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## Skills Commission– Call for Evidence

**Spotlight Inquiry: Apprenticeships & Social Mobility**  
**August 2017**

### The Spotlight Project

The further education landscape is currently undergoing significant reform. With a strong government agenda focussing on apprenticeships, productivity, and cutting the national deficit, the reforms are expected to go further over the course of the next five years and considerable changes to the system and its structures are expected.

With the expansion of apprenticeships, and following the completion of the area reviews of post-16 education, there are many components moving simultaneously across the system. The preoccupation with reforms and changing structures risks pulling attention away from the needs of individuals, and marginalised demographics, as they experience the labour market and our skills and training system. We will focus attention on the needs of each of the following groups:

- Young people with below average educational attainment
- Older workers looking to retrain
- **Apprentices & Social Mobility**
- Small employers
- Gender

### Apprenticeships & Social Mobility

The third report in the Spotlight series will look at apprenticeships and social mobility. Apprenticeships policy in the UK has undergone a period of rapid transformation in recent years, with the recent introduction of the apprenticeship levy, a move from frameworks to standards and the Government target of 3 million apprenticeship starts by 2020. Whilst this increased focus on apprenticeships is welcome, it is vital that disadvantaged young people, who arguably have the most to gain from apprenticeships, are not overlooked in the race to meet this target.

### Terms of Reference and Scope

The purpose of this inquiry is to investigate:

- **How do recent reforms to the apprenticeship system support social mobility?**
- Will there be any unintended effects on disadvantaged young people accessing apprenticeships?
- What will the effects be on progression within apprenticeships?
- What are the longer term changes on the horizon as a result of these reforms?
- What can be done by employers, providers and government to avoid any unintended issues that may arise? What good practice is already occurring that we can learn from?

The inquiry will have a specific focus on disadvantaged young people, where young people are defined as age 16-24 and disadvantage includes economic and educational disadvantage. Free School Meal eligibility will be used as an indicator of economic disadvantage.



## Submit evidence

Please use the questions below to frame your response to the call for evidence, but do not feel restricted by or compelled to answer every question.

The Commission welcomes all types of evidence, from data including data analysis or internal studies your organisation has carried out, and personal or organisational views on these issues. Submissions of evidence will not be published and the Commission will seek your permission before quoting from evidence submissions in our final report.

The deadline for submission of evidence is Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> August. Evidence can be submitted to [beth.wheaton@policyconnect.org.uk](mailto:beth.wheaton@policyconnect.org.uk). Please also get in touch if you would like to discuss this issue in further detail on **020 7922 8003**.

## Call for evidence

### Employers of apprentices

1. How long has your organisation provided apprenticeships? To what age groups and at what level have you typically provided apprenticeships in the past?
2. What positive, negative or otherwise impact do you think the new apprenticeship levy will have on your recruitment of apprentices? (Level provided, age, number etc.)
3. Do you have any 16-18 apprentices and if so how will the removal of ring-fenced funding impact this provision?
4. What is your view of the new apprenticeship standards and the transferable skills they provide?
5. Do you have a social mobility strategy associated with your recruitment of apprentices, or is this issue considered in any way?
6. Do you keep data on the number of disadvantaged young people taking up apprenticeships with you? (Please note: We are not asking for this data to be shared)
7. Do you have a rationale behind your entry criteria and recruitment processes for apprenticeships? (Minimum grade requirements, psychometric testing, interviews, written tests etc.)
8. Do you provide any support for young people or those from disadvantaged backgrounds with your application process or in the workplace? Is there anything additional you think you could do?

**Please indicate whether you are happy for the commission to attribute this evidence to you or your organisation in the report.** Thank you for your contribution.