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Trailblazer Scheme and Apprenticeships in the Electro- Mechanical Trades

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Trailblazers

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Benefits of Apprenticeship programmes

- The apprenticeships programme is already successful and provides proven benefits to both employers and apprentices.
- For apprentices, it can equip them with the skills needed for a successful career and be a genuine alternative to going to University or even an opportunity to combine an apprenticeship with higher education.
- For employers, it can provide a highly efficient and effective means of developing the skills of their workforce.

Why the changes in Apprenticeship programmes?

- The Richard Review (2012) found that there were key areas of the programme where significant improvements could be made.
- Make it more rigorous and responsive to the needs of employers
- Help to drive growth in the number of apprenticeships.

Recommendations from the review

The key measures aim to:

- Put employers in the driving seat. Apprenticeships will be based on standards designed by employers, making them more relevant and therefore more attractive to existing and new employers.
- Increase the quality of apprenticeships. An apprentice will need to demonstrate their competence through rigorous and holistic assessment. This will focus on the end of the apprenticeship to ensure that the apprentice is ready to progress.

- Simplify the system. The new employer-designed standards will be short and easy to understand. They will describe the skills, knowledge and behaviour that an individual needs to be fully competent in an occupation.
- Give employers purchasing power. Putting control of government funding for the external training of apprentices in the hands of employers, to empower businesses to act as customers, driving up the quality and relevance of such training.

Trailblazers

- Trailblazers are groups of employers who have come together to be some of the first to design new apprenticeship standards and assessments, helping to define, test and improve the system.
- These new standards will replace the existing apprenticeship frameworks.

Essential criteria

- All Apprenticeship standards must:
- be short, concise, accessible documents. They must describe the skills, knowledge and competency required for a specific occupation, and to allow an apprentice to operate confidently within the sector.
- describe what full competence for a specific occupation means so that, on completion, an apprentice will have the skills, knowledge, behaviour and confidence to perform the role in any part of the sector. An end assessment will be required.

Essential criteria

- Be publicly recognised by employers (including small businesses), recognised professional or trade bodies and, where appropriate, higher education institutions (HEIs), as fit for purpose.
- Be suitable for small businesses to use to train their apprentices, if necessary with external training.

Essential criteria

- contain sufficient content and be pitched at such a level, that a new entrant to the occupation would find it stretching and require at least one year of training to meet the standard.
- include any skills, and any other requirements, for professional registration if such a system exists in the sector or occupation so that, on completion, a successful apprentice can achieve professional registration.
- specify the level of English and maths achievement required, whether this is the minimum level required by government for all apprentices or a level above this minimum set by the Trailblazer.

Optional criteria

- Any new standard may:
- specify any mandatory qualifications to be achieved by all apprentices as a pre-requisite to taking the end-point assessment.

Funding for the standards

- As part of the wider reforms to apprenticeships, employers will control the funding of apprenticeship training.
- There has been ongoing trialling of a simple funding model for apprenticeships based on standards since the beginning of the 2014 to 2015 academic year (AY14/15), this will continue during AY15/16.
- The model may be subject to change in subsequent years in the light of experience gained in the trial, but its key elements are currently:
- A single government co-investment rate for core funding. This means that for every £1 employers contribute to the external training and assessment costs of an apprenticeship, government will pay £2.

Funding for the standards

- This will apply up to a clear cap for the standard – the Core Government Contribution (CGC). There are five caps set at £18,000, £8,000, £6,000, £3,000 and £2,000.
- Employers will have the opportunity to negotiate the actual price for training and assessment with the provider(s) they are working with. The price will vary depending on the needs of the employer and the apprentice(s).

Funding for the standards

- There will be additional payments on top of the CGC for small businesses up to 50 employees (between £500 and £2,700), for taking on a 16-18 year old apprentice (between £600 and £5,400) and for successful completion (between £500 and £2,700).
- Where apprentices need to complete training in English and maths at level 1 or level 2, this will be fully funded.

Developing a new standard

- In order to develop a standard for an occupational area, the following criteria must be met:
- The proposed occupation is unique and there is not already a standard in development.
- There is not a high degree of overlap between the proposed occupation and another either proposed or in development.
- The occupation will require rigorous and substantial training of over a year to achieve full competence, with off-the-job training accounting for at least 20% of the apprenticeship.
- The occupation is at a sufficiently high level to allow the successful apprentice to develop transferable skills that will enable them to perform this role in a business of any size or relevant sector.

Trailblazer membership criteria

- Employer Development Group Criteria
- There is a wide range of employers, meaning at least 10 (in addition to any participating professional bodies, trade associations etc) committed to being actively involved in the development of the standard.
- These employers are reflective of those who employ people in this occupation – including in terms of size (the group must include small employers) and sector or sectors.
- One employer member has been chosen by the group to act as Chair.

Trailblazer membership criteria

- Any other organisations involved, such as sector or trade bodies, professional bodies, training providers or industry training boards have been invited to support the process by the employer leads and their role is specifically to support the employers.
- The group is willing to work inclusively and collaboratively with other employers or groups who come forward with an interest in the same or similar occupation(s).
- Employers involved in the Trailblazer should have the intention of making use of the standard once it is available for delivery.