

## Pocket Watch: Government Response to the Richard Apprenticeship Review

2013/19

15 March 2013

“We agree with Doug Richard that we must empower employers and place them at the heart of the Apprenticeship system”

### Introduction

This week the Government responded formally to Doug Richard’s Review of Apprenticeships. Timed to coincide with National Apprenticeship Week, the Response accepts the broad thrust of the Review’s recommendations, namely transferring ownership as far as possible to employers, clarifying and strengthening the brand, sharpening testing and validating procedures and focusing on clear outcomes but opts for a further round of consultation on how best to implement them. The fact that some 12 of the 24 questions posed in the consultation begin with the word ‘how’ suggests that the Government is looking for some fairly fundamental responses on how to make things happen. The consultation will run until 22 May 2013 with further announcements due this autumn and some new programmes beginning in 2014/15

### Report context

The Richard Review was one of a number of reviews of Apprenticeships completed last year but in many ways was the most important partly because it was intended to set out a vision and strategy for Apprenticeships in England for the future and partly because it was intended to bring developments together at a time when so much emphasis is being placed on Apprenticeships as a core component of growth strategies. The Review, which was published last November, was pretty forthright in its belief that Apprenticeships should be attached to real jobs, that the qualification and assessment systems should be refined and, perhaps most contentiously, that employers should be granted purchasing power through a system of tax credits

### Headline messages

The Responses can perhaps best be grouped under four areas: those that endorse the Review recommendations with few caveats; those that accept the recommendations in principle but require more consultation; those that are accepted but on different terms; and those that are pretty much left for another day. Examples of the first include those on the Apprenticeship brand, on giving employers responsibility for designing standards and on the importance of end point assessment with one, overarching qualification. Examples of the second where it’s left for further consultation, include how best to engage employers in designing standards, the nature of assessment and grading processes and recognising quality services. Examples of the third where things are accepted but on different terms, include the emphasis on English and maths where the recommendation for a L2 threshold doesn’t appear and careers guidance particularly for schools, recognised but within existing duties. And fourth, left for another day are funding and incentives and the recognition of off-site learning

### Some of the key Responses

- On branding and purpose: *“Apprenticeships should be targeted at people starting a new job role or occupation”*
- On standards: *“We agree that the responsibility for designing standards rightly sits with employers”*
- On qualifications: *“Things could be addressed through a core and options approach for each standard and qualification, increasing their flexibility for different settings and contexts”*
- On assessment: *“Employers will be invited to set out what an effective test of competency against the standards they wish to set, would be”*
- On English/maths: *“From August 2014, we will go further by requiring that all Apprentices who begin their Apprenticeship with only L1 qualifications in Eng/maths, work towards L2 during their Apprenticeship”*
- On training: *“We believe it is for industry and professional bodies in each sector to judge this and develop any schemes they believe appropriate”*
- On funding: *“We will explore options for addressing the principles articulated by Doug Richard”*

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