



Traineeship Position Statement

On behalf of the Northern Skills Network Board

The Traineeship programme plays a unique and niche role in the delivery of learning and work experience support to young people. It has grown significantly in key parts of the North as its core skills offer has been welcomed by young people, especially for those who have dropped out of mainstream education or need some additional support to become Apprenticeship ready. The programme has, time and time again, shown how effective it can be in re-engaging learners and supporting them to progress onto another programme of learning, employment or an Apprenticeship. Many of the northern local authorities support traineeships as a pathway to employment and apprenticeships and support with reducing NEET figures and reengagement.

The decision to remove standalone traineeship funding contracts and integrate it into the wider Study Programme for 16-18 provision, is a retrograde decision. It has the very real potential to result in the removal of Traineeship type provision in its entirety, reduce choice for learners, increase levels of NEET whilst reducing Apprenticeship starts and cause unnecessary instability in the provider market. The removal of funding is likely to have a serious impact on a group of providers whose experience cannot be replaced immediately. All this at a time when there is uncertain economic times ahead and learning providers will be needed to deliver skills programmes to support the country through a possible recession and any subsequent recovery.

It is against this backdrop that the Northern Skills Network, and its member networks across the North of England, is lobbying strongly for the DfE to rethink its policy decision and protect the Traineeship programme.

Impacts identified by member organisations and employers include:

- Reduction in Choice and opportunity
- NEET increase across some of the most affected local authority areas
- Lack of progressions onto an Apprenticeship pathways
- 16-18 Apprenticeship starts will experience a further decline
- The provider base will be further destabilized
- Reduction of recruitment pipeline for businesses struggling to recruit committed, sustained employment.
- Lack of traineeship offer or interest with existing study programme primes
- Devolved authorities complex procurement for 19+ may result in traineeship provision being ignored

The Northern Skills Network board, want to work with the northern MCA's and non-devolved areas to ensure traineeship offer remains strong, and the providers deliver good quality provision. We ask Department for Education to rethink their plans to merge 16-18 provision into study programmes based on the lack of interest and commitment from those primes to support traineeship provision and we ask for the department to work with us and with the existing pool of good quality traineeship providers, share practice, encourage greater take up and commit to traineeship promotion and pathways as an important part of the apprenticeship branding.