

SENSE & INSTABILITY:

Three decades of skills and employment policy

England has witnessed dramatic changes in the skills and employment landscape over the past three decades.

City & Guilds' extensive review of this landscape highlights major structural changes as well as policies and initiatives that have affected education and employment policy for young people, adults in work and the unemployed.

A SNAPSHOT OF CHANGE
Over the past three decades there have been at least:

- 7 MAJOR REVIEWS OF SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT**
- 13 ACTS OF PARLIAMENT**
- 10 DEPARTMENTS OVERSEEING OR SHARING SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY**
- 7 SUCCESSOR AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS REMIT**
- 61 SECRETARIES OF STATE WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT**

...AND NUMEROUS PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

DEVELOPMENTS AT THE CENTRE | **YOUNG PEOPLE** | **EMPLOYED ADULTS** | **UNEMPLOYED**

CONSERVATIVES UNDER THATCHER (1979-1990)

1980

Industry Training Boards (ITBs) under Manpower Services Commission (MSC) and Department of Employment (DE).
Both the DE and the Department for Education and Science share responsibility for skills and employment.

1982 Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) launched. Ran until early 1990s.

1983 Youth Training Scheme (YTS) offering one-year programmes of work experience and training. It was expanded in 1986.
In 1989 renamed Youth Training and placed under local Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) management.

1984 Training for Jobs White Paper proposed splitting expenditure into the Job Training Scheme and work preparation courses for longer-term unemployed.
This changed in 1988 to Employment Training (ET) and focused further on the long-term unemployed.

1988

MSC remit reduced with rebranding of the Employment Service as the Training Commission (TC) under DE.
Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) introduced in 1989.

1986 National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) first introduced.

1990 Investors in People (IiP) first conceived by CBI.
Developed as a powerful and low-cost tool to improve employers' commitment to investing in training their workforces.

CONSERVATIVES UNDER MAJOR (1990-1997)

1992 General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) introduced. Later criticised for being overly broad, renamed Advanced Vocational Certificates of Education (AVCEs), then Applied GCEs, before being phased out between 2005 and 2007.

1992 People, Jobs and Opportunity White Paper focused on recognising value of employees to employers.

1993 The Open Learning Credits pilot (1993-4) reported to have positive outcome.

1995

DE and the Department for Education merged into Department for Education and Employment (DfEE).
Skills and employment delivery split: Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) managing further education, TECs covering training.
Two organisations responsible for managing qualifications: Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) for GCSEs and A levels, and National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) for NVQs.

1994 Modern Apprenticeships (MA) programme introduced offering work-based training to NVQ level 3.

1995 Job Seekers Act introduced 16-hour limit for how long those qualifying for jobless benefits could work.
Claimants entitled to Jobseeker's Allowance if they were actively seeking employment and fulfilled other criteria.

LABOUR UNDER BLAIR (1997-2007)

2000

Learning and Skills Act 2000 led to the dissolution of TECs and FEFC; their remit merged into the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).
26 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) established.
In 2001 Department for Education and Skills (DfES) formed, introducing a comprehensive programme for young people.
Training programmes for the unemployed transferred from DfEE to Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
TEC budgets for training for unemployed transferred to JobCentre Plus.

2001 Cassels Review recommended establishment of MA framework.

2003 Modern Apprenticeships Task Force launched to encourage employer input.

2004 The Tomlinson Report suggested a framework of diplomas.
Young Apprenticeships for 14-16 year olds introduced.
Advanced Apprenticeships replaced Advanced Modern Apprenticeships.

2002 JobCentre Plus introduced a radical shift in the way public employment and benefit services were delivered.

2005 Education and Skills White Paper proposed introduction of specialised diplomas.

2006 The Leitch Review advocated a demand-led system to skills training, proposed the establishment of unified adult careers service.
Implemented by BIS in 2007 via the Skills Pledge. Train to Gain (TtG), introduced in 2006, promoted apprenticeships for adults and the employed workforce.

1997 First of Labour's New Deals focused on the 18-25 age group, providing access to work and training opportunities.

LABOUR UNDER BROWN (2007-2010)

2007

Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) set up.
Post-16 education and training placed under Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), though some responsibilities remained with DCSF.
LSC replaced by Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA).
In 2009 Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) formed.

2008 UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) established. Replaced the Sector Skills Development agency, the National Employment Panel and the Skills Alliance.

2008 Ready for Work White Paper promoted employer-led reforms and skills development, including redesign of Sector Skills Councils (SSCs).

2010

The DCSF conducts an inquiry, From Baker to Balls: the foundations of the education system.

2010 Coalition Government announced introduction of the English Baccalaureate.

2011 The Wolf Report proposed greater powers for awarding bodies to develop vocational qualifications and for institutions to introduce more wide-ranging programmes of study.

2012 The Richard Review recommended introducing a single qualification at the end of an apprenticeship.

2010 Universal Credit incorporated Jobseeker's Allowance into a single benefit system, alongside other allowances.

2011 The Work Programme supported long-term unemployed into work, by offering them skills and experience.

2013 Government announced introduction of Jobseeker's Allowance Claimant Commitment

COALITION (2010-PRESENT)

KEY FINDINGS

- “There has been significant and ongoing political tinkering in the system.”
- “There exists a fundamental conflict between political incentives to make quick changes and the stability required by the skills and employment system.”
- “A desire to rebrand schemes and qualifications has often led to confusion and frustration among employers and individuals.”
- “Quantitative training targets can have adverse effects if not realistic, by encouraging misreporting of results and compromises on quality.”
- “Employers will fund training that is useful and relevant.”
- “Employer-led infrastructure is critical to ensure that training is relevant and that buy-in from industry is achieved.”
- “Privatisation of training bears significant risks, with the achievement of income and training targets possibly overriding quality considerations.”
- “Allowing individuals to combine job seeking with training through Open Learning schemes is effective.”
- “Welfare to Work schemes are not necessarily effective when the incentive to work is created by the reduction of other benefits.”

CITY & GUILDS RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 STABILITY THROUGH CONSENSUS**
There should be no change to the current network of LEPs post-election for the duration of at least one Parliament, and LEPs should be established on a statutory basis.
- 2 UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT TO IMPROVE FUTURE POLICY**
The BIS Select Committee should conduct an inquiry into the skills and employment system, reporting before or shortly after the 2015 General Election.
- 3 COHERENCE THROUGH INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT**
The Government should establish an equivalent body to the Office for Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) to provide independent and authoritative analysis of the UK's skills and employment sector