

**Local Government Association**

# **NEWSLETTER**

**Date: March 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 from the Budget, our support programme and the role of the practice educator for the Occupational Therapist apprenticeship, but we start this month with the latest on the Pooled PAYE issue.

## **Pooled PAYE – ESFA Announce Potential Solutions**

Many councils that run Pooled PAYE schemes for their non-maintained schools have been affected by a long-running issue that has prevented the schools signed up to these systems from properly accessing apprenticeships. For anyone unfamiliar with the problems, any non-maintained schools that are part of a Pooled PAYE scheme with their local authority are functionally unable to access apprenticeships, as they share the same PAYE number. This prevents these schools from setting up their own DAS account to access non-levy funding, prevents the local authority from setting up a levy transfer and prevents the receipt of apprenticeship incentives.

I have been discussing this issue with ESFA colleagues to try find a solution for a couple of years now, with this effort particularly ramped up over the last eight months since the incentive payments were introduced. ESFA have taken the issue seriously, though it has not been easy for them to find a fix for this problem.

ESFA have now completed an extensive piece of work to identify the options available to solve the problem and have written to all employers that had flagged this issue with their helpdesk to explain what they are. ESFA invited me to a briefing on Monday to explain their thinking and share their letter, a copy of which I have attached to this email for reference.

Four potential solutions have been put forward for councils to consider, though it has not been possible to create a new way an alternative registration route for employers without their own PAYE scheme that provides an acceptable level of assurance.

The four potential solutions that have been identified are:

1. Ending the Pooled PAYE scheme, with the affected schools then creating their own PAYE scheme and DAS account;
2. A local authority employing the apprentices directly and then seconding them to the non-maintained schools;
3. Working with an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA) to recruit, employ and arrange training on behalf of non-maintained schools;

4. Working directly with a training provider to access any remaining funding through that providers' procured non-levy contract before those contracts end on 31 March 2021.

Option 4 is clearly only a very short-term option, which may help councils solve the problem for apprenticeship starts that are currently ready to go but are being held up by this process. If this is an option you want to explore further, a good starting point is to check out the list of providers that received non-levy allocations in 20/21. This list will not tell you who still has funding available but should at least help you narrow down which providers to speak to if you want to explore this option. You can find that list here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/funding-allocations-to-training-providers-2020-to-2021>

If you have any questions about any of what has been announced, you can contact the helpdesk on [helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk](mailto:helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk) or 08000 150600. You are also welcome to contact me directly on [jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk](mailto:jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk) to discuss any aspect of this further.

## Budget 2021

As many of you will have seen, government announced a number of new measures related to apprenticeships in the Budget earlier this month. These included:

- **Apprenticeship Incentive Payments**
  - Increased to £3k per new apprentice – regardless of age
  - Extended through to end of September 2021
  - Will continue to be paid in addition to any other incentives the apprentice may be eligible for (e.g. 16-18)
- **New Flexi-Job Apprenticeship**
  - Apprentices can be linked to an agency instead of one employer and take on jobs with multiple businesses
  - Targeted at industries with more flexible working patterns (e.g. TV & Film / Construction)
  - Employers can bid for a share of a £7m fund to create new agencies – first 'flexi-job' expected in Jan '22
- **Expansion of Traineeships**
  - Extra £126m to expand traineeships by an extra 40,000 in 2021/22
  - Includes £22m to continue the employer incentive payments of £1,000 per trainee
- December's **Spending Review** in previously confirmed £2.5bn for apprenticeships and further improvements and announced plans for a **new online Levy Transfer matchmaking service** from August 2021.

I have attached the comms sent out by ESFA on the day, which also includes a good summary of what was announced, while you can also listen back to our discussion on the announcements with our on-the-day ESFA Q&A Session. I've attached the slides from this session to the email, and you can listen back to the session here:

**REMINDER: Reaching Local People – Supporting the Hard to Reach Webinar  
Wednesday 10 Feb 2pm – 3.30pm**

A final reminder that our next webinar will be taking place on Wednesday. With the theme 'Supporting the Hard to Reach, this webinar will look at how to make a successful impact through the Apprenticeship Bursary for Care Leavers and other individual-focused incentives and programmes.

[You can register for the webinar here](#)

You can also sign up for the other two webinars we have announced so far below (there will be more to come as we enter Spring/Summer):

***Reaching Local Employers: Making the Best Use of Levy Transfers***  
***Wednesday 31 March 2pm – 3.30pm***

This webinar will look at successful apprenticeship impact through the Apprenticeship Levy Transfer process. Hear from the LGA on what makes a good transfer policy and how our support work can help you with yours; Hear from councils that have put Levy Transfer into practice successfully and their plans to develop this activity further to support Covid recovery; and hear from the government on the improvements being made to levy transfer, including the development of the national levy matchmaking service, due to launch in August.

[Register here](#)

***Rebuilding the Workforce Plan***  
***Wednesday 14 April 2021 2pm – 3.30pm***

This webinar will help you consider the impact of Covid on skills gaps, shortages and wider workforce development priorities as well as cover the latest thinking and activity to help you rebuild a coherent programme for current staff and new recruits.

[Register here](#)

**LGA Apprenticeship Surgeries**

Thank you to all of the councils that have taken advantage of our Apprenticeship Surgeries so far, we've had some useful conversations which I hope are helping move you forward.

The surgeries are a new element of our support package for 2021 are online which we'll be running a couple of times a month. If you've got any issues you want to raise, want advice on a particular topic or want to highlight an issue you'd like the LGA to raise with government on your behalf, you can now book a half-hour slot with our Apprenticeships Adviser Jamie Saddler to discuss anything and everything apprenticeships.

Some new dates for surgery slots are available below:

Date	Slots Available					
<b>29-Mar</b>	2pm - 2.30pm	2.30pm - 3pm	3pm - 3.30pm	3.30pm - 4pm	4pm - 4.30pm	
<b>13-Apr</b>	2pm - 2.30pm	2.30pm - 3pm	3pm - 3.30pm	3.30pm - 4pm	4pm - 4.30pm	
<b>10-Mar</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.

**Apprenticeship MOTs**

Apprenticeship MOTs were a new process developed by the LGA as part of our support offer for councils on apprenticeships in 2019/20. The MOT is essentially a health check, a min-review of a local authority's apprenticeship programme and is designed to:

- develop a clear picture of a council apprenticeships programme, consider what it is doing well and which areas it should consider for improvement
- understand what the apprentice experience is like at the council and share best practice
- show how the council compares to the national and regional averages on apprenticeships starts, levy spend, schools and maturity model self-assessment
- provide an external assessment of the council's performance against the Maturity Model to compare that with the council's own assessment;
- produce a short report setting out progress, comparisons, improvement priorities and identifying areas where LGA support can help.

The process is delivered entirely online and requires an initial three-hour meeting with the key officers delivering your apprenticeship programme to discuss your successes and challenges, how your apprenticeships are being supported, where you want to get to and how you are performing against the Maturity Model.

If your council would like to discuss the process further or book an MOT, please email the LGA's Apprenticeships Adviser: [jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk](mailto:jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk).

### **REMINDER: Still time to sign up for Local Government Apprentice of the Year Awards 2021 – 22 April 2021**

As we mentioned in our last newsletter, the LGA is supporting East of England LGA and South West Councils to develop and hold the Local Government Apprentice of the Year Awards 2021.

Based on the format of previous regional Apprenticeship Challenges, this national one-day event is an exciting event that will provide the opportunity for apprentices to learn, network and showcase their skills, expertise and initiative during a one-day event. Over the course of the day, apprentices will work in virtual teams to experience the opportunities, risks and challenges involved in delivering successful local government services, in a developmental environment.

- Are you an apprentice looking to push yourself and to test your skills and capability?
- Are you interested in challenging and developing yourself alongside others in the same position?
- Would you like to stand out and be recognised nationally amongst your peers?
- Then this is the event for you!

Unlike similar events that have run previously, this is a national event, open to apprentices working in local government in any of the nine English regions. EELGA and South West Councils have been working hard to pull this event together on behalf of the sector and we are pleased to be able to support them in doing so.

We would strongly welcome the engagement and support of employers and managers of apprentices to encourage them to sign up for the event. The activities participants will undertake during this event focuses on some of the core principles around the 21st century public servant key model.

This national event is open to all level 2 and level 3 apprentices in local government in England (current apprentices or recently qualified within last 12 months). Places cost £149 per apprentice and can be booked here: <https://www.eelga.gov.uk/events/local-government-apprentice-of-the-year-awards-2021/>

If you have any queries about the event, please contact Jayne Cole, Events Coordinator, East of England LGA on [Jayne.cole@eelga.gov.uk](mailto:Jayne.cole@eelga.gov.uk).

If you or an organisation you work with would be interested in sponsoring the event, please contact Emma Grant, EELGA on [emma.grant@eelga.gov.uk](mailto:emma.grant@eelga.gov.uk).

## Occupational Therapy Degree Apprenticeship

From conversations with colleagues at Health Education England, I understand that there has been some confusion between employers and providers over the role of the practice educator and whether the practice educator's employer needs to be on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers.

This is an issue that also previously came up with the Social Worker apprenticeship and may indeed come up again with other standards that use this model. Having spoken to ESFA colleagues today, I have received the following confirmation from them as to the most appropriate way forward: "If the host employer is not being paid to deliver training and/or on-programme assessment they do not need to be on ROATP. If they are being paid for this, then they do."

## Apprenticeships in the News

### Apprenticeships, Traineeships, Kickstart...what's right for my organisation?

*FE News.co.uk, Friday 12 March 2021*

[Read more here](#)

### 'Absurd': Small employers blocked from apprentice cash incentives

*Billy Camden, FE Week, Friday 12 March 2021*

[Read more here](#)

### 'Flexi-job' apprenticeships: What are they and how will they work?

*Fraser Whieldon, FE Week, Friday 5 March 2021*

[Read more here](#)

### "The Budget should have tackled the deep structural problems with apprenticeships"

*Andy Norman, FE Week, Wednesday 3 March 2021*

[Read more here](#)

## Previous Newsletters

Missed one of our [previous newsletters](#)? They are now archived on the KHUB. You can find copies at the links below:

## 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 [Sadique.miah@local.gov.uk](mailto:Sadique.miah@local.gov.uk)

Best wishes

Jamie, Sadique and Nigel

**Jamie Saddler**

Apprenticeships Adviser  
Local Government Association

t: 07780 226 832 | e: [jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk](mailto:jamie.saddler@local.gov.uk)