



The Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP

Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education

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Dear apprenticeship colleagues

Today my department has published data on the number of achievements on the apprenticeship programme in the first 6 months of the 2022 to 2023 academic year and the full-year apprenticeship achievement rates for the 2021 to 2022 academic year. I am pleased to see that in the first six months of 2022 to 2023, 22% more apprentices have achieved occupational competence compared to the same period last year.

Behind these numbers are individuals, young people just starting out in their professional lives, as well as those wishing to upskill or change career – people from all backgrounds, who you have helped to climb the ladder of opportunity to get fulfilling, career-building jobs. I want to thank you all for the brilliant work you're doing as further education and training providers, employers, assessment organisations or others supporting the programme.

I also know that there is much more for us to do collectively to raise the annual apprenticeship achievement rate, currently standing at 51% for apprenticeship standards. While not all the reasons for non-achievement are within the gift of providers or employers, I know that, like me, you want to see this figure improve. Supported by the dedication and expertise of our further education and skills sector, we all want to see the quality of apprenticeships continue to improve for apprentices of all backgrounds, to drive social justice and support the economy. Our ambition of reaching a 67% achievement rate for apprenticeship standards by 2024 to 2025 remains a cornerstone of this improvement drive.

We will now take further action to support you to improve achievements:

- Today my department publishes, for the first time, the aggregate results of our **apprentice feedback** survey, which shows overwhelmingly that apprentices really appreciate their training provider. However, it also highlights areas for improvement. We're also publishing the results of our new **exit feedback survey** which is sent to learners who withdraw from the programme. Using and improving the data available on achievements will be key to our success. You can find out more in our [report on apprenticeship achievements](#).
- In April, we will launch our new **Apprentice Support Centre**, bringing together in one place essential information and resources to help those already on an apprenticeship to make the most of their experience and achieve occupational

competence. Apprentices will be able to easily find and access the right support, whether this is to find out more about their end-point-assessment or what support and assistance is available to them if they have learning difficulties or disabilities.

- We are also facilitating a **partnership between Disability Rights UK (DRUK) and the Association of Apprentices (AoA)** to put in place a new community to share support and information among disabled apprentices. I have asked officials to look at what more we can do to make sure apprentices access available support and to remove barriers to participation and achievement.
- We are supporting providers to deliver excellent provision through **£7.5m of investment in the workforce development programme** for teachers and trainers of apprentices. The second phase of this is now gathering pace; I encourage all of you to access and use these free resources ([Apprenticeship Workforce Development - The ETF \(et-foundation.co.uk\)](https://www.et-foundation.co.uk)) which have been developed by the Education and Training Foundation in partnership with the Association of Colleges (AoC), the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), the University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC), Strategic Development Network (SDN) and SQW.
- We have asked the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) to facilitate **exceptional funding band reviews for 20 priority standards** to ensure that funding reflects current costs of delivery and can continue to support quality of provision.
- We will continue to work with End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs), IfATE and Ofqual to improve end-point assessment. The Federation of Awarding Bodies are producing an **EPAO good practice guide**. The Guide will address the roles and responsibilities of EPAOs and how they should work in partnership with employers, providers and apprentices to deliver a high quality service.
- IfATE are **integrating mandatory qualifications and end point assessments where appropriate**, to simplify and improve the experience for apprentices. This includes degree apprenticeships as part of [reforming how degree apprenticeships are designed and delivered](#) so that they integrate the best of degree-level study and off-the-job-training.
- We have refreshed our [guide for providers to deliver high quality apprenticeships](#), including a new section on remote learning.
- We will continue to offer **targeted support for employers** to be great employers of apprentices. We have updated our step-by-step guide for employers ([Employ an apprentice for your business: step by step \(apprenticeships.gov.uk\)](#)). We also plan to **showcase and publicise employers who are successful in their own achievement rates**.

- We will continue our drive to **improve and simplify apprenticeship systems and processes** to free you up to provide high quality programmes.

In addition, we recognise the important role smaller employers play in creating apprenticeship opportunities, particularly for younger people and those in disadvantaged areas, and we want to ensure smaller employers have the access to the apprenticeships they need to meet their ambitions, fill their skills gaps, and grow their business. That's why from 3 April **small employers who do not pay the levy will no longer be limited to a maximum of 10 new apprenticeship starts** - they will be able to recruit as many high-quality apprentices as their business needs.

I know that you are already committed to supporting apprentices from all backgrounds every step of the way, and together we can re-new our efforts to ensure achievements improve year-on-year.

I look forward to continuing to work with you on this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Halfon', written in a cursive style.

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