

# Policy Updates - November 2019

## Manifesto Pledges

As we approach the General Election 2019, the political parties have written and published their manifestos. We have extracted the pledges that could have an impact on employment and skills in our sector.

### Conservative

The Conservatives have pledged to invest in training and skills: if re-elected, they will review the workings of the Apprenticeship Levy. The manifesto also commits to 'a dramatic rebooting of our training system'. It describes not just training 'hundreds of thousands' more highly skilled apprentices but going even further to require significant numbers of new UK apprentices for all new large infrastructure projects. The Conservatives will also create a new National Skills Fund worth £3 billion over the course of the next Parliament to provide match funding for training for individuals and SMEs.

The Conservative manifesto is available to view [here](#).

### Labour

The Labour manifesto also sets out a number of skills initiatives: Labour would seek to make it easier for employers to spend funds from the Apprenticeship Levy, by allowing it to be used for a wider range of accredited training. A Climate Apprenticeship programme would be launched and employers would be expected to allocate 25% of the funds in their Apprenticeship Levy accounts to training Climate Apprentices. There would be extra support for small businesses, with the transferable amount to non-levy paying employers increased to 50%. However, Labour's headline pledge has been to bring energy and water infrastructure back into public ownership. Workers will be supported through the transition and will be guaranteed retraining opportunities and a new, unionised job on equivalent terms and conditions.

The Labour manifesto is available to view [here](#).

### Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats have pledged to enable an adaptable, future-focused workforce, empowering individuals through new Skills Wallets worth £10,000 for every individual. The Government would contribute £4,000 at age 25, £3,000 at age 40 and £3,000 at age 55. Individuals, their employers and local government would also be able to make additional top up payments into the wallets. Individuals would be able to choose how and when to spend this money. Government would work with industry to identify skills needs and to evaluate and

certify training courses. Under a Liberal Democrat government, there would be a 'major expansion' of high-quality apprenticeships and the Apprenticeship Levy would become a wider 'Skills and Training Levy'.

The Liberal Democrats' manifesto is available to view [here](#).

## Green Party

The Greens have pledged to invest £2 billion a year in training and skills, including new apprenticeships. The further education sector would be revived to provide a wider choice of academic and vocational learning and the funding rate would increase for 16-17 year olds, followed by an annual rise in line with inflation. Every higher education student would be fully funded and undergraduate tuition fees would be abolished. In line with Labour, the Green Party states that public services should 'belong to all of us', 'run by the people for the people'.

The Green Party manifesto is available to view [here](#).

## Structural Funds Consultation

The Scottish Government is currently consulting on [how European Structural Funds should be replaced in Scotland](#), post EU-exit. Under the current 2014-2020 programmes, Scotland benefits from over £780 million of funding through the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund, which is invested in key policies such as its Modern Apprenticeship schemes. The UK Government has indicated its intention to provide successor funding to European Structural Funds following Brexit, but the detail on the scale, objectives and allocation of such funding is under discussion. The consultation will close on 12 February 2020 and Energy & Utility Skills will submitting a response on behalf of the sector. If you would like to input into this, please contact [grace.storey@euskills.co.uk](mailto:grace.storey@euskills.co.uk) before Friday 10 January 2020.

## Report on 20% off-the-job apprenticeship requirement

Since the introduction of apprenticeship standards in May 2017, there has been a requirement that every apprentice spends at least 20% of their time on off-the-job training. City & Guilds and ILM have recognised that there is some concern around these requirements. The rules state that off-the-job training applies to all apprenticeships, new and old alike. The fact that every apprentice, whether a new or existing employee, is required – and closely monitored by law – to spend 20% of their time not doing their job is seen as one of the key challenges in the successful delivery of apprenticeships. City & Guilds and ILM have published this [guide](#) to help employers understand what the requirement really means and the range of different ways in which it can be implemented.

## T Levels – consultation on outline content

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) is continuing to finalise the Outline Content for the three Engineering and Manufacturing T Levels: Design and Development; Maintenance, Installation and Repair; and Manufacturing, Process and Control.

These courses will be designed to follow GCSEs and will be equivalent to three A Levels. They will combine classroom theory, practical learning and a 3-month industry placement with an employer to make sure students have real experience in the workplace. The [Post-16 Skills Plan](#) sets out the Government’s vision to reform technical education by creating a technical education option that prepares individuals for skilled employment by developing the technical knowledge and skills needed by employers and industry.

The consultation on the final outline content for the Design and Development T Level closed on 12 November 2019, while the consultations on the outline content for the Maintenance, Installation and Repair and Manufacturing, Process and Control T Levels are [expected to be launched](#) on 3 December 2019 and will close on 7 January 2020.

## Standards (Route) review

A consultation on the Institute’s review of the Engineering and Manufacturing Route is running in parallel to this, from 16 October to 8 January 2020. This will cover the Engineering and Manufacturing occupational map and 59 apprenticeship standards.

The [public consultation](#) forms a part of the wider review process, as discussed and documented in recent ATEAG meetings. Following the public consultation, there will be an additional four-week period where trailblazer groups will have the opportunity to feed in their views. This will end on 5 February 2020.

Energy & Utility Skills is preparing a shared sector response to submit to IfATE. Interested members can input their views via our [online survey](#), which will be open until 2 December 2019.