

Consultation Summary Paper

Pearson response to the Education Committee inquiry into apprenticeships and traineeships for 16 to 19 year olds

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Opened 17/07/2014, closed 30/09/2014, Pearson lead: Gary Tovey

A brief introduction to Pearson

Pearson is the world's leading learning company and in the UK, includes Edexcel, LCCI, BTEC and the Financial Times. We take learning personally. Our qualifications, courses and resources help people learn whatever, wherever and however they choose.

Pearson welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Education Committee's Call for Evidence: apprenticeships and traineeships for 16-19 year olds. With large scale reform of Traineeships and Apprenticeships currently being undertaken, it is welcome that the importance of this and its impact on the 16-19 learner is subject to the Committee's on-going scrutiny.

A summary of the consultation

The Education Committee invited written submissions, by 30 September 2014, addressing the following points:

1. The effectiveness of apprenticeships and traineeships for 16-19 year olds, including in terms of meeting employer needs in various sectors, and providing young people with a solid foundation for employment in general or in particular occupations or for further study.
2. The range of apprenticeships and traineeships available to young people.
3. Current levels of employer engagement in apprenticeships (including in providing places or defining standards and setting assessment), and what further steps the Government could take to improve this.
4. The impact of recent changes to the funding of apprenticeships and traineeships.
5. Whether the Government's investment in apprenticeships represents value for money in terms of the future wage returns for young people and their employability.
6. How the Government could encourage businesses of all sizes and in all sectors to offer apprenticeships, including improved fiscal, regulatory and other measures.
7. What factors prevent more young people considering apprenticeships and how these could be overcome.
8. Whether young people are adequately prepared for apprenticeships and how that preparation should be improved.
9. How the Government could encourage more young people to consider apprenticeships and traineeships.

A summary of the Pearson response

An integrated employability curriculum

Every young learner needs to be engaged with the world of work throughout their schooling, especially from the age of 14. To achieve this, vocational and academic curricula need to be integrated and balanced to meet the needs of the individual to prepare for their future careers. The introduction of Progress 8 measures, Key Stage 4 vocational qualifications and technical levels seek to address this but currently do not align fully with Traineeships or the new Apprenticeships (Trailblazers).

Recommendation – preparation for Traineeships and Apprenticeships needs to be integrated across the 14-19 age range to ensure full alignment with work based programmes

Recommendation – workforce development for educators within schools to enable high quality vocational delivery

Recommendation – greater employer engagement in 14-16 education and delivery to increase learners' employability skills.

A stable and clear structure for employability

Unlike other areas of the education and training system, the 16-19 area, including Traineeships and Apprenticeships, is subject to a range of different funding requirements and agencies, government departments, qualification sets and initiatives. This somewhat anomalous position does not allow for a focussed approach to the further development of the skills, knowledge and behaviours required for the world of work.

Recommendation – the creation of a cross departmental 'youth skills' division to ensure coherence and articulation with other areas.

Recommendation – greater articulation between Traineeships and Apprenticeships using one brand.

A collaborative approach

The development of Traineeship and Apprenticeship standards and programmes needs to be a trusted partnership between employers, educators, trade associations and assessment organisations with each investing their expertise to ensure high quality outcomes with a quantifiable return on investment for all - learners, employers and government.

Recommendation – the development of a government sponsored infrastructure to support the industry sector; this could be through the development of sector bodies or professional bodies which represent the views of employers, champion standards and assessment development and work closely with other organisations to ensure the quality of assessment and delivery.

An efficacy approach

Outcomes for learners should be measured across the educational and vocational systems, with clear reporting.

Recommendation – the development of a coherent and open access data system to evidence and support learner destinations.

Recommendation – entry to sustainable employment for 16-18 year olds needs to be reflected in school accountability measures.

A vocational campaign

There is a profound lack of public understanding of the short and long term value of vocational learning including Traineeships and Apprenticeships. This needs to start with impartial and knowledgeable career and pathway advice and information within schools.

Recommendation – the development of a fully funded and auditable careers service.

Recommendation – a highly visible and sustained campaign aimed at learners and the general public together with an informational campaign targeted at educators .