

## AELP briefing on the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) represents the interests of around 800 organisations delivering vocational learning and employability programmes. Our members support thousands of businesses and millions of residents in England.

The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill gives Parliament the opportunity to truly put learners and employers at the heart of the skills system. There are many aspects of the Bill which AELP agrees with, however we have some key concerns:

### Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs)

AELP supports putting employers and learners at the heart of the system, while tackling skills and workforce shortages more effectively. However, we are concerned as to whether LSIPs are the right mechanism for this. In their current iteration, it is unclear how LSIPs can fully articulate the needs of local labour markets. The pilot trailblazers show significant disparity in local training provider engagement. Furthermore, LSIPs may duplicate existing local skills plans, particularly in devolved areas. We are also concerned that funding could be channelled through LSIPs to favoured civic institutions, who may lack neutrality and appropriate commissioning expertise. AELP recommend a statutory role for all training providers in the development of LSIPs. We would also like a clear statement on the record as to whether the government intends to use LSIPs to channel funding to civic institutions.

### List of relevant providers

AELP is certainly not opposed to strong accountability of training providers, or the protection of learners. However, no consultation has taken place on the conditions attached to a provider being on the new list of relevant providers. The government acknowledges that this could mean 'significant costs' being imposed on smaller providers, particularly those who may deliver niche provision or in rural areas. Independent training providers should not be saddled with more bureaucracy and unnecessary costs. The focus needs to be on post-pandemic recovery for both learners and providers.

### Measures to extend and enforce the 'Baker Clause'

We thought the extension of the Baker Clause to year 7 pupils and better enforcement measures were incredibly positive aspects of the FE White Paper. Therefore, it seemed remiss not to have included these measures in the Bill. We would like this to be addressed with appropriate amendments. We must ensure that all young people get fair and equitable access to appropriate careers information, advice, and guidance- with parity for academic and vocational routes.

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