

# Flexible Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship Training Agencies: Consultation Summary

## Background

A number of recent skills policy announcements from Westminster, including January's FE White Paper – Skills for Jobs, have included proposals to make apprenticeships more flexible and a better fit to the working practices of some industries. Proposals include:

- Developing portable apprenticeships, putting apprentices in the driving seat, and enabling them to move between employers and step on and off their apprenticeship in industries or professions where short-term contracts are the norm
- Enabling apprentices with relevant skills and experience to do accelerated apprenticeships and complete their training more quickly
- Making training more flexible by enabling employers to 'front-load' training. This will embed key skills early on so that apprentices can hit the ground running from day one in the workplace

The Department for Education (DfE) is now consulting on proposals for reformed apprenticeship training agencies that will enable apprentices to have multi-employer programmes.

The online consultation can be found [here](#), and the guidance document [here](#). This consultation is open until 1<sup>st</sup> June.

Respondent's views will shape a £7m funding opportunity that will open for interest in July 2021 with the aim of supporting the setup of flexi-job apprenticeship schemes.

The consultation takes the form of seeking views from respondents on the details of the proposed flexible apprenticeship model described in the guidance.

A summary of the proposal and the questions is below.

If you have any questions about the proposals or the consultation, please contact [carl.jordan@euskills.co.uk](mailto:carl.jordan@euskills.co.uk)

## Summary

The proposal considers how the Apprenticeship Training Agency approach, which has been operating for a number of years to support *portable apprenticeships*, can be reformed to support *flexi-job apprenticeship schemes*, which must ensure that

- apprentices receive an excellent experience of both on and off-the-job training, and are supported to achieve their apprenticeship and to progress
- as apprentices move between placements with host businesses, the flexi-job apprenticeship scheme, as the apprentice's employer, provides constant support, ensuring that the movement between placements does not disrupt learning or the development of knowledge, skills, and behaviours
- in supporting the apprentice's journey to occupational competence, pastoral support must be woven into the fabric of how the scheme operates and schemes must have clear strategies for ensuring the quality of the apprenticeship experience for apprentices
- placements with host businesses deliver substantial on-the-job training and support and provide the opportunity for apprentices to apply and evidence the knowledge, skills, and behaviours they develop in order to pass their end-point assessment at the planned time.

In addition to hiring and placing apprentices, flexi-job apprenticeship schemes may also be expected to

- act as leaders and conveners within their sector, profession, or geography to address strategic skills challenges and drive the use of apprenticeships
- seek to increase the diversity of people undertaking apprenticeships in the industries and regions they serve
- develop and oversee schemes to facilitate the greater transfer of levy funds to support apprenticeships managed by the scheme or in other related employers
- identify demand for apprenticeship training provision and work with providers to develop capacity to meet this demand
- work with employers to identify new apprenticeships standards that may be required to meet emerging and future skills needs in a sector.

## Consultation Questions

- 1: Do you agree with our vision for flexi-job apprenticeship schemes?
- 2: How should flexi-job apprenticeships demonstrate that they are meeting the needs of employers?
- 3: What expectations should we set of flexi-job apprenticeship schemes in providing a high-quality experience for apprentices?
- 4: What challenges and opportunities are relevant to flexi-job apprenticeship schemes achieving financial sustainability? How might they balance a fee-based model with other income streams?
- 5: Does the name flexi-job apprenticeship scheme accurately describe our vision for these organisations and the role they will play? Would you propose any alternative names?
- 6: Do you have any views on our proposals for portable apprenticeships, including on how portable apprenticeships and flexi-job apprenticeship schemes can complement each other?
- 7: Do you agree that we should create a register of approved flexi-job apprenticeship schemes?
- 8: What entry criteria do you think we should establish for admission to this register in order to ensure that approved flexi-job apprenticeship schemes meet our vision set out in section 2?
- 9: How do you think the performance and quality of approved flexi-job apprenticeship schemes should be monitored and assured after admission to the register?
- 10: To assure the quality of flexi-job apprenticeship schemes, should schemes entry to the register set out the standards they can offer to apprentices? What process should we develop to enable schemes to change the standards they offer?
- 11: Do you have any concerns about the closure and withdrawal of the dormant register of ATAs?
- 12: Do you agree with the parameters we have proposed for how any funds awarded should be used?
- 13: Are there any capital costs that a new or expanding flexi-job apprenticeship scheme might require funding for?
- 14: Should there be a difference in how new or existing organisations are permitted to use the fund?
- 15: Should any additional parameters to the fund be added to encourage employer engagement – for example, pledged levy funds or matched co-funding for set up or expansion costs?
- 16: Do you have any views about the implications of the proposals set out in this consultation on people with protected characteristics, as defined in section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010? What evidence do you have on these matters? Is there anything that could be done to mitigate any impacts identified?