitigate the disruption to learning arising from COVID-19. We have now managed to ascertain that as part of this, the ESFA will allocate each provider £150 **per instance** for full-time students without GCSE grade 4 or above in English and/or maths based on the numbers in their current 2020 to 2021 academic year allocation; in other words, a student requiring support for both maths and English will, therefore, be in scope to attract a one-off funding top-up of £300.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-16-to-19-tuition-fund>

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

Val Braybrooks and David Willett have decided to step down as co-chairs of the AELP 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.

Apprenticeship Service error messages

The Apprenticeships Service are aware of an issue whereby some employers are unable to access their 'My Training Providers' section of their Apprenticeship Service account. When attempting to click into it they are presented with an error message. Work is underway to resolve this as a matter of priority, but if affected by this issue it would be helpful to report it by ringing 08000 150 600 or emailing helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk

Government launches new Queen's Award for Enterprise category to promote social mobility

The government has launched a new 'Promoting opportunity through social mobility' category in the prestigious Queen's Awards for Enterprise, recognising businesses that promote a sustainable and inclusive culture.

UK businesses are being urged to join more than 7,000 winners of the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in applying for the new award category.

The award recognises those who are playing a role in creating an inclusive and compassionate society by supporting socially disadvantaged individuals to develop their skills and chances of finding work.

There are 4 award categories and winners are announced each year in April on Her Majesty the Queen's birthday. The categories are:

- Innovation
- International trade
- Promoting opportunity (through social mobility)
- Sustainable development

Research and Consultations

Learning the lessons of lockdown

Training providers have had to make many immediate and fundamental changes to their businesses and operations to adapt to the recent national emergency. Moreover, they now have to begin to plan ahead for the shape of their businesses, and the economy and sector as a whole, as the pandemic recedes and lockdown is lifted.

Management of delivery is just one example of this, and in [this survey](#) AELP would like to explore these challenges a little further – to understand the issues and challenges that have been faced during the Covid-19 outbreak and lockdown; how they have been dealt with; but most crucially how these changes will translate into a post-pandemic world.

The survey should take no more than about ten minutes, and your contribution will be invaluable in helping us to better understand the challenges now facing your organisations. We will be presenting the results in a free webinar scheduled for September 16th 2020 – please contact enquiries@aelp.org.uk for further details and to

express an interest in attending.

The [survey](#) is kindly supported by Bud, and will be open until close of business on Friday 31st July – if you have any queries, please contact Paul Warner on pwarner@aelp.org.uk



Start the Survey

Ofsted seeking volunteer pilot organisations

Further to mentions on a number of recent webinars, Ofsted plan to pilot the methodology for the visits they will be conducting in the autumn term during weeks commencing 31 August and 7 September, and are still seeking further volunteer organisations to work with.

If providers would be willing to host a pilot visit then please contact Paul Warner at AELP on pwarner@aelp.org.uk.

What are your workforce development needs?



Given the changing environment, AELP and ETF are keen to understand the current and future workforce development needs across the sector, including both challenges and opportunities. We created [this survey](#) that will help both organisations understand how we can best respond and support you.

It should take no more than 10 minutes of your time, and we appreciate your time and valuable contribution. The information you will provide will of course be anonymised and form the basis of a report.

Start the Survey

Events



Business Recovery
Conference

Headline sponsors



The AELP Autumn Conference
9 - 10 September 2020

The 'Business Recovery Conference'

Website now taking bookings



Facing the Future with Confidence

Are we heading for a V-shaped recovery or do the latest economic forecasts point to a grim outlook for the next 12 months? The AELP online Business Recovery Conference on 9-10 September, now open for bookings, will be the right time to help providers plan for every eventuality. The event will consider how government, devolved authorities and providers can support employers and learners minimise the negative effects of a downturn while also taking advantage of the new opportunities that have emerged during the lockdown. At the same time, sessions will advise providers themselves on operational best practice to ensure their resilience in the coming months.

Confirmed speakers include:

- Toby Perkins, MP, Shadow Minister for Apprenticeships & Lifelong Learning
- Andy Street, Mayor, West Midlands Combined Authority
- Paul Joyce, Deputy Director of Further Education & Skills, Ofsted
- 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:

AELP Member Rate: £100 + VAT

Non-Member Rate: £275 + VAT

Each booking entitles up to 10 delegates from that organisation access to the Business Recovery conference.

Visit the conference [website](#) today and book your place!

BOOK NOW! 

How to keep learners engaged and progressing in a mixed delivery model

Ufi are pleased to invite you to a webinar on designing learning to maximise the use of both digital interactions and face to face time for synchronous delivery.

Much work is being undertaken by Jisc, AoC and others on blended learning models. However few specifically address the issue of synchronous online and offline teaching. It's not easy, but there are practical ways of designing learning to maximise the use of both digital interactions and face to face time for synchronous delivery.

The starting point for the 'mixed delivery model' is the learner, and the aim is to ensure that the learner remains engaged and progressing.

Implementing such a model requires a change of mindset, flipping the question on inclusive engagement. It's no longer "how can tech support our current (F2F) delivery strategies?" but "how can we adjust our delivery strategies to make best use of currently available tech?". The webinar aims to help participants answer that question, look at effective strategies for student engagement and suggest some learning design models for



synchronous delivery.

Who is it for?

Principals, heads of curriculum, heads of department, heads of IT, all involved in FE teaching

Wednesday August 5th 10.30.- 1.30

[Register here](#)



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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

Upcoming #aelpwebinars

aelp | webinars

Ofsted expectations regarding off-the-job training, progress reviews and assessment practice

Thursday, 30 July 10.00 – 11.00 am BST

Facilitator: Richard Moore, Richard Moore Solutions

This webinar will examine the key parts of the 'learner journey' for apprentices through the lens of an Ofsted inspector, highlighting what are always the 'game changers' regarding crucial aspects of that journey such as initial assessment, off-the-job training, English and mathematics, progress reviews and assessment practice.

[Register »](#)

Transforming the apprenticeship delivery model to succeed in the 'new normal'

Thursday, 30 July 2.00 – 3.00 pm BST

Facilitator: James Swaffield, Operations Director at QA and Brad Tombling, Apprenticeship Delivery consultant, Bud

Sponsored by



Maximising Apprenticeship Performance

James Swaffield will provide valuable insight into planning and delivering a digital change programme within an ITP, from a strategic perspective. This will be particularly useful for anyone who's organisation is looking to adopt new technology and adapt their business delivery for the 'new normal'.

This webinar is complimentary to attend, sponsored by [BUD](#)

[Register »](#)

Ofsted nominee training for those managers new to the role on inspection

Tuesday, 4 August 10:00 am - 11:30 am BST

Facilitator: Richard Moore, Richard Moore Solutions

This webinar will tell you everything you need to know about being a nominee for the first time during an Ofsted inspection based on the Education Inspection Framework (EIF). It builds on the 'Overview of the role of the nominee' webinar delivered by Ofsted in June.

[Register »](#)

Webinar Recordings on Demand also available [here](#)

[Back to Top](#)



AELP Events & Webinars Calendar



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

JULY

30 July Webinar [Ofsted expectations regarding off-the-job training, progress reviews and assessment practice](#) £49 Online »

30 July Webinar [Transforming the apprenticeship delivery model to succeed in the 'new normal' - Sponsored by Bud](#) £0 Online »

AUGUST

04 August Webinar [Ofsted nominee training for those managers new to the role on inspection](#) £49 Online »

11 August Webinar [Supporting the effective delivery of Functional Skills in English – Level 1 and 2](#) £49 Online »

13 August Webinar [How learning providers can support victims and survivors of domestic abuse](#) £49 Online »

14 August Webinar [In Conversation with the ESFA](#) £49 Online **Member Exclusive** »

18 August Webinar [Ofsted nominee training for those managers who are experienced in the role on inspection](#) £49 Online »

21 August Webinar [AELP Policy Webinar](#) £0 Online **Member Exclusive** »

25 August Webinar [Supporting the effective delivery of Functional Skills in mathematics – Level 1 and 2](#) £49 Online »

27 August Webinar [Improving Bid Success](#) £49 Online »

SEPTEMBER

- 08 September Webinar [Traineeships Policy Update](#) £49 Online »
- 09-10 September Conference [The Business Recovery Conference](#) £100 Online »
- 15 September Webinar [Staying safe online – keeping learners and your staff safe online](#) £49 Online »
- 22 September Webinar [Curriculum sequencing](#) £49 Online »
- 24 September Webinar [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - why it matters](#) £49 Online »

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AELP Member Exclusive Meetings

SEPTEMBER

- 16 September [Hospitality and Catering](#) Online »
- 23 September [Construction](#) Online »
- 24 September [Creative & Design](#) Online »

OCTOBER

- 07 October [Hair and Beauty](#) Online »
- 15 October [Engineering, Manufacturing and Automotive](#) Online »
- 28 October [Digital & IT](#) Online »
- 29 October [Land-based](#) 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).

[Back to Contents](#)





[View as a Web Page](#)

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