

***A brief update about policy & other developments for third sector training providers***

## What's in this month's update?

Adult education budget .....	p1
Challenge Fund now open .....	p2
Draft Code of Good Governance for Independent Training Providers .....	p2
T-Levels .....	p3
Apprenticeships update .....	p4
Other news in brief .....	p5
Focus on Funding, Resources & Events .....	p7



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## ***Adult Education Budget***

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has become the first devolved area to launch a pre-procurement exercise for the adult education budget, ahead of its taking over of the AEB budget in 2019. The authority is asking local training providers to help develop a tender specification, considering a variety of delivery and payment models (including payment by achievement, payment by outcomes or a mixture of the two). The GMCA is also considering payments for work experience. Manchester will have a budget of £92.2 million in the first year, of which £25 million will go out to tender. The rest will be allocated as grant funding to FE Colleges, local authorities and third sector providers.

The GMCA will also be able to keep any underspend, although the budget has to include all operational costs incurred by the authority – there is no separate administration budget. It intends to procure services for one year with an option to extend for an additional two years.

In other AEB news, the Mayor of London has also launched his Skills and Adult Education Strategy *Skills for Londoners*. It sets out the skills challenges London faces, along with priorities and actions required to make the London skills system the envy of the world.

**Read this!** Although it is now too late to respond to the GMCA call for information, click on the [prior information notice](#) to read about the principles and priorities.

**Read this!** The Skills for Londoners strategy is at <https://tinyurl.com/y8cx4c3c>

## ***Challenge Fund now open***

A £4.2 million Challenge Fund to support people with mental health or musculoskeletal conditions to stay in work has recently been launched and is open for applications until 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

The fund is part of a ten-year strategy which aims to see 1 million more disabled people in work by 2027, and is run by Rocket Science on behalf of the Government. It aims to test new approaches to helping people experiencing mental ill health or musculoskeletal issues to remain in employment, whether they are at risk of losing existing employment, or are currently off work through ill health.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Sarah Newton, said she wanted to support disabled people who want to work, and that the joint initiative between the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health and Social Care would fund projects to provide that help.

The fund will also support employers and employees to develop workplace solutions to support those with mental health or musculoskeletal conditions.

Applications are welcome from organisations in any sector, including employers, charities, social enterprises, local authorities, health bodies and others.

**Read this!** The Challenge Fund is open to applications from all organisations, and applications from smaller organisations are particularly welcome. The deadline is 17<sup>th</sup> August. More information at <https://challengefund.flexigrant.com/> .

## ***Draft Code of Good Governance for Independent Training Providers***

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) has launched a consultation on a new Code of Good Governance for Independent Training Providers, setting out the key themes and principles to help providers demonstrate that it is conducting its business in the best interest of its trainees, employers, key stakeholders and funders. The Code builds on the Seven (Nolan) Principles of Public Life of Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership.

The Code is designed to apply to all independent training providers (ITPs), including charities and not-for-profit organisations, and has been developed by HOLEX Director of Policy Dr Sue Pember along with ex-inspector Karen Adriaanse and the AELP.

The draft Code is based on the following expectations of good governance:

- Putting the trainee, apprentice and employer first
- Promoting high expectations and ambitions for trainees, apprentice and staff
- Listening to trainees, apprentice employers and staff.
- Promoting inspirational training, teaching and learning and assessment
- Creating a safe environment for trainees and apprentices to train, learn and develop
- Providing strong strategic leadership and challenge to the senior team

- Demonstrating accountability to all stakeholders, including publishing accurate and timely information on performance
- Ensuring the achievement of equality of opportunity and diversity throughout the organisation.

**Read this!** The Draft Code of Governance is at <https://tinyurl.com/y8lu7ub8>

# T-Levels

## Legal challenge to T Levels

The Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) has warned the DfE and the Institute for Apprenticeships that it may launch a legal challenge to the T-Level programme over proposals to have just one awarding body per subject. This was the model proposed in the Sainsbury plan on technical and vocational reforms, but the FAB worries that the new systems are being rushed in which could damage the prospects of the 30,000 young people expected to enrol on the first wave of new qualifications.

The FAB says that a judicial review would look at whether the government had *“acted lawfully in the way it has handled the T-Level process”* and ensure that all awarding organisations have the information needed to participate in the procurement process. It says, *“The single-provider model has, moreover, been adopted without proper stakeholder engagement, regardless of the duties owed by the DfE (and IfA), and irrespective of the serious implications for the sector”*.

The invitation to tender (ITT) for Awarding Organisations is currently planned for September 2018 for the first three T Level pathways which will be taught from September 2020.

## “Rushed” T-Level consultation criticised

T Levels are under further attack, this time from the Public Accounts Committee Chair Meg Hillier, who has criticised Ofqual for allocating just 4 weeks for providers to respond to its 71-page consultation on new rules around the qualification. She further criticised the timing, as the consultation was launched on July 10<sup>th</sup>, a time when many educational institutions are dealing with exams and holidays. Ms Hillier said, *“If you are going to introduce a new qualification, getting it right is really important. Rushing it through and risking getting it wrong could undermine it completely.”*

Ofqual defended its short timetable, saying that respondents only need answer questions that were relevant to them and that the quick turnaround was to inform the invitation to tender, due to be launched by the government in September. The DfE said that Ofqual had already undertaken pre-consultation activity during events held with awarding organisations.

However, the events themselves caused controversy, as awarding organisations were presented with having to sign up to commercial terms which include giving intellectual property ownership to the IfA, banning awarding organisations from reusing any of the content without “prior written approval” and stopping them using any of their own branding.

**Respond to the consultation (if you have time!)** The consultation documents are at <https://tinyurl.com/yd4dj3p6>. The consultation closes on 6<sup>th</sup> August.

# ***Apprenticeships update***

## **How much apprenticeship levy is left for non-levy payers?**

A year on from the start of the apprenticeship level paid by half a million large employers, 40% of those levy-paying employers still report seeing it as little more than an additional tax, according to research by the Open University. The OU further reports that although 37% support the levy in principle but want to see changes in the future, only 3% actively oppose it. However, among non-levy payers, the number of employers opposed to the levy is 11%.

Non-levy payers still do not have access to the funds raised and have to pay for apprenticeship training upfront. However, this will change after 6<sup>th</sup> April 2019, with all employers being able to access the levy pot. And this pot could be quite big, especially in England where employers have only withdrawn 8% of what they have paid in – which leaves £1.29 billion left over. Unless spending by levy payers increases substantially, this could leave a large amount for SMEs next year.

**Read this!** Read the report and data from the OU Research *The Apprenticeship Levy: One Year On* at <https://tinyurl.com/y967xuon>

## **Concern over rise in high level apprenticeships**

Shadow Skills Minister Gordon Marsden has urged an investigation following a huge increase in higher level management apprenticeship starts at level four and above, after it emerged that almost half of all starts in 2017-18 had the word “management” in the title. Mr Marsden worries that employers are using apprenticeships to upskill existing staff rather than train new people, despite reassurances from Skills Minister Anne Milton who said that “*high quality*” management apprenticeships were creating “*the leaders our businesses need to grow*”.

Ms Milton admitted that the department had no information on which apprenticeship standards levy-paying employers spent their apprenticeship funding on. Reform Think Tank Advisor Tom Richmond said, “*The key issue with apprenticeships is progression. Anything that smacks of rebadging, or simply validating normal training or professional development, is not going to get us the step change in numbers and quality that we desperately need.*” He also expressed concern that the levy money was being diverted away from young people at the beginning of their careers in favour of established senior executives.

## **Government has ‘no concerns’ over sub-contracting fees**

Education Select Committee chair Robert Halfon called sub-contracting fees of 30% charged by some providers as “*absolutely scandalous*”, but the government has said it has “*no concerns*” about them, despite over £100 million disappearing on the charges. The fees are used by prime providers to cover the management costs associated with working with subcontractors who deliver training on behalf of a prime provider.

Around a third of prime contractors have been going against best-practice limits agreed by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, Holesx and the Collab provider group by charging above 20%. Skills Minister Anne Milton said it was “*too soon*” for the government to take action in specific cases, despite assurances from the ESFA in April that it would review the fees and charges to ensure the funding was being used for “*recognised costs*”.

“Comprehensive” new subcontracting guidance is due to be published in time for the new academic year, but the Association of Colleges has said that it will not include tougher limits on top-slicing fees. The AoC was not part of the original group which recommended a maximum of 20%.

## *Other news in brief*

### **Futures secures National Careers Service contracts**

Not-for-profit organisation *Futures* has regained its National Careers Service contracts for the East Midlands and East of England regions, with a deal worth more than £23 million over three years.

The National Careers Service provides personalised careers information, advice, and guidance services to adults.

### **FETL paper on lifelong learning**

A FETL (Further Education Trust for Leadership) Occasional Paper *Reimagining Lifelong Learning: A Brief History of an Idea*, has been published as a contribution to the work of the Independent Commission on Lifelong Learning. It describes the meaning of ‘lifelong learning’, its emergence as an idea and how it has been used by policy-makers, planners and educationalists. It gives a useful overview of the main trends and ideas around lifelong learning.

**Read this!** The paper can be read at <https://tinyurl.com/y83yflob>

### **Consultation on education and employability for young people**

The Learning and Work Institute’s Youth Commission has launched a one-year study of issues around youth education and employability with the aim of improving opportunities for 16-24 year olds. The work will cover current outcomes for young people in differing geographical and demographic groups, the impact of change on the jobs market, whether current initiatives such as apprenticeships and T Levels match need, developing a vision for support and collating best practice examples from across the world.

**Find out more!** Information is available at <https://tinyurl.com/y8k5snjc>

**Get involved!** Send in your examples of good practice supporting young people through education and employment, or your ideas for change to [youthcommission@learningandwork.org.uk](mailto:youthcommission@learningandwork.org.uk)

### **ESF funding promises**

Chancellor Philip Hammond has reassured training providers receiving European Social Fund monies that their cash will be protected until the end of 2020, even if a ‘no-deal’ Brexit is reached. The funds will be “guaranteed” by the Treasury until that date, meaning that any organisation currently running a project within the 2014-2020 funding round will not face a sudden cessation of funding. The current round of ESF funds is worth about €3 billion (£2.3billion) in England.

However, there is still no word on what will happen after 2020 to funds which currently support thousands of people across the country to find training and employment. The government has published a response to the work and pensions committee’s *Future of the European Social Fund inquiry* in which it outlines plans to create a new fund with fewer bureaucratic burdens which will provide “wrap-around support for people with

complex needs”, but any actual details about a possible new *UK Shared Prosperity Fund* will not be addressed until next year’s spending review.

**Read this!** The government response to the Work & Pension Select Committee Report on ESF funding is at <https://tinyurl.com/yau4lfu5>

**Read this!** The updated government guidance is at <https://tinyurl.com/ybnsyzhh>

## Functional Skills consultation outcome

Ofqual have published a 29-page document outlining the changes resulting from the Functional Skills reform consultation. The changes, many of which are relatively small, come into effect in September 2019.

The main documents you will need to look at are:

- [Consultation decisions summary document](#)
- [Functional Skills English Guidance](#)
- [Functional Skills English Conditions and Requirements](#)
- [Functional Skills Maths Guidance](#)
- [Functional Skills Maths Conditions and Requirements](#)

## Importance of literacy, numeracy and IT skills

New research from the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry has shown that employers value basic numeracy, literacy and IT skills more than technical or sales techniques. Numeracy came out as the most important skill, with 92% of employers saying it was vital, followed by basic IT at 91%.

The results come from a survey of over 500 business leaders across London. Other vital skills were listed as problem solving (90%) and literacy and written communication (90%), but these were ranked slightly below numeracy and IT.

Job specific skills such as technical skills (86%) and customer and sales skills (85%) were ranked of lower importance, and foreign language skills were only identified by 55% of employers.

## Using phonics with adult learners

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) has published research into the *Current Practice in Using a System of Phonics with Post-16 Learners*. The report looks at the extent to which phonics approaches are being used with adult Entry level learners and identifies how adult literacy tutors might be supported to use phonics approaches effectively. The report also looks at current research into the effectiveness of using phonics with adult learners.

The report makes recommendations for a systematic approach to using phonics with adults and sets out why guidance and support is needed to successfully embed systematic approaches to teaching phonics in different post-16 settings. According to Gary Phillips from the ETF, “*workforce development is particularly crucial to the use of phonics in the teaching of reading and writing to adults in order that tutors can skilfully assess individual learners needs, select appropriate materials that gain learner confidence and use phonics effectively.*”

**Read this!** The full report is at <https://tinyurl.com/y7jfue2s>

# ***Focus on Funding, Resources & Events***

## **ETF training events**

### **1. Digital Skills**

ETF are running a number of free online training programmes, including *Applying your Digital Skills in Teaching and Learning Programmes*. There are seven courses designed to improve digital skills and build confidence in using technology – including video and content design – in the classroom, workshop or virtual learning environment. The seven courses each run for three weeks and repeat every month throughout the next year.

**Do this free Digital Skills in Teaching and Learning course!** Enrol on the course at <https://tinyurl.com/y9j6jb7c>

**Find out more about digital skills!** More information is at <https://tinyurl.com/y9sdecn4>

### **2. English and Maths**

Free support with English and Maths includes:

- [Free online modules and self-evaluation tools](#) to develop your personal maths or English skills at level 2, with some extension to level 3
- A range of tools, resources and case studies on the [Excellence Gateway](#), our resources portal with dedicated [maths](#) and [English](#) exhibition sites
- Resources for teaching [ESOL learners](#) in mainstream FE classrooms
- [Top Ten Tips](#) provide advice and guidance to improve outcomes
- [Guidelines for assessment and tracking](#), co-created with the sector, setting out clear expectations of effective practice in assessment for learning
- [Resources](#) to support promotion of maths and English in work experience

There is also a range of other digital, English and Maths support available for a small fee.

**Find out more about English and Maths support!** More info at <https://tinyurl.com/yapqn6be>

### **3. SEND**

The ETF National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) is running three network meetings to bring together Local Authority (LA) and FE SEND professionals to problem solve and ensure that young people with SEND have the best possible outcomes. There are 34 free places available (17 pairs of post-16 providers and local authority partners) and attendees must come to all the meetings:

- 17 October 2018 - identifying the challenge and working through solutions
- 5 December 2018 – learning from implementing solutions
- 12 February 2019 – celebrating success and identifying key learning.

**Get involved!** For further information, to register or to get help finding a partner, contact [Kirstin.hawkes@ndti.org.uk](mailto:Kirstin.hawkes@ndti.org.uk).

## Leading Change staff development programme for T Levels

FE News has worked with the Department for Education to offer free T-Level resources based on the experience and learning from a pilot project. 'There is a range of guidance resources for post-16 education providers and employers to help them to implement industry placements.

These resources will be particularly useful for providers who will be delivering industry placements in academic year 18/19 with funding from the Department for Education's capacity and delivery fund.

**Find out more!** See what resources are on offer at <https://tinyurl.com/y88n7kd4>

## Digital guides from Digital Unite

Digital Unite provides a huge range of easy to use digital guides, and they have bought out a few that are particularly designed to help you cope with the summer months. Check out some of the following:

- [How to book a holiday online](#)
- [Best travel websites](#)
- [How to use a Kindle](#)
- [Top tips when taking your mobile abroad](#)
- [How to use Google maps](#)

## Equality Act Handbook

If you need help understanding the Equality Act 2010 or want a handy reference guide, this may be of use. Written by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, it offers a set of checklists and advice for anyone advising learners.

**Download this!** The guide can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/yaeb2uz>

## Free training events from OCN London

If you are based in London, these courses running in August may be of interest:

### **SHORT COURSES TO SUPPORT LEARNERS' CHARACTER BUILDING AND SELF DEVELOPMENT**

**Wednesday 29 August 3.30pm-4.45pm**

OCN have developed a package of mini Awards to help learners to develop mental stamina, digital agility and confidence, as well as helping them to stay safe and healthy. The free afternoon curriculum awareness session will give more information on delivery and assessment of these qualifications.

**Find out more!** More info at <https://tinyurl.com/ydg4vwzy>

### **PRE-ACCESS PROGRAMMES**

**Wednesday 29 August 2pm-3.15pm**

ONC's Pre-Access programmes (at Entry 3 and Levels 1 and 2) are designed to help learners to progress onto Access to HE Diplomas and help organisations to grow their Access provision. The size of the qualifications means they can be delivered alongside GCSE English and /or maths. This session will provide a thorough introduction to the Pre-Access qualifications and an opportunity to ask questions.

**Find out more!** More info at <https://tinyurl.com/yc96lats>

If you find this Policy update useful, why not circulate it onto your colleagues? It is also published on the TSNLA website at <http://www.tsnla.org.uk/policy>

**Policy in your Pocket will return in the autumn. Have a wonderful summer!**

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