

The Business Innovation and Skills Select Committee Inquiry into Apprenticeships



An LSIS response

Introduction

1. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) is the sector-owned body supporting the development of excellent and sustainable FE provision across the learning and skills sector. Its aim is to accelerate the drive for excellence and, working in partnership with all parts of the sector, to build the sector's own capacity to design, commission and deliver improvement and strategic change.
2. LSIS welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Business Innovation and Skills Select Committee Inquiry into Apprenticeships for three key reasons:
 - our role in building the sector's capacity to deliver improvement involves supporting further education colleges and independent providers to develop and improve the quality of their Apprenticeship provision;
 - we are responsible for the development of national occupational standards, qualifications and apprenticeship frameworks within the sector.
 - as an employer, we are committed to offering apprenticeship opportunities to 10% of our workforce, and we currently enjoy the contribution of 14 apprentices to our work.
3. Our response outlines our work under each element.

General comments

Supporting quality improvement of apprenticeship delivery

4. LSIS has been involved in supporting improvements in the quality of apprenticeship delivery since it was established in 2008. In particular, we have responded to colleges' and providers' needs for support in adopting functional skills into apprenticeships, in making the transition from offering Train to Gain to apprenticeships, and meeting the requirements of the specification of assessment standards in England through a range of workshops, webinars, study visits, peer group activities, CPD events, and consultancy support. We also worked with the National Apprenticeship Service on the development of initial guidance material associated with the introduction of Apprenticeship Training Agencies.
5. We have also supported providers to develop new relationships in response to the introduction of minimum contract levels. Support has focused on assisting providers to form new contracting arrangements, working relationships, systems, work-practices, and organisation structures through increased collaboration and partnership.

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6. With BIS support, and on behalf of the Employer Reference Group, in 2011 LSIS also undertook the research which led to the report on *Simplifying end-to-end apprenticeship processes for employers*¹. The report made a number of recommendations for tackling the bureaucracy faced by large direct contract employers delivering Apprenticeships, and led to the announcement of measures to simplify and streamline the apprenticeships programme for firms and other large employers that take on large numbers of apprentices.
7. At present, LSIS is supporting ten sector-led collaborative projects on aspects of apprenticeships including improving progression and quality assurance. The learning from these projects will be disseminated more widely to providers in the sector this spring. There continues to be a demand from colleges and providers for support to manage the transition from key skills to functional skills. This month, we are launching a series of events and consultancy support to support providers, together with a programme of specific regional events to help providers improve the quality of their numeracy provision. A starter kit for functional skills will also be available from April, which draws together a range of nationally developed functional skills resources, including self assessment tools and case studies.
8. In response to concerns about access to careers education on apprenticeships, LSIS has produced a CPD module on learning while earning, and has also funded the development of an apprenticeship information pack which is now being trialled in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight; this aims to raise awareness of Apprenticeships in schools. LSIS is also supporting a project by the Sussex Council of Training Providers which is developing a collaborative and more efficient approach to getting the message about apprenticeships in Sussex into schools. In partnership with the Skills Funding Agency, we are also supporting two inclusion projects. One aims to create opportunities to enable more young people with learning difficulties and disabilities to effectively access apprenticeships; the other to improve the information, advice and guidance given to both prospective employers and 16-18 apprentices in order to enhance the employment and support given to disadvantaged learners.
9. LSIS recognises that the National Apprenticeship Service has raised the profile of Apprenticeships since its inception, particularly with employers but also learners and the public. LSIS is currently in discussion with the National Apprenticeship Service about how we can collaborate to further support providers in the sector to deliver high quality apprenticeships. Future activity may therefore include: support for the development of higher apprenticeships; and updating materials for the apprenticeship training agencies.

¹ <http://www.lsis.org.uk/Services/Publications/Pages/Simplifying-end-to-end-apprenticeship-processes-for-employers.aspx>

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Developing standards, qualifications and apprenticeship frameworks for the lifelong learning workforce

10. Following the closure of Lifelong Learning UK, LSIS is now the Issuing Authority for apprenticeship frameworks and works with employers and other stakeholders in the further education and skills sector to develop frameworks, promote them, keep them up to date and issue apprenticeship certificates. LSIS currently offers apprenticeship frameworks in the following in England:
- Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeship Frameworks in Youth Work
 - Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeship Frameworks in Libraries, Archives, Records and Information Management Services
 - Intermediate and Advanced Apprenticeship Frameworks in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools
 - Advanced Apprenticeship Framework in Learning and Development
11. Ongoing engagement with sector employers and providers has shown that there is continuing demand for level 3 apprenticeship frameworks in the sector and increasing demand for higher level frameworks. To address employer needs, work on new apprenticeship frameworks at level 3 and level 4 is scheduled for the year ahead.

Offering apprenticeship opportunities

12. As an employer, LSIS has recruited 12 apprentices (one in ten of our total staffing), as part of our commitment to developing new talent in the sector. We offer apprenticeship opportunities at levels 2, 3 and 4 which enables us to support internal progression for our experienced apprentices.

Contact details

Enquiries about this response should be addressed, in the first instance, to:

Rob Wye
Chief Executive
Learning and Skills Improvement Service
Friars House
Manor House Drive
Coventry
CV1 2TE
rob.wye@lsis.org.uk