



Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP  
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions  
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)  
Caxton House  
Tothill Street  
London  
SW1H 9NA

3 July 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Institute of the Motor Industry (the IMI) and the undersigned organisations to set out our shared position on current proposals for apprenticeship reform, and to highlight what we believe is essential to protect quality, safety and employer confidence within the automotive sector.

Automotive apprenticeships play a critical role in developing a skilled, competent and safety conscious workforce. They underpin workforce capability in a sector that is undergoing rapid and profound technological change, including increased electrification, digitalisation and complexity in vehicle systems. This clearly highlights the continued need for vigorous, independent assessment of apprentices, particularly given the risks and challenges associated with rapidly advancing vehicle technologies. As these changes accelerate, the need for rigorous training and robust assessment becomes more, not less, important.

The IMI supports reform of the apprenticeship system where it strengthens delivery, improves outcomes and reflects the evolving needs of employers and learners. However, there is a clear and shared concern that reforms must not compromise the quality, integrity or safety of technical and safety critical occupations.

Of particular importance is the role of rigorous, independent end point assessment. Independent assessment is not an administrative formality; it is a critical safeguard that ensures competence is verified objectively and consistently against national standards. In the automotive sector, technicians must demonstrate practical, job ready competence, not just theoretical knowledge. Employers, consumers and the public rely on apprenticeships to provide assurance that individuals entering the workforce can carry out safety critical work competently and safely.

Any reduction in the robustness of assessment, or any narrowing of the depth of training required for these roles, risks introducing inconsistent competence across the workforce, increasing safety risks for both technicians and the public, and undermining

employer confidence in the apprenticeship system as a whole. Once confidence is lost, it is difficult to rebuild.

We are also concerned about the extent to which employer voice is meaningfully reflected and retained within current reform processes. Employers are central to the design of apprenticeship standards because they best understand the skills, behaviours and levels of competence required in real world roles. Where employer led recommendations are subsequently overridden or diluted during approval or reform stages, this undermines the core principle of employer designed apprenticeships and weakens confidence in the system.

On behalf of the IMI and the signatories to this letter, we are calling for apprenticeship reform that:

- Maintains rigorous, independent end point assessment, particularly for technical and safety critical roles
- Protects the depth and quality of training required to achieve real occupational competence
- Ensures that standards reflect the safety critical nature of much automotive work, especially as vehicle technologies continue to evolve, including electric vehicles, connected and digital systems, and emerging hydrogen technologies, which are a growing presence within bus, coach and large commercial vehicle sectors
- Ensures that employer led recommendations are consistently respected and not overridden during approvals and reform processes

Reform should strengthen apprenticeships, not dilute them. With the right safeguards in place, reform can improve responsiveness and flexibility while still protecting quality, public safety and employer confidence. Without those safeguards, the risks to workforce capability and safety are significant.

As the professional body for the automotive sector, the IMI stands ready to continue working constructively with government, employers and stakeholders to ensure that apprenticeship reforms deliver a future ready system that supports learners, meets industry needs and maintains high national standards.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Connor FIMI  
Chief Executive Officer, Institute of the Motor Industry

Supported by:

- Andy Hamilton, President & Executive Managing Director, LKQ
- Daksh Gupta, Group Chief Executive Officer, Huws Gray & Non-Executive Chair, Hendy Group
- Denis Houston, Director, Aftersales and ATV & Marine, Suzuki
- Emma Thompson, Chief Executive, SOE
- Graeme Potts, Chief Executive Officer, Eden Motor Group
- Jeremy Hicks, Retired Jaguar Land Rover Executive
- Linda Jackson, Retired Peugeot Executive
- Matt Coates, Training & Apprenticeships Manager, DAF Trucks
- Robert Forrester, Chief Executive Officer, Vertu