



Department  
for Education



Department  
for Business  
Innovation & Skills

# Traineeships

Supporting young people to develop  
the skills for Apprenticeships and  
other sustained jobs

**A discussion paper**

**January 2013**

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## Foreword by Matthew Hancock MP, Minister for Skills



Apprenticeships are at the heart of our drive to equip people with the skills that employers need. They are rightly popular both with businesses and with young people.

But when I speak to employers, they consistently tell me that they are concerned that young people often lack the right skills and attitudes when they apply for an Apprenticeship or other jobs.

This is perhaps not surprising – too many young people have little or no experience of seeking, or being in, work. At a time when young people are competing for jobs against adults with more skills and experience, we risk younger people being passed over for these opportunities. That is not right.

We know that many young people, including those who are currently not in education, employment or training, are highly motivated by work, or the prospect of it. We need to ensure that young people are well equipped with the skills to impress potential employers and to secure and succeed in jobs, including Apprenticeships.

Many providers already offer excellent activities that aim to do just this. I want to build on their experiences to develop a successful new **Traineeships** programme in England. I want this to offer a combination of substantial work placements, work skills training and English and maths, to support a significant number of young people into Apprenticeships and other employment opportunities.

This document is not a formal consultation but rather a starting point for discussion. It sets out our aspirations for Traineeships. I am keen to hear from providers, employers, other partners and young people themselves about what we can do together to ensure that this important project succeeds.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Hancock', followed by a decorative flourish.

**Matthew Hancock MP**  
Minister for Skills

## A. What is the problem we are trying to solve?

1. The existing training and skills system in England works very well for the majority of young people. Most already choose to participate in some form of post-16 education or training and achieve valuable and recognised qualifications, moving on to Higher Education, to sustainable employment and fulfilling careers.
2. However, some young people who are motivated and focused on employment, including Apprenticeships, are unable to successfully find work. Some of these young people may cycle through low-level training provision or churn in and out of short-term opportunities, whilst others are not in education, employment or training (NEET) at all. Youth unemployment began to rise well before the recession and although it is currently falling, it is still far too high. This is a longstanding structural problem, with changes in the wider labour market reducing the opportunities for entry-level employment (*Fig 1*). In the third quarter of 2012, 206,000 16-18 year olds and 821,000 19-24 year olds were NEET<sup>1</sup>. Evidence shows that these young people are more likely than their peers to go on to have negative outcomes, including unemployment, low pay, poor health and depression<sup>2</sup>.

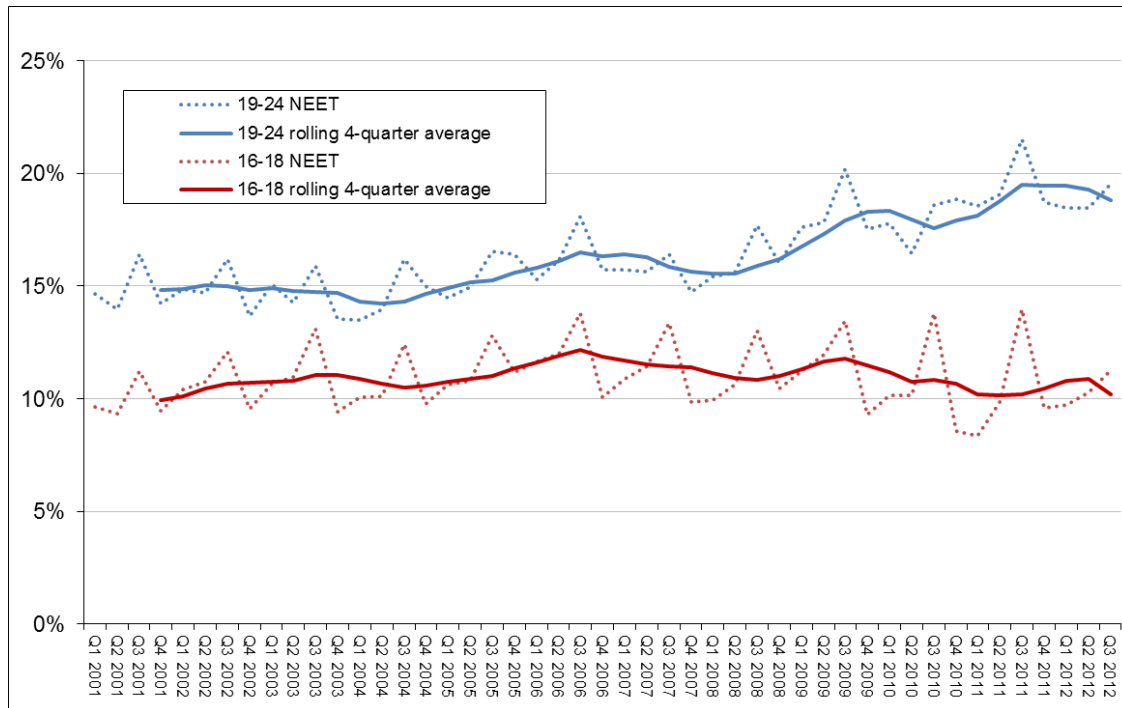


Figure 1 - Proportion of 16-24 year olds NEET (2001-2012) – Labour Force Survey

<sup>1</sup> NEET Quarterly Brief (Quarter 3 2012) – November 2012

<sup>2</sup> British Birth Cohort Study, cited in *Bridging the Gap: New opportunities for 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training*: report by the Social Exclusion Unit

3. We know that young people who are NEET are a very diverse group, but that in general they tend to be motivated primarily by work. Evidence shows that around a fifth of young people NEET at age 16-17 are aspiring to move into an Apprenticeship and another two-fifths into other full-time employment<sup>3</sup>. We are increasing the age of compulsory participation in education or training to 17 in 2013 and to 18 in 2015<sup>4</sup>. Two of the key routes through which these young people can fulfil this duty will be Apprenticeships and part-time study alongside full-time employment. We also want to see more unemployed young people aged 19 to 24 participating in Apprenticeships or continuing in training.
4. However, employers consistently report that young people applying for vacancies often lack work related skills and attitudes which they need to secure and sustain employment. They are concerned that their CVs are poorly written, some do not turn up for interviews, others have not prepared or do not understand the requirements of routine or punctuality. These young people do not have some of the key skills and experience they need to compete in the job market at a time when they face significant competition from older workers for Apprenticeships and other jobs. Evidence from our Apprenticeship Vacancies services shows that a high proportion of young applicants are rejected because of poor applications or interviews.
5. This has led to the situation that Professor Alison Wolf recognised in her report on vocational education for young people, where young people ‘move in and out of education and short-term employment...churning between the two in an attempt to find either a course which offers a real chance for progress, or a permanent job, and finding neither’<sup>5</sup>.
6. This is the gap that we want to fill through the development of Traineeships. The programme will provide a structured opportunity for young people who are motivated by work to develop the skills and experience they need to be attractive to employers. This will help them to move into sustainable Apprenticeships or other jobs, reinvigorate the workforce, reduce the proportion of young people NEET and reduce youth unemployment.
7. Our aim is to establish Traineeships as *the* preferred route for young people who aspire to Apprenticeships or other jobs and who need additional training to reach their goals. We want to ensure a close fit with other training

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<sup>3</sup> DCSF, *Youth Cohort Study and Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: The Activities and Experiences of 17 year olds: England 2008*

<sup>4</sup> More information is available at [www.education.gov.uk/rpa](http://www.education.gov.uk/rpa)

<sup>5</sup> *Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report* (March 2011)

programmes, including Apprenticeships, 16-19 Study Programmes and the skills offer available to young adults on benefits through Jobcentre Plus (though we are clear that this will be primarily targeted before they are eligible for the Work Programme). We want to take this opportunity to simplify the current landscape, so that it is easier for young people and their advisers to navigate. Over time this may involve bringing some existing activities under the Traineeships banner, or stopping them, where Traineeships are shown to be more effective.

8. In developing Traineeships, we will also consider the recommendations of the recent Richard Review of Apprenticeships<sup>6</sup>, including the proposal to focus Apprenticeships on job roles which require sustained and substantial training, and to introduce a new separate work based programme to support entry into employment.
9. We will also want to consider a range of options for supporting young people on Traineeships financially, such as wages or allowances, and the fit with the benefits system.
10. This document applies to England only but the Government will work with the Devolved Administrations on any areas of shared interest.

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<sup>6</sup> Available at: [www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2012/Nov/richard-review-of-apprenticeships](http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2012/Nov/richard-review-of-apprenticeships)

## B. What does the evidence tell us about what works?

11. We want the development of Traineeships to build on the best evidence of what works in supporting young people to rapidly develop the work skills and experience they need to find sustainable employment.
12. There is strong evidence to suggest that the most effective approaches are **flexible and personalised**, fitting closely with the individual needs and aspirations of young people. The OECD's 2010 review of evidence on supporting young unemployed people suggested that the best approaches integrate and combine different services and support, including education (particularly in English and maths for those who have not achieved in these areas), work experience, relevant vocational education and mentoring in a package tailored to individual participants.
13. The Wolf Report<sup>7</sup> reinforced the importance of **English and maths** to young people's employment and education prospects and pointed out that whilst fewer than 50% of students achieve an A\*-C GCSE in both subjects by the end of Key Stage 4, just 4% achieve this key credential during their 16-18 education. From 2013, these subjects will become a key part of our 16-19 Study Programmes<sup>8</sup>, whilst for those aged 19 and above, we have recently improved the offer to support young people's and adults' achievement in these areas and are focusing on making this provision more effective.
14. International evidence supports an emphasis on improving skills in these areas. Especially when combined with workplace experience, it is likely to produce positive outcomes, in particular for disadvantaged young people. Employers consistently tell us, including through the annual CBI Skills Survey, of the importance they place on functional literacy and numeracy when they fill their vacancies.
15. Businesses also report that **workplace experience** can be just as important to them as formal qualifications. Successful programmes tend to combine training with periods of work experience, contact with employers and

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<sup>7</sup> Available at: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00031-2011>

<sup>8</sup> Following the Wolf Report, we have announced that we will implement new Study Programmes for 16-19 year olds from September 2013, which will focus on substantial qualifications, English and maths and work experience. More information is available at: [www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a00210755/16-19-study-programmes](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a00210755/16-19-study-programmes)

assistance with job search<sup>9</sup>, helping young people to emerge with tangible experience on their CV. Some of the attitudes and behaviours that employers look for include reliability, punctuality, communication skills, teamwork and the capacity to present well in both application forms and interviews. The best work placements involve purposeful, real tasks with a planned programme to develop a range of skills. Coordination between the placement and training delivery ensures that participants see the relevance of one to the other and helps to increase learning and motivation.

16. Guaranteed interviews are already part of some training initiatives, such as Sector-Based Work Academies. We are interested in views on whether the inclusion of a guaranteed interview as part of a Traineeship would strengthen the overall offer, from the perspectives of individuals, employers and providers.
17. For some young people, **mentoring** and other pastoral support, together with targeted job search support can also make a significant difference to their likelihood of moving into a successful outcome.
18. We know that many training providers, businesses and other organisations are already offering or developing opportunities that include many of the key elements outlined above. We want Traineeships to build on the best of these programmes, making it easier for providers and employers to offer these successful opportunities.

### **St Helens Chamber – Work Ready: Chamber Approved**

St Helens Chamber, an accredited training provider, spotted a gap in provision where their members were telling them that young people applying for their vacancies were not work ready.

They proactively developed a programme to fill that gap. Young people spend three weeks working on employability and interview skills and preparing for job search. Some are ready to find work at that point, but others move into a 10 week programme of intensive skills training and work experience.

At the end of the programme, they are certified as *Work Ready: Chamber Approved*, a mark which has currency with local employers. Of 50 young people who began the programme since September 2012, by November, 20 had already moved into Apprenticeships, jobs or college courses.

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<sup>9</sup> Sally Dench, Jim Hillage and Pam Coare, *The impact of learning on unemployed, low-qualified adults: A systematic review*, DWP research report no 375 (2006)



### **PM Training (Stoke and Staffordshire) – Work Pairings**

PM Training is the social enterprise training arm of the Aspire Group. They have won work through open tender as well as providing services for their sister company, Aspire Housing. This includes maintenance contracts for housing stock and providing services from gardening to painting, decorating and environmental improvements.

All of this work is carried out by teams involving an experienced professional, an Apprentice and one or two work pairing trainees. After an initial period of intensive work preparation, young people go out as part of these teams to gain real workplace experience and build mentoring relationships with their supervisors and Apprentices.

As they become work ready, participants move into an Apprenticeship with PM or are supported into an Apprenticeship or job with an external employer, often from PM's own supply chain.

### **National Apprenticeship Service – ‘Bootcamps’**

From January 2013, a series of ‘Bootcamps’ will be delivered by training providers across England. These Bootcamps will support young people to present their capabilities and potential in the best possible light when applying for an Apprenticeship, helping to pave the way for the work skills training element of Traineeships.

Focused upon those young people who have been unsuccessful in applying for an Apprenticeship, these opportunities will provide CV writing skills, interview techniques, and inter-personal skills development, as well as identifying gaps in skills that can then be addressed. They will also provide careers guidance and job search support to young people to help them with the choices and applications they make.

- **Question 1:** What are your views on the elements that are essential for an effective programme to support young people to prepare for Apprenticeships and other jobs?
- **Question 2:** Should a guaranteed interview be part of the core content of a Traineeship?
- **Question 3:** What makes work placements high quality and effective?

- **Question 4:** Are you aware of other evidence from existing programmes that demonstrates the effectiveness of these elements?
- **Question 5:** How could Traineeships best complement what is already available for young people, simplify our offer and avoid unnecessary duplication?

## C. What does the proposed Traineeship model look like?

19. Based on the evidence of what works and the effective practice that is already being developed and delivered through projects around the country, this section provides an overview of how the Traineeship model might work.
20. The primary **objective** of Traineeships would be to equip young people with the skills and experience they need to secure an Apprenticeship or other good job. In doing so, it would aim to support young people's progression into and achievement in sustainable employment, reduce the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), and make a positive impact on youth employment.
21. We propose that Traineeships would be available to young people aged 16-24. We think that Traineeships should be targeted on young people who are primarily motivated by work but do not yet have all of the skills and experience necessary to secure sustainable employment. These young people might currently be NEET or might otherwise have been looking to undertake a programme with a college or training provider or seek low-level employment. We do not think that Traineeships should be focused specifically on the most disaffected and those with the lowest level of attainment, as that group might need further support (for instance, through the Youth Contract funded activity for 16 and 17 year-olds) before they are ready for this opportunity.
22. The evidence suggests that it is important for us to be fairly flexible with the **content** of Traineeships in order to ensure that they can cater for the needs of a diverse group of young people. However, we propose that there should be three core elements of all Traineeships:
  - **A focused period of work preparation training.** This might focus on areas like CV writing, interview preparation, job search, self-discipline and inter-personal skills.
  - **A high quality work placement** (extended, where possible) to give the young person meaningful experience, develop workplace skills, and provide an opportunity to prove themselves to an employer.

- **English and maths** for young people who have not achieved a GCSE Grade C or equivalent<sup>10</sup>.

23. For 16-19 year olds, this would place Traineeships firmly within our new Study Programmes<sup>11</sup>. All other areas of the Traineeship’s content would be highly flexible to allow for the needs of individual young people and of the local labour market. For some young people, providers might want to include other relevant education or training, vocational qualifications, or guidance within the Traineeship where that helps young people to successfully move into Apprenticeships or other work.

24. In terms of **duration**, the length of Traineeships would be flexible depending on the individual young person’s needs. Our initial expectation is that Traineeships would generally last around six months, but some young people may leave earlier into successful Apprenticeship or other job outcomes and in exceptional circumstances some young people might continue on beyond this if they are close to achieving a successful outcome.

25. For some young people Traineeships will need to include more intensive support to overcome barriers. Therefore we are developing a trial of **Intensive Traineeships**, for Jobseekers aged 18 to 24 with little or no work experience and very few qualifications. This provision would be targeted towards young people who are more disengaged than the group who we would expect to undertake Traineeships but would form part of the same ‘family’ of provision.

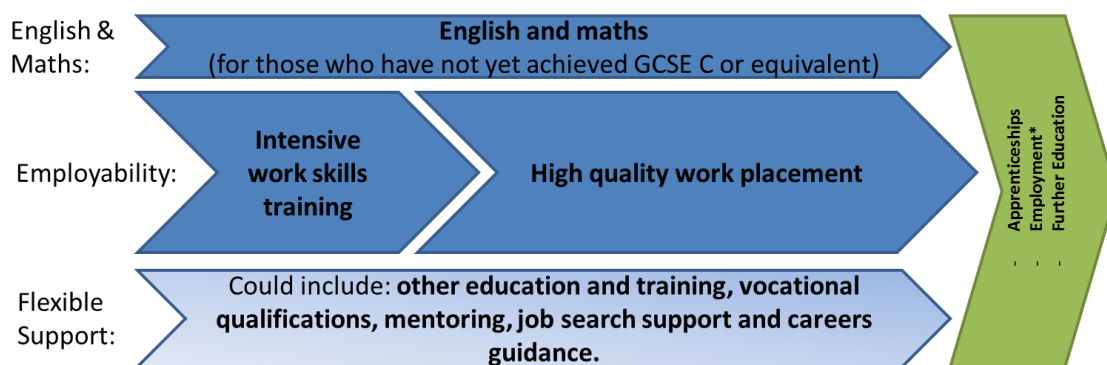


Figure 2 – Potential Traineeship Model (\*with training for 16-17 year olds)

<sup>10</sup> For those aged 19+, we fund young people to work towards a GCSE, Level 2 Functional Skills qualification or QCF qualifications and units to help lower-level learners progress.

<sup>11</sup> More information on Study Programmes is available here:

[www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a00210755/16-19-study-programmes](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a00210755/16-19-study-programmes)

- **Question 6:** What are your views on the proposed Traineeships model? Are the core components right? Is the balance between flexibility and specification correct?
- **Question 7:** What are your views on the right age range for the programme (Paragraph 21)?
- **Question 8:** What are your views on the right duration for the programme (Paragraph 24)?
- **Question 9:** What other elements of flexible content would you expect to be added to the core locally?

## D. How will Traineeships be delivered?

26. Our aim is to explore the possibility of Traineeships beginning to be available for young people to access from September 2013. We do not yet have a fixed view of the scale that could be delivered in the first year but would expect this to be an attractive and growing part of the wider offer. We would be interested in views on how best to scale up provision of Traineeships to young people. The examples set out above make clear that the model can be developed and led effectively both by employers and by training providers, each working in partnership with the other. We want to give both models the opportunity to prove their effectiveness and make use of existing skills funding systems to ensure simplicity.

27. **Education and training providers**<sup>12</sup> will be able to manage the development of Traineeships for young people in partnership with local employers. We recognise that the funding and accountability systems pre- and post-19 are different, but we want to enable providers to offer a similar high quality Traineeship route to young people:

- For 16-19 year olds, Traineeships will be part of Study Programmes. We made clear when we published our response to the consultation on Study Programmes<sup>13</sup> that some students will take a programme of work experience focused on developing their employability skills. Traineeships will make a reality of that commitment. Providers would be funded for Traineeships in the same way and at the same rate as other Study Programmes<sup>14</sup>.
- For 19-24 year olds, providers will be able to make use of the flexibilities of the Adult Skills Budget and will be funded on the basis of the published matrix rate for any accredited units and qualifications delivered as part of the Traineeship. Organising the work placement will be funded in addition and will attract an outcome payment if a young person progresses into an Apprenticeship or job.

28. We would also like to encourage **employers and employer organisations** to develop Traineeship models and submit proposals for funding of these

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<sup>12</sup> We would also expect many employer-providers to be interested in offering Traineeships.

<sup>13</sup> Available at: [www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a00210755/16-19-study-programmes](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/a00210755/16-19-study-programmes)

<sup>14</sup> This is set out in the *Update on the 16-19 Funding Formula 2013/14* (December 2012), which is available at [http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/u/16-19%20funding%20formula%202013\\_14%20final.pdf](http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/u/16-19%20funding%20formula%202013_14%20final.pdf). Paragraph 46 provides details of how this funding could be used to underpin Traineeships.

through the Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot<sup>15</sup>. The funding methodology and rate of funding for Traineeships delivered on this basis will reflect the way employers and employer organisations are funded through the pilot.

29. In either case, the success of the Traineeships model will rely on effective partnerships between employers and education and training providers, together with others such as Jobcentre Plus, the Voluntary and Community Sector, Local Enterprise Partnerships and local authorities, drawing on the expertise of all sectors. Over time, as both of these models develop, we will continue to monitor and compare the effectiveness of each in order to help decide how Traineeships should be delivered in future.
30. We will also need to encourage and ensure the **quality** of Traineeships being offered, so that they succeed in supporting young people into tangible Apprenticeship and other employment outcomes. We will consider a range of options for this, which might include looking at how we define the group of young people who are eligible for Traineeships and the nature of the work placement, how we measure the outcomes from Traineeships and whether we should incentivise those outcomes through an element of payment by results.
- **Question 10:** What are your views on the most effective routes for delivering Traineeships? Do the funding systems set out in Paragraph 27 provide sufficient flexibility to achieve this?
  - **Question 11:** How can we ensure that Traineeships are a high quality route which delivers real progression for young people but minimises bureaucracy for employers and providers (Paragraph 30)?

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<sup>15</sup> More information is available at: [www.ukces.org.uk/employeroownership](http://www.ukces.org.uk/employeroownership)

## E. How will we engage employers?

31. The involvement of employers will be crucial to the successful development and delivery of Traineeships. The best way to ensure that Traineeships are successful in helping young people gain the skills and experience they need to move into Apprenticeships or other sustained employment is to ensure that they include a high quality work placement with an employer.
32. We recognise that **engaging sufficient employers** to offer these opportunities to young people will be essential. That is why we are keen to engage employers and their representative organisations at this early stage in helping us to develop the model so that it is attractive and meets their needs. We would welcome views and responses from employers of all sizes in response to this paper.
33. Employers tell us that being directly involved in shaping and designing training for their employees is a major incentive to getting involved and that is why we are keen to test this approach to Traineeships through the Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot (Paragraph 28).
34. Where education and training providers lead the delivery of Traineeships, they will need to put significant energy into engaging local employers from the start of the process. Employers have already indicated that keeping local Traineeships programmes simple and offering support and mentoring for young people taking part would act as significant incentives to them being willing to offer work placements. We are keen to consider any other ways in which we can support and encourage employer engagement with Traineeships and would welcome views on this issue.
  - **Question 12:** The success of Traineeships will rely on employers offering high quality work placements. How can we best support and encourage employers to offer these? What will employers see as the benefits of being involved in Traineeships?



## F. How can I join the discussion?

35. The success of Traineeships will depend on the commitment and expertise of training providers and employers alike. We are very keen that the delivery of Traineeships is informed by the very best of current practice so that young people can access high quality opportunities from day one.
36. We would therefore be keen to hear views from a wide range of providers, employers, young people and other partners about the ideas set out in this discussion paper. We are also keen to see any relevant evidence from existing programmes about the most effective practice.
37. You can join the discussion by sending your views to [Traineeships.Discussion@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Traineeships.Discussion@education.gsi.gov.uk). We will also be setting up discussions with representative organisations and with young people over the coming month. We would particularly welcome views **by 8 February 2013** to help feed into the development of the model. The key questions from this paper are set out on the following page, but we would welcome thoughts on any aspect of these proposals.

## Key Questions

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