
England Apprenticeship Reforms

An IMI Update

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ambition to businesses with
vision



Apprentices

BECOME AN APPRENTICE

Everything you need to know about
becoming an apprentice

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Employers

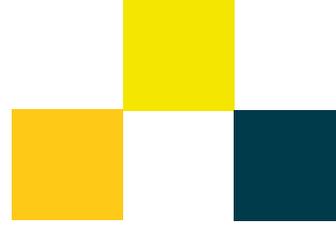
HIRE AN APPRENTICE

Find out how to hire an apprentice
and what you need to do

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NAW – 2025

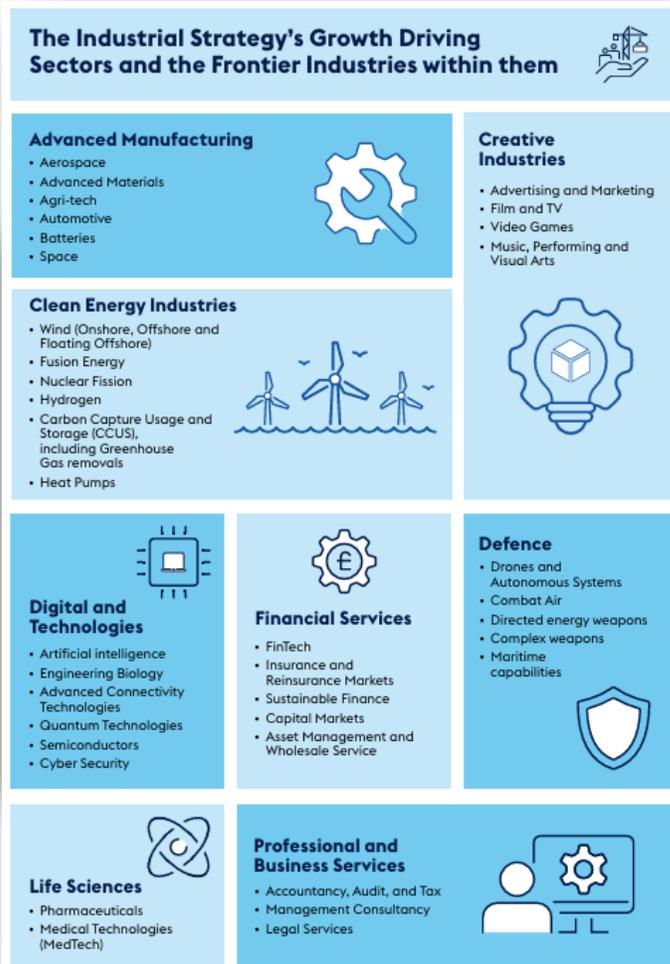
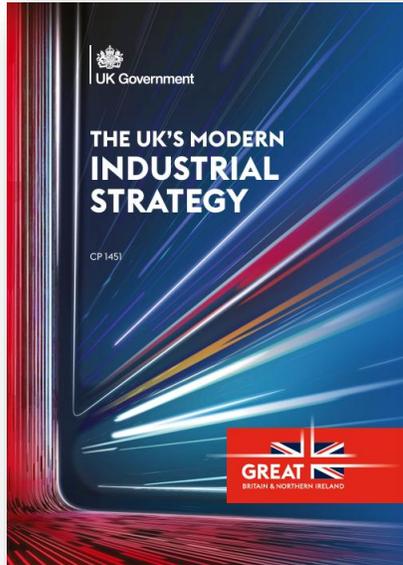
Announcements



- Up to 10,000 more apprentices will be able to qualify per year as the government cuts red tape to boost economic growth by giving employers more flexibility over maths and English requirements.
- Businesses can now decide whether adult learners over the age of 19, when they start their apprenticeship, will need to complete a level 2 English and maths qualification (equivalent to GCSE).
- This means more learners can qualify in high-demand sectors, helping to drive growth and meet government targets.
- The minimum duration of an apprenticeship was reduced to 8 months, down from the previous minimum of 12 months.



Industrial Strategy – June 25

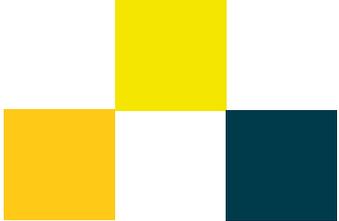


Over the last 15 years, we have seen falls in participation in adult further education and employer investment in training per worker. We have also seen a decline in participation in apprenticeships with numbers falling by almost a fifth between 2016/17 and 2023/24.⁴¹ 10% of businesses report at least one skills| shortage vacancy.⁴²

The approach

To address this, we will:

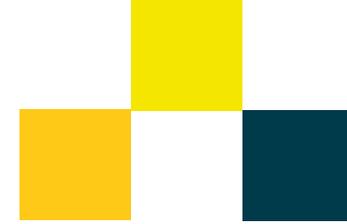
- **Ensure that the skills system and employment support are aligned to strategic economic priorities, including the needs of the IS-8 and transformative opportunities like AI.** Working with partners including Mayoral Strategic Authorities, we will harness all parts of the system to create a talent pipeline for crucial occupations, from our work experience schemes and apprenticeships, to our Higher Education and Further Education sectors, to our network of Jobcentres - which provide employment support to millions of people, many holding degree level qualifications.⁴⁵ As education policy is devolved, we will partner with devolved governments to align approaches on shared skills priorities in our Industrial Strategy sectors.



Key Reforms in the Transition from the **Apprenticeship Levy** to the **Growth & Skills Levy**



Transition to the Growth & Skills Levy



- **Levy Fund Expiry Reduction**

The expiry window for levy funds has been cut from 24 months to 12 months, accelerating employer engagement with training investments.

- **Employer Planning Challenges**

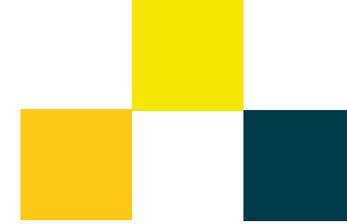
Shorter expiry increases urgency, requiring employers to operate at speed to avoid financial loss from unspent funds.

- **Proactive Fund Monitoring**

Digital alerts and monthly planning cycles help organisations monitor levy funds to optimise their training investments.



Transition to the Growth & Skills Levy



- **End of Government Top-Up**

The 10% government top-up on apprenticeship levy funds has been removed (from Aug 26) under the Growth & Skills Levy system.

- **Impact on Large Employers**

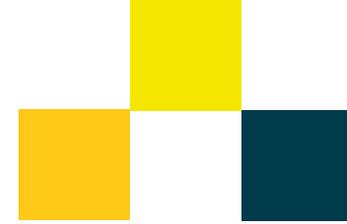
Large levy-paying employers must reassess training budgets as they no longer receive extra government contributions.

- **Strategic Prioritisation Needed**

Organisations must prioritise skills investment due to tighter budgets and evolving economic demands. Employers may stagger apprenticeship start dates to manage costs effectively.



Transition to the Growth & Skills Levy



- **Co-Investment Increase Overview**

From April 2026, employer co-investment rises from 5% to 25% after levy funds are exhausted, impacting training budgets.

- **Collaborative Learning Solutions**

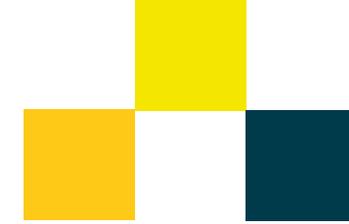
Increased costs encourage collaboration between employers and providers for customized, cost-efficient training.

- **Flexible Levy Fund Usage**

Employers can now use up to 50% of levy funds on training beyond traditional apprenticeships, enabling agile learning solutions.



Transition to the Growth & Skills Levy



- **Modular Training - Apprenticeship Units**

Introduction of modular apprenticeship units allows tailored skill development with stackable credentials.

- **Alignment with Workforce Trends**

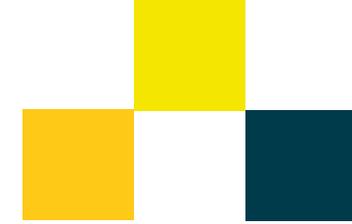
New levy flexibilities support rapid reskilling needs in emerging sectors e.g. AI, green energy.

- **Enhanced Employer and Employee Benefits**

Shorter training programs improve employee engagement and allow efficient use of funds for targeted skill gaps.



Transition to the Growth & Skills Levy



- **Youth Guarantee Expanded Eligibility Age**

Youth Guarantee (£820m of funding aimed at reducing NEETS for those on universal credit) now fully funds apprenticeships for individuals under 25, extending from the previous under-22 limit.

- **Reduced Financial Barriers for SMEs**

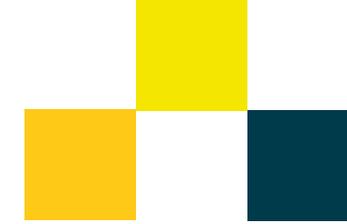
The expansion reduces or removes training costs, enabling SMEs to invest in workforce development more easily.

- **Addressing Skills Shortages**

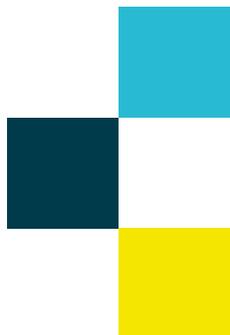
Expanded funding supports sectors with high youth employment needs

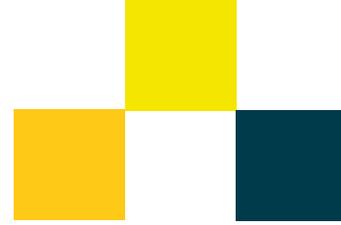


Transition to the Growth & Skills Levy



Area of Change	Apprenticeship Levy	Growth & Skills Levy
Fund Expiry Window	24 months	12 months
Gov Top-Up	10% top-up	Top-up removed
Employer Co-Investment	5% employer	25% employer
Use of Funds	Apprenticeships only	50% flexible training
Modular Options	None	Apprenticeship Units
Training Requirement	20% OTJ	Fixed hours
Policy Intent	Rigid	Flexible & productivity-led



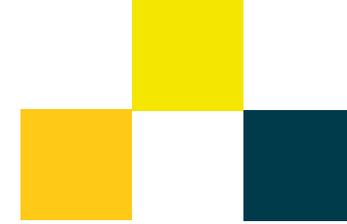


End Point Assessment Reformed to Apprentice Assessment



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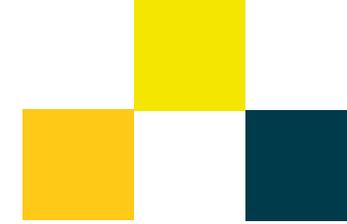
Key Terminology Changes



Old Terminology	New Terminology	Notes / Meaning
End-point assessment	Apprenticeship assessment	Assessment contributing to final grade during or towards end of apprenticeship. Refers to any assessment contributing to final grade.
End-point assessment organisation	Assessment organisation	Updated simplified naming convention.
Gateway	Gateway to completion	Updated term in revised guidance.



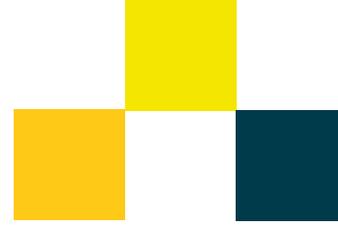
Key Terminology Changes



Old Terminology	New Terminology	Notes / Meaning
EPA Plan	Apprenticeship Assessment Plan	Updated term in revised guidance.
Trailblazer Group (Employer Group)	Group of Persons	Updated naming convention. Must include sector-level representative organisations, such as professional bodies, industry associations, or similar.



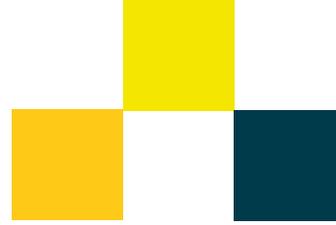
Reforms



- Training Provider (TP) assessment is permitted – Quality Assured by the AO
- Behaviours verified by the employer, **No QA required** – received negatively from industry
- EPA plans will now be known as 'Apprenticeship Assessment Plan(s)' or 'AAP(s)'
- Planning for working group consultations following release of relevant information



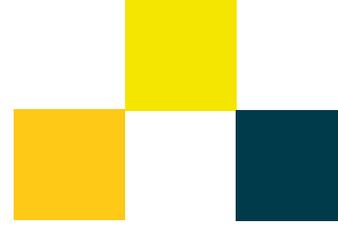
Reforms



- One mandatory assessment method; others are optional, selected from a list
- No duplication between methods – on-programme qualifications can cover all the knowledge and skills in some cases – potential for some non-tech routes
- Digital tools encouraged – e.g. AI simulation
- Assessment can occur during the apprenticeship, not only at the end. Ofqual and Skills England are recommending 'approximately half of the assessment is synoptic, and AO assessed (K&S assessed in scenarios relevant to the occupation)



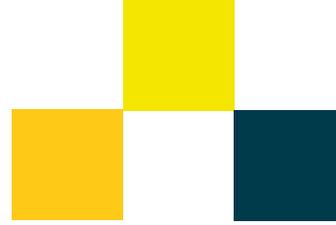
Reforms



- Assessment methods Skills England are advising to GoPs:
- **Practical Assessment Methods**
 - Observation
 - Simulated task
- **Discussion-based Assessment**
 - Interview
 - Professional discussion
 - Question and answers (Q&A)
 - Presentation
 - Role-play
- **Portfolios and showcases**
 - Portfolios
 - Showcases



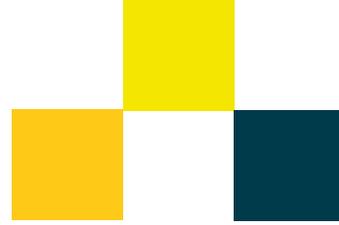
Reforms



- Assessment methods Skills England are advising to GoPs:
- **Project**
 - Written report
 - Products and artefacts
 - Business case.
 - Project presentation
- **Written assessment**
 - Multiple-choice test
 - Short answer test
 - Long answer test
 - Essay
 - Case study
 - Reflective journals



Reforms



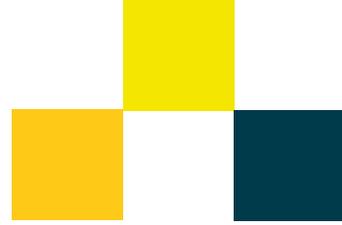
Skills England published 93 Apprenticeship Standards in Tranche 1 on 10/12/2025:

[Revisions and adjustments status report February 2026 v1.xlsx](#)

- 7 Apprenticeship Standards linked to The IMI:
 - **ST1372** **Bus, coach and heavy goods vehicle service and maintenance technician**
 - **ST1422** **Bus, coach and heavy goods vehicles, service and maintenance operative**
 - ST0387 Lift truck and powered access engineering technician
 - ST0033 Motor Vehicle Service and Maintenance Technician (Light Vehicle)
 - ST0406 Vehicle damage assessor
 - ST0405 Vehicle damage mechanical, electrical and trim (MET) technician
 - ST0403 Vehicle damage panel technician
 - ST0805 Construction equipment maintenance mechanic (added to Tranche 1 on 12/02)

ST0448 - Accident Repair Paint and ST0352 - Accident Repair Technician omitted, but are considered to be in development



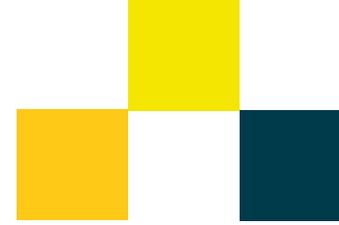


Apprenticeship Assessment Plans (AAPs)



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Reformed AAPs

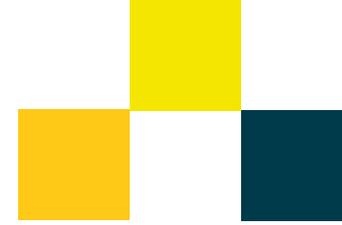


- Apprenticeship Assessment Plans structured as:
 - Introduction
 - Assessment outcomes
 - Assessment requirements
 - Performance descriptors
 - Additional qualifications

[Requirements and guidance for apprenticeship assessment - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/requirements-and-guidance-for-apprenticeship-assessment)



Reformed AAPs

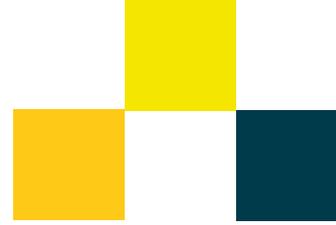


Apprenticeship Assessment Plans structured as follows:

- **Introduction** - Explains the assessment plan's purpose, status and relationship to other documents.
- **Assessment outcomes** - Summarises the content of the occupational standard into assessment outcomes and explains which knowledge and skills statements map to each outcome. Where there is an additional qualification mandated, these outcomes describe the content (if any) **that is not assessed by the qualification**. This section also sets out the mandatory knowledge and skills statements that must be assessed in every version of the assessment that is made available. Knowledge and skills statements which offer opportunities to develop functional English and maths are identified with an asterisk*.



Reformed AAPs

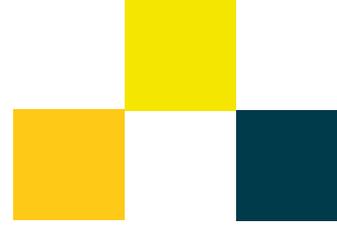


Apprenticeship Assessment Plans structure:

- **Assessment requirements** - Outlines the mandatory assessment method that must be used in every version of the assessment that is made available, together with optional, additional assessment methods as appropriate. Outlines any additional requirements regarding the setting, marking or timing of assessments.
- **Performance descriptors** - Describes the characteristics of a 'pass' and 'distinction'.
- **Additional qualifications** - The qualification detailed in the occupational standard must be completed before the end of the apprenticeship.



Reformed AAPs

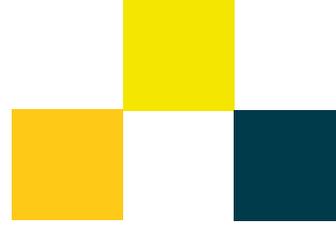


Apprenticeship Assessment Plans structure:

- Skills England published 3 AAPs in October for 'illustrative purposes'
- These are:
 - ST0002 level 3 assistant accountant
 - ST0795 level 3 data technician
 - ST0135 level 3 early years educator
- The following AAP was also published as is showing as 'Approved for Delivery'
 - Artificial intelligence (AI) and automation practitioner / Skills England



Reforms

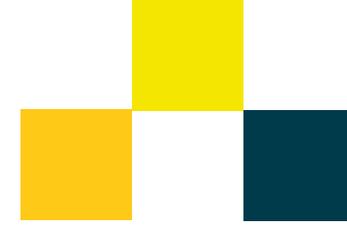


Summary:

- Reforms offer assessment flexibility, relaxing stipulations for full independence
- Removing duplication of assessment is realistic and achievable
- Reduces burdens on Training Providers for assessment requirements; e.g. workshop space
- On-programme assessments create metrics for apprentices' progress
- To ensure technical competence of apprentices is maintained or improved for our industry,
The IMI strongly recommends mandatory, independently assessed synoptic skills Apprenticeship Assessment methods
- Optional assessment methods will be based on outcomes of consultation with Employers



Reforms Next Steps

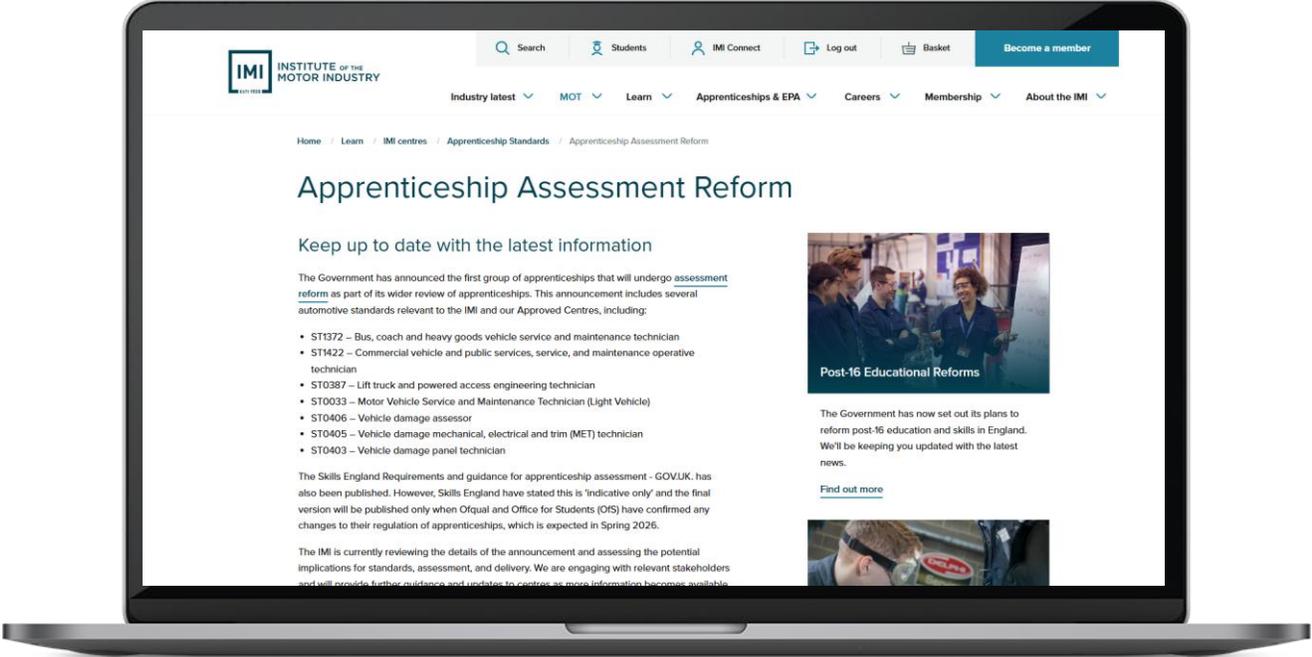


- 1st Draft AAP of new Bus, coach and heavy goods vehicles, service and maintenance operative shared with GoP for feedback on assessment methods
- Tranche 2 of apprenticeships for Reform expected in February, and Tranche 3 in June
- Apprentice transfers to Reformed AAPs will be expected – could be based on time on programme
- Finalised Ofqual Regulatory Framework expected in Spring

If you would like to be added to the Skills England survey distribution list, to be notified when a survey is released, please email submissionsurvey.skillsengland@education.gov.uk stating the standard and route you are interested in.



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Thank you Any Questions?

