



## Pearson UK – Funding News

28 August 2015

*Funding News provides a regular round-up of 16-18, 19+ and apprenticeship funding, and related news from government departments, funding agencies and other relevant organisations.*

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News this week includes a new group set up by the Skills Funding Agency to support their work on creating a simpler, more locally focused and responsive funding system for adult skills, the release of an updated version of the register of apprentice assessment organisations (a list of organisations that have been assessed as being suitable to conduct independent end-point assessment of apprentices and be in receipt of public funds), information from Hefce for alternative providers on course designation (the first window for applications for courses starting in 2016-17 will open on 1 September 2015 and close on 30 September 2015), and a report from right-leaning think tank Policy Exchange who argue that secondary schools should cover the costs of some or all their students who fail to get a C in GCSE English or maths.

### BIS

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### Pearson

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## Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

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### National living wage

BIS have published a [policy paper](#) which explains the National Living Wage (NLW) announced in the Summer Budget 2015 and includes information on the rates. From April 2016, the government will introduce a new mandatory NLW for workers aged 25 and above, initially set at £7.20 – a rise of 70p relative to the current rate, and 50p above the increase coming into force in October. It equates to a £1,200 per annum increase in earnings for a full-time worker on the current NMW. The adult NMW rate is currently £6.50.

### 24+ advanced learning loans application information

BIS have [released](#) the latest monthly report on the number of applications for 24+ advanced learning loans for the August 2014 to July 2015 and August 2015 to July 2016 academic years. The total number of applications received for the 2014/15 academic year, from April 2014 to July 2015, was 68,330, and the total number of applications received for the 2015/16 academic year, to July 2015, was 16,220.

## Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and Skills Funding Agency

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### FE data library: apprenticeships

A new version of apprenticeships geography age and level: starts 2005/06 to 2014/15, has been added to the [statistical data set for apprenticeships](#).

## Skills Funding Agency

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### Funding reform and localism steering group

The Agency have [announced](#) a new group set up to support their work on creating a simpler, more locally focused and responsive funding system for adult skills. This follows on from the announcement last week about the Agency's [moratorium](#) on qualification approval for 19+ funding which is being implemented as the Agency work on changing the approval process following publication of the government's productivity plan. Members of the new group include representation from LEPs, combined authorities and the FE sector, and it will be chaired by Dr Ann Limb CBE, Chair of South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP). The group will help the Agency shape how adult skills are funded (excluding apprenticeships) to meet local needs in a way that is simpler to operate. The Agency has also reviewed their existing advisory arrangements and the current groups – the Funding External Technical Advisory Group (FETAG) and the Qualifications Advisory Group (QAG) – will cease to operate.

### Apprenticeship standards in development

The Agency has updated the [contact details](#) for the occupations approved for the development of an apprenticeship standard document, and a more newly approved [standards](#) have been published over the past week.

### Register of apprentice assessment organisations

A new version of the [register](#) of apprentice assessment organisations was uploaded on 26 August. The register is a list of organisations that have been assessed as being suitable to conduct independent end-point assessment of apprentices and be in receipt of public funds. Only these organisations are eligible to conduct independent end-point assessment of apprentices. Employers of apprentices will select an organisation from the register to conduct independent end-point assessment. The register will be regularly updated as more organisations

successfully apply. (For anyone having trouble with the Excel file (it's a new version which doesn't work for those with older versions), the Agency is aware of this and is looking to fix it.)

## **Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency**

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### Joint audit code of practice

The [Joint Audit Code of Practice](#) (JACOP) sets out a common standard for the provision of assurance in relation to funding of post-16 providers. It sets out the specific requirements for the assurance, accountability and audit arrangements for providers of post-16 education and training and the broad framework in which they should operate. This version of JACOP is relevant to accounting periods ending on or after 31 July 2015 and will be updated by SFA and EFA as required.

## **Higher Education Funding Council for England**

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### New Hefce information on applications and re-designation

Hefce have published [new information](#) for alternative providers on course designation. It explains how to apply for specific course designation and provides new information for existing providers with specific course designation, including details of the annual re-designation exercise and the process for reporting changes of circumstance. The first window for applications for courses starting in 2016-17 will open on 1 September 2015 and close on 30 September 2015 and there are three different application routes: repeat applicants for providers that have current specific-course designation that wish to apply for additional courses, new applicants for providers that do not currently have specific-course designation, and postgraduate only for providers that do not currently have specific-course designation and wish to apply for postgraduate level courses only.

## **BIS Commons Select Committee**

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### Inquiry on government's productivity plan

In late July the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee launched an [inquiry](#) on government's recently published [Productivity Plan](#). The inquiry – the Committee's first of the new Parliament – explores whether the Productivity Plan addresses the main causes of low productivity in the UK and whether it is likely to achieve its desired results. The Productivity Plan covers a wide range of areas, including the tax regime for businesses, skills, science and innovation, digital infrastructure, investment and trade.

## **Association of Employment and Learning Providers**

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### Short statement on apprenticeship levy consultation

The AELP published a short [statement](#) on the apprenticeship levy [consultation](#) released last week. The AELP warn that proposals to introduce the levy in 2017 may be too ambitious and they would rather employers and providers be given more time to build more capacity into the system over the next three or four years. They also highlight the importance of finding a solution to how SMEs will be funded for their apprenticeships which they argue should not be managed through mandatory cash contributions.

## Policy Exchange

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### Crossing the line: improving success rates among students retaking English and maths GCSEs

On 25 August right-leaning think tank Policy Exchange published a [report](#) arguing that secondary schools should cover the costs of some or all their students who fail to get a C in GCSE English or maths and end up transferring from the school to a FE College to take their resits. *Crossing the Line* reports that FE Colleges are left to deal with a far greater proportion of students taking resits in GCSE maths and English compared to secondary schools and sixth form colleges. FE Colleges also take on more students who have received grades below a D and who require more intensive teaching.

## Pearson

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### Steve Besley's Policy Watches

The latest from Steve Besley can be found on the [Pearson UK](#) website or [sign up](#) for email updates direct to your inbox.

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