

Local Government Association

## NEWSLETTER

Date: December 2021

**Reminder:** If you've not yet joined us on the KHUB you can sign up to our apprenticeships group [here](#).

**Got an urgent question on apprenticeships? Email us on our 24/7 query line on [info@spark.org.uk](mailto:info@spark.org.uk)**

Hi everyone,

Welcome to the latest LGA Apprenticeships Newsletter. This month we've got updates on COVID flexibilities, Apprenticeship Incentives, Pooled PAYE and the SENCO trailblazer for you, but all of us at the LGA would also like to take the opportunity to wish you all the best for the festive period and look forward to working with you all again in the New Year. Merry Christmas!

### **IFATE Postpones Flexibility Switch-Off in Light of New COVID Guidelines**

Following publication of the latest COVID-19 guidance from the government, IFATE has announced that the three flexibilities it introduced into the apprenticeships system during the pandemic that were due to expire in December will now be extended until 28 February to minimise the disruption in the early 2022. The flexibilities that will now be extended a further two months include:

1. Changes to be made to who sits on the end point assessment (EPA) interview/discussion panel (when someone in addition to the independent assessor is specified)
2. Suitable evidence of achievements being used in replacement of functional skills qualifications at gateway (other mandated qualifications are covered under temporary discretions)
3. Extension to the length of the end-point assessment period (where specified)

The remaining seven flexibilities that were introduced will be retained but will have to follow guidance set out in the Institute's new Flexibility Framework from 28 February.

You can read more about the extensions of the flexibilities here:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/about/newshub/news-events/institute-acts-fast-on-covid-19-flexibilities-following-latest-government-guidance/>

More information on the Flexibility Framework can be found here:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/developing-new-apprenticeships/resources/flexibility-framework/>

### **Public Sector Target Data Published: Starts down in 20/21, but up across the four-year period; Most councils miss their target**

Hopefully everyone saw my update last week on the publication of the public sector target data. If you didn't, some quick takeaways from the numbers are below:

- Local Government created 12,227 starts in 20/21, taking us to over 53,000 apprenticeships created since April 2017
- Starts fell 22.6% year on year from 19/20, but were still over 1,000 higher than in 17/18
- Our percentage performance against the PST was 1.2% in 20/21, and was 1.2% across the full four-year period, below the public sector average of 1.7%
- An estimated 6,400 starts took place across schools of all types, which implies a slight increase in the number of starts created in maintained schools, likely driven by the apprenticeship incentives
- 33 councils and combined authorities met their public sector targets across the full four-year period

For the full analysis of the data, and a copy of the spreadsheet we've put together with the key bits of data for each council that reported, please go to [this folder](#) on the KHUB where you can download both documents.

Lastly, profuse apologies to Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, who thanks to a feline-induced mishap (my cat deleted parts of the table) were accidentally omitted from the table of councils that had met their public sector target in 2020/21. We've updated the analysis document accordingly and want to take this opportunity to correct the record.

### **Apprenticeship Incentives: Application Period Set to Open on 11 January**

The government has now announced that the employers will be able to claim apprenticeship incentive payments (still worth £3,000 per apprentice) for the period 1 October 2021 to 31 January 2022 from 11 January 2022. The application period will close on 15 May 2022. To claim the incentive, any apprentices must have started their employment between 1 October and 31 January and have begun their apprenticeship by 31 March 2022. More information on how to apply is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/incentive-payments-for-hiring-a-new-apprentice>.

### **REMINDER: LGA T Levels Survey**

Just another quick reminder that the LGA's T Levels survey is still open. Thank you to all the councils that have responded so far. We are running the survey as part of the work the LGA is doing to support councils with the roll out of T Levels and to take on Industry Placements. The survey is a short one (takes 5 minutes to complete) and will give us a better picture of the sector's current views on T Levels and what activity is taking place.

You can complete the survey on Survey Monkey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/V7YR9TP>

Or you can complete a Word version (see attached) and send it back to me on

[jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk](mailto:jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk).

**Deadline for completing the survey is 5pm on 17 December.**

If you are interested in T Levels or want to find out more about the support available, please email [Sadique.Miah@local.gov.uk](mailto:Sadique.Miah@local.gov.uk).

### **Pooled PAYE: Latest Update**

The saga of the Pooled PAYE issue continues to rumble on. The latest updates are below:

1. **The LGA is raising the issue at political level with the Apprenticeships Minister** – in a letter sent welcoming the new Apprenticeships Minister Alex Burghart to his role, we also raised the Pooled PAYE issue and requested a meeting with him to discuss that and other parts of the apprenticeships and skills agenda. He has now agreed to meet with the three LGA Board Chairs that have some responsibility for apprenticeships and skills. A meeting date is in the process of being arranged and we will provide an update as soon as we are able to, should we make any progress.
2. **Providers have been alerted to the issue by ESFA** – Anyone who attended the roundtable we held with ESFA in September will know that one of the issues raised was that providers weren't alerting schools that they needed to check they were able to access apprenticeship funds before they offered a role to their prospective apprentice. We secured a commitment in that roundtable that ESFA would contact providers and ask them to get schools to check they were not affected by the Pooled PAYE issue before progressing. We have been informed that ESFA have now contacted providers to alert them of this and hope this will at least reduce the number of schools being caught unaware by this issue moving forward.
3. **Additional Workaround Identified** – Following recent discussions I have had with both West Sussex County Council and Rochdale MBC, there is another option we want to bring to councils' attention that may help in some circumstances. It is possible to pay for apprenticeship training privately with training providers. The plus side of this is that these transactions do not require the use of the DAS system, meaning it is open as a route that schools affected by the Pooled PAYE issue can take. The downside is that you can't use apprenticeship levy funds to pay for the training nor can you claim an apprenticeship incentive payment. Given the extra financial cost associated with this option, we don't expect it to be a 'solution' to the problem for most, but in the limited number of situations where a school has already hired someone and their apprenticeship would otherwise not be able to proceed, this may be an option that can be explored.
4. **Briefing on Pooled PAYE now available on KHUB** – following requests from a couple of councils, I have now put together a short 'beginner's guide' to Pooled PAYE, [which is now on the KHUB](#). this briefing summarises the issue, outlines the workarounds we know about so far and highlights the LGA's lobbying efforts on the sector's behalf to address the issue. This might be useful to share with colleagues who are unfamiliar with the issue and want a quick explainer to get them up to speed.

## **SENCO Apprenticeship Standard Development Update**

As it is a standard many councils are showing considerable interest in, we're delighted to include in this month's newsletter a message from the Chair of the SENCO trailblazer group providing an update on the current status of the standard.

*I am sure for many of you, the SENCO apprenticeship is something which is of real interest to your schools and very much needed. I have had demand from West Sussex school for a few years, which is why the LGA and myself have worked with the IfATE to develop this new apprenticeship standard.*

*Back in the spring, the DfE asked the SENCO Trailblazer group to pause the development of the SENCO apprenticeship standard while they undertook a review of the role and its training routes. At this point, we had written the standard and were part way through the assessment plan with a view to it being available for delivery from early 2022. However, due to internal DfE and Ministerial changes, the review and consultation didn't go ahead as planned but I am pleased to confirm I met with the DfE in October who have asked the trailblazer group to reconvene and get the apprenticeship development underway again*

*The trailblazer group has recently met and we are underway with the development of the apprenticeship assessment plan once again. The DfE sees the apprenticeship route as a future training pathway for a SENCO to gain their qualification. They have requested that the apprenticeship standard is available to new learners from autumn 2021 as it would be a pilot and help inform their consultation. The trailblazer group is committed to being part of the SENCO consultation when this occurs and will update the standard to ensure it reflects the consultation outcome at the appropriate point in the future.*

*The trailblazer group aim is to have the standard and assessment plan completed by late January/ early February 2022 at which point it would commence its consultation journey. The apprenticeship standard would be submitted to panel in March with the aim of it being approved and signed off by the Minister in May/June. This should enable delivery from autumn 2022. The trailblazer group is at capacity and includes both training providers and an End Point Assessment organisation which will enable delivery to start as soon as possible upon approval.*

*Please kindly note that as we are submitting the standard and the assessment plan together there will not be any further updates on the Institute's website until the formal approval by the Minister. Due to the late stage in the development of this apprenticeship, it isn't practical to join our group now and I thank you for your understanding.*

*The LGA will keep you updated on news about this apprenticeship standard.*

Elizabeth Flegg  
Apprenticeship Consultant at West Sussex County Council and Chair of the SENCO  
Trailblazer Group

## **LGA Apprenticeships Mapping Tool Update**

The next update to the LGA's Apprenticeships Mapping Tool, which maps council job roles to the most applicable apprenticeship standards, will be available on the KHUB on Thursday – you will be able to find it in the usual place [here](#) or by following these steps: LGA Apprenticeships Group > Library > 01. LGA Support Offer, Mapping Tool and Webinars > Apprenticeships Mapping Tool

## **LGA Apprenticeship Surgeries**

Below are a new round of surgery dates if you want to have a conversation with Apprenticeships Adviser Jamie Saddler about anything and everything apprenticeships. Half hour slots are available at the following times on the following dates throughout January and February.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Slots Available</b>					
<b>17-Jan</b>	1pm – 1.30pm	1.30pm - 2pm	2pm - 2.30pm	2.30pm - 3pm	3pm - 3.30pm	3.30pm - 4pm
<b>31-Jan</b>	1pm – 1.30pm	1.30pm - 2pm	2pm - 2.30pm	2.30pm - 3pm	3pm - 3.30pm	3.30pm - 4pm
<b>24-Feb</b>	1pm – 1.30pm	1.30pm - 2pm	2pm - 2.30pm	2.30pm - 3pm	3pm - 3.30pm	3.30pm - 4pm

If you want to book a slot, please email Jamie on [jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk](mailto:jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk) letting him know which your preference(s) are and a very brief outline of anything you think he will need to know before the meeting.

## **Webinars**

Following Wednesday's webinar on Delivering Apprenticeships with Impact, we have now completed our autumn webinar programme. If you missed any of them, are new to apprenticeships and want to catch up with some of the latest discussions, or just simply want to listen back to any of the webinars we have held in 2021/22 so far, you can do so at the following links:

- **Traineeships** (with Steve Latus, Head of Traineeships, ESFA)  
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/9122320737672692495>
- **LGA Schools Apprenticeships Toolkit** (with Andy Turner, Rochdale Borough Council)  
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/6119967898749762563>
- **LGA 2021 Apprenticeship Survey Results** (with Jamie Saddler, Apprenticeships Adviser, LGA)  
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/7847968069824875521>
- **Successful Apprenticeship Governance & Oversight** (with NE Lincolnshire, Barnsley and Somerset Councils)  
<https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/6580134406001150477>
- **Levy Transfers: How the new system works and what's still to come** (with John Myers, Head of Apprenticeships Funding Policy, ESFA; Kate McDonagh, Apprenticeships Funding Policy Manager, ESFA; and Thurrock Council)  
<https://attendeegotowebinar.com/recording/3101539102006397711>
- **Supporting Apprentices During Virtual Working** (with City of York, Dudley MBC and London Borough of Enfield)  
<https://attendeegotowebinar.com/recording/4358474406755801094>
- **Implementing Apprenticeships with Impact** (with Sandwell and Salford Councils)  
<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/1264572931937921037>

if you want to view the slide packs, you can do so on the KHUB via the following steps:

LGA Apprenticeships Group > Library > 01. LGA Support Offer, Mapping Tool and Webinars > Webinars and Resources

## Your suggestions/ideas

If you have any suggestions for what you'd like to see in future newsletters, have items you want to add yourselves, want to sign a colleague up to our mailing list or want to **unsubscribe** yourself from the mailing list, please contact [jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk](mailto:jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk)

Best wishes

Jamie, Sadique and Nigel

### Jamie Saddler

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