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## Pocket Watch – Making sense of the skills agenda

### Introduction

Three days, three important announcements about the training and skills agenda. In order, first Lord Adonis announced the launch of a wide-scale growth review, re-focusing current activity to concentrate on continuing weaknesses in the system such as the case for youth apprenticeships. Second, Nick Clegg announced a Cabinet Office Review into employment and training opportunities for 16-24 year olds and third, and hard on the heels of both previous announcements, Matthew Hancock announced an extension of the Traineeship framework to 19-24 year olds from next month. Here's a quick summary of each before things move on

### The Adonis Growth Review

*"We need bold policies for more and better jobs, a radically better strategy for promoting skills, infrastructure, innovation, business start-ups, business ethics and long termism in business practice. This is my agenda."* That's how Lord Adonis described what he was hoping to achieve when he launched his **Review** which is jointly backed by the IPPR and Policy Network last week. Wide-ranging therefore, and picking up the threads from a number of other related Reviews, notably the Heseltine Report, it will aim to fill in some of the gaps left by such Reports to create a more visionary skills and growth strategy. The Review will undertake considerable research and evidence gathering and aim to report in spring 2014

### The Nick Clegg announcement

Another Review of what's available for 16-24 year olds? This was announced in a **speech** to the CBI this week by Nick Clegg on the theme of 'Building Britain's recovery.' Healing and recovery are very much the preferred descriptors for the UK economy at the moment but a critical weakness remains the way in which young people are prepared for the labour market and the ease with which they are able to cross that bridge. The OECD and the CBI/Pearson Employers Survey have both recognised this as the *"UK's biggest challenge"* and the Government for its part is busily introducing new Study Programmes and Traineeships alongside its existing Youth Contract. But concerns remain about skill levels, market responsiveness, careers guidance and operational complexity. Nick Clegg argued that *"what we want is a simple, easier to use system that lays down a clear route into work for our young people and gives businesses a coherent offer to find the workers they need."* Hence this Review which sounds system-based and will report to Ministers in the first instance this autumn

### The latest Traineeship developments

Traineeships, typically bridging programmes for young people seeking to improve their skill levels and job prospects prior to entering employment or an apprenticeship are due to start next month. With the Chancellor confirming in his spending announcements last month that funding would now be available to extend the scheme to 19-24 year olds as well as 16-19 year olds, the BIS Dept has just released updated delivery **guidance** to take in this extended age group. Much of the initial guidance remains but funding for this 19+ group will be through the existing adult skills budget although that for the work placement element still needs to be developed



**Steve Besley**

Head of Policy (UK and International)  
Pearson Think Tank

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