

## **White Paper - Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and Growth**

The White Paper, Skills for jobs: lifelong learning for opportunity and Growth was published by the government on 21 January 2021. The paper set out reforms to post-16 technical education and training to support people to develop the skills needed to get good jobs and improve national productivity. The paper repeats previously announced proposals including the Lifetime Guarantee announced in September 2020 but also announces new developments, some of which have short implementation timescales, with others likely to need further consultation and/or new legislation.

### **What does the White Paper recommend?**

The reforms proposed in the White Paper include:

#### **Putting employers at the heart of post-16 skills:**

- Give employers a central role working with further education colleges, other providers and local stakeholders to develop new Local Skills Improvement Plans which shape technical skills provision so that it meets local labour market skills needs.
- Pilot Local Skills Improvement Plans in Trailblazer local areas, exploring an approach where they are led by accredited Chambers of Commerce and other business representative organisations in collaboration with local providers; and engage employer and provider groups to ensure we create the most effective models of employer representation before wider rollout.
- Make Strategic Development Funding available in 2021/22 in a number of pilot areas to support colleges to reshape their provision to address local priorities that have been agreed with local employers.
- Ensure government has up-to-date and expert advice on the labour market and national skills gaps from the Skills and Productivity Board.
- Align the substantial majority of post-16 technical and higher technical education and training to employer-led standards set by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, so skills provision meets skills need.
- Continue to improve and grow apprenticeships, so more employers and individuals can benefit from them as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.
- Improve the quality of traineeships, to better support young people to transition to apprenticeships and other occupations.
- Continue to support participation in English, maths, and digital training to meet employers' needs and support people to progress in employment or further study.
- Invite proposals through the Strategic Development Fund to establish College Business Centres within further education colleges to work with employers in a designated sector on business development and innovation.

#### **Providing the advanced technical and higher technical skills the nation needs:**

- Use the new £2.5 billion National Skills Fund to enhance the funding to support adults to upskill and reskill. This will include an offer, backed by £95 million in 2021-22, for all adults to achieve their first full advanced (level 3) qualification as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

- Expand our flagship Institutes of Technology programme to every part of the country by the end of this Parliament, to spearhead the increase in higher-level technical skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.
- Continue to roll out T Levels, to prepare students for entry into skilled employment or higher levels of technical study, including apprenticeships.
- Reform higher technical education (levels 4 and 5) with a new approval system based on employer-led standards.
- Create clear progression routes for students towards the higher-level technical qualifications that employers need.

#### **A flexible Lifetime Skills Guarantee:**

- Implement the flexible Lifelong Loan Entitlement to the equivalent of four years of post-18 education from 2025.
- As a pathway towards the Lifelong Loan Entitlement, we will stimulate the provision of high-quality higher technical education (levels 4 and 5), as we work towards making it as easy to get a student finance loan for an approved Higher Technical Qualification as it is for a full-length degree.
- Introduce pilots to stimulate higher technical education and incentivise more flexible and modular provision.
- Determine how we can best stimulate credit transfer between institutions and courses.
- Consult on the detail and scope of the Lifelong Loan Entitlement in 2021.
- Improve how teaching is delivered so that it is more accessible, with the use of digital and blended learning.
- Provide clear information about career outcomes through occupational maps, wage returns data and ensuring providers give pupils information about all options.

#### **Responsive providers supported by effective accountability, governance, and intervention**

- We will consult on the following proposals to reform our funding and accountability system:
- Simplification and streamlining of funding for further education to support high-value provision relevant to the labour market, with elements of simplified and streamlined funding to be tested ahead of consultation.
- Give more certainty to providers over their funding, including considering how we could move to a multi-year funding regime.
- Reform our accountability approach, relaxing ringfences and reporting; instead focusing on outcomes.
- Introduce new accountability structures to underpin the delivery of Local Skills Improvement Plans.
- We will continue to invest in the college estate, to transform facilities and enable high-quality provision.
- Introduce new powers for the Secretary of State for Education, so the government can intervene quickly and decisively in cases where there are persistent problems that cannot otherwise be addressed, either with colleges not delivering effectively or where local providers are unable to deliver the skills priorities for that area.

- Strengthen the governance of colleges, by taking a clearer position on what good governance and leadership looks like and placing specific requirements on colleges and other provider types.
- Ensure that subcontracting practices improve educational outcomes.

### **Supporting outstanding teaching**

- Launch a national recruitment campaign for teachers in further education settings.
- Base Initial Teacher Education on employer-led standards.
- Improve the provision of high-quality professional development and support progression for teachers.
- Facilitate a strong relationship between industry and providers.
- Support apprenticeships teachers and lecturers with a tailored professional development offer.
- Introduce comprehensive workforce data collection

### **What has the reaction been?**

There has been general support for the White Paper giving attention to the FE sector and putting businesses at the heart of the system. FE Week published an article that brought together the reaction, in which some of the support was qualified by suggestions on how the reforms could be strengthened.

<https://www.fenews.co.uk/fevoices/61938-skills-for-jobs-white-paper-is-launched-sector-response> . The Association of Colleges view the paper as ambitious which delivers a significant shift in how colleges support the lifelong education and skills needs. <https://www.aoc.co.uk/fe-white-paper-aocs-response>

The University Alliance welcome the opportunity to build a more integrated tertiary education system that further incentivises HE and FE to work in partnership but have expressed series reservations on some of the proposals and are welcoming the opportunity to further engage in the full response to the review.

<https://www.unialliance.ac.uk/2021/01/21/university-alliance-responds-to-the-governments-skills-for-jobs-white-paper-and-interim-conclusion-of-the-review-of-post-18-education-and-funding/>

AELP welcomed the Skills for Jobs white paper with its outcome focused approach and emphasis on working closely with employers. They were pleased that the role of independent training providers was recognised. They believe that piloting the Local Skills Improvement Plans would be prudent, as there are major issues to untangle and understand. The local skills and employment infrastructure are complex, so it will be vital for all the stakeholders to see more details including what the proposed chamber-led trailblazers are going to be responsible for.

<https://www.aelp.org.uk/news/news/press-releases/outcome-focused-approach-in-fe-white-paper-welcomed-by-training-providers/>

### **What does this mean for Brighton and Hove?**

There is not yet enough detail on the Local Skills Improvement Plan to determine the impact on the city. The Council will be closely monitoring further developments how

this proposal links into the Skills Advisory Panels which are overseen by the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership. All organisations affected by the proposals will be reviewing and responding as further details emerge. The council through its partnership and networks, including colleges, universities, chambers and Sussex Council of Training Providers will be collaborating in order to keep informed and engaged.