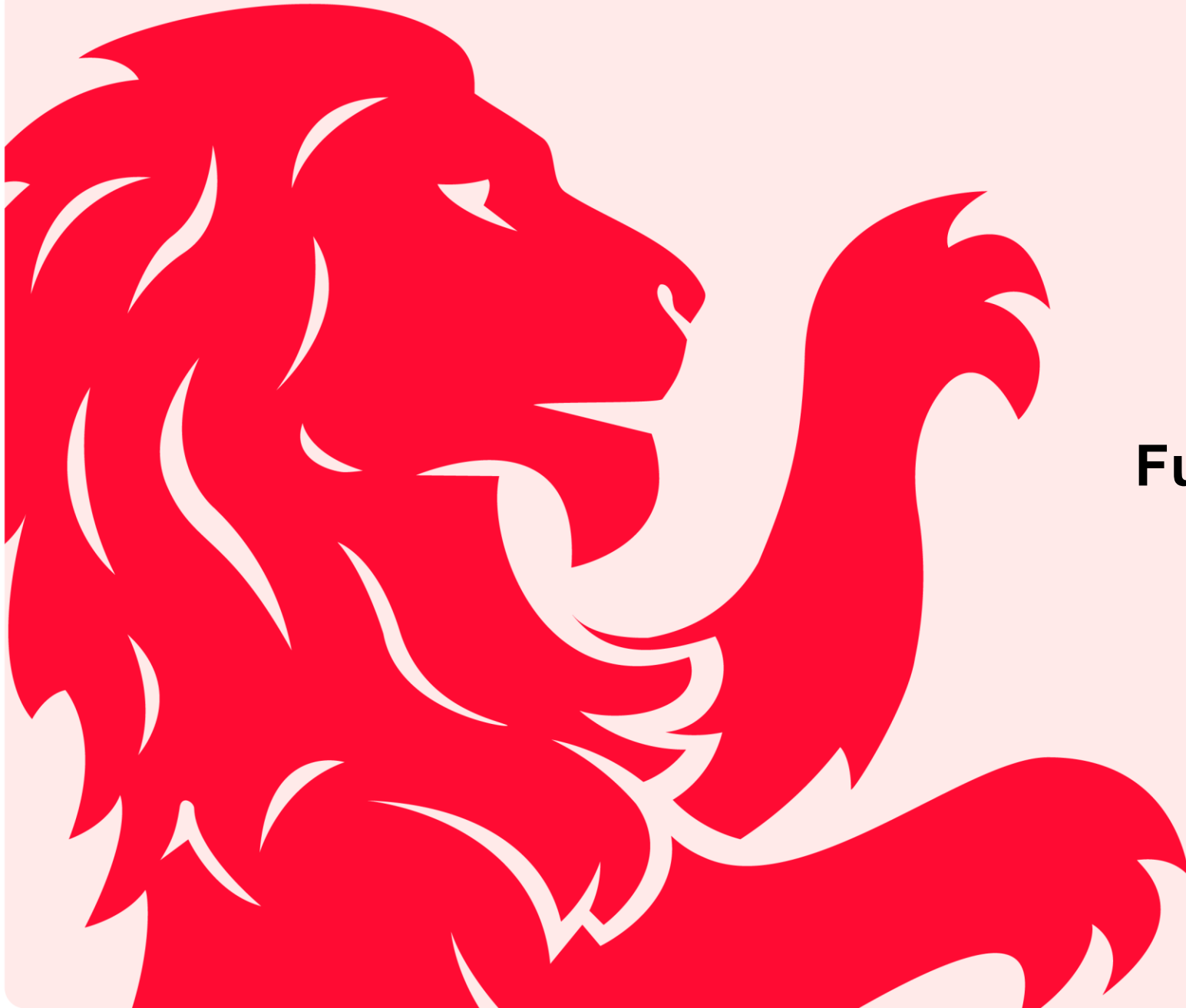


# Funding & Policy Update

30<sup>th</sup> April 2026





*Meet the people*

## City & Guilds *in the room*



**Bryony Kingsland**

Head of Funding & Policy



**Eric Oliver**

Funding & Policy Advisor

# Using the GoTo Webinar Platform



Ask questions via the question area in the pop out dashboard



All attendees will be set to mute



Recording & slides will be sent shortly after the webinar

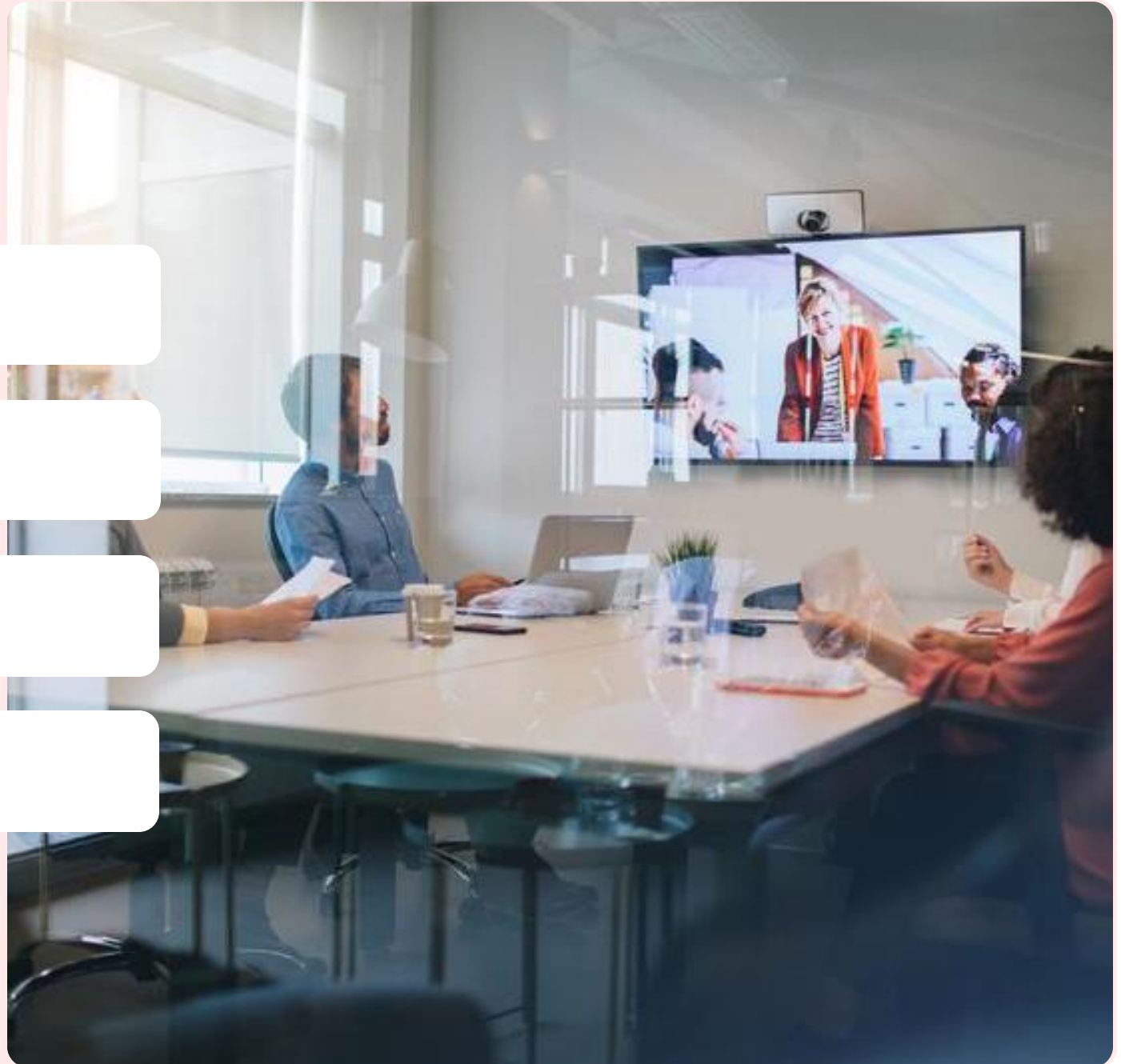
# Agenda

**1** Qualification Reform

**2** Apprenticeship Update

**3** Other Updates

Questions



# Qualification Reform



# Post 16 Education and Skills Response

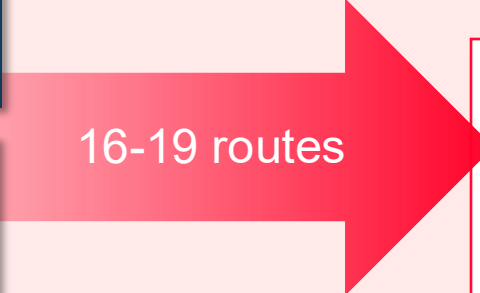
HM Government

Post-16 Education and Skills

Department for Education

**Post-16 Level 3 and Below Pathways**  
Government consultation

Launch date 20 October 2025  
Respond by 12 January 2026



**Simplify skills system**

Plan to educate and train the workforce of the future and give people the skills and knowledge they need to progress and succeed.  
Align to IS-8

**Apprenticeships**

Remove bureaucracy, simplify offer and system.  
Ensure apprenticeships offer truly benefits young people. .

**Teacher recruitment and training.**

An additional 6,500 new expert teachers.

**V Levels**

will sit alongside A levels and T Levels.  
Only alternative funded pathway for vocational qualifications at level 3 for 16 to 19-year-olds.

**Occupational or further study progression.**

A new level 2 offer for either occupational competence or a route leading to further study at a higher level.

**T Levels**

Will remain a level 3 pathway but be updated and gain additional new subjects

Current qualifications such as NVQ's, Dips and Certs will be removed from the Government funded offer at Level 3 over the coming 3 years as new quals are introduced

**Maths & English**

A new approach to continued study of English and maths will be introduced

Short, modular units of learning, called Apprenticeship Units. Launched April 2026 focus on IS-8 sectors  
LLE entitlement first teaching Jan 2027

# Reforming Level 2 and 3 Pathways

## V Levels:

V Levels are a completely new qualification. They will be introduced in phases and offer a broad vocational qualification for students who want to explore a sector before deciding where to specialise. They will emphasise “learning by doing” combined with practical assessment. They will ultimately replace the existing suite of applied general qualifications still available, such as BTECs.

Initial Subjects for Sept 2027: Digital, Education and Early Years, and Finance and Accounting

## Key features of V Levels:

- Same size as an A Level (360 GLH) and can be combined with A Levels where this creates a coherent study programme
- Built on nationally set content with a common approach to grading and standard setting
- Designed to support progression to higher education and employment
- Replacing over 900 current Level 3 qualifications with V Levels, which will become the only level 3 vocational qualification pathway for 16 to 19-year-olds





## Level 2 Qualification Reform

These qualifications will offer students 2 distinct but complementary pathways at level 2

An occupational pathway for those looking to enter employment

And a further study pathway for students wishing to progress on to level 3 study

DfE/Skills England will develop two clear post-16 pathways at level 2 (occupational pathway and further study pathway)

**Foundation Certificates** will typically last one year, with a vocational focus and nationally set subjects linked to occupational standards. They will cover broad sectors to support progression on to relevant T Levels and V Levels or, where applicable, A Levels

**Occupational Certificates** will typically last 2 years and will be a technical qualification based on occupational standards, enabling learners to work towards occupational competence

# Government Consultations on post 16 reforms

Following the recent announcement of new V Levels and wider changes to post-16 provision, government has set out its ambition for a clearer, more coherent system that offers more simplified pathways for technical education routes.

The consultations represent a critical opportunity for employer, providers and other sector specialists to influence how the reformed qualifications are designed to be deliverable and meet future skills needs.

**[Post-16 L2 and L3 qualifications: 2027 proposed subject content - GOV.UK](#)**



Consultations	Consultation deadline
Post-16 level 2 and level 3 qualifications: 2027 proposed subject content	4 June, 2026
Regulating post-16 vocational and technical qualifications at level 2 and level 3	2 July, 2026
16-19 level 1 English and maths qualifications	2 June, 2026

**[Working together to shape a post-16 system that works for all sectors: government opens consultations - News | City & Guilds](#)**



## Technical Excellence Colleges

Gov have invested over £175 million to support high-quality teaching, improved and industry-aligned courses, and state-of-the-art specialist equipment

Colleges awarded Technical Excellence College status have been selected based on their ability to deliver outstanding technical education in areas critical to Britain's economic future

The new **Construction** Technical Excellence Colleges are:

- ✓ Derby College Group, East Midlands
- ✓ West Suffolk College, East of England
- ✓ New City College, Greater London
- ✓ City of Sunderland College, North East
- ✓ Wigan and Leigh College, North West
- ✓ North Kent College, South East
- ✓ Exeter College, South West
- ✓ Bedford College, cross-regional
- ✓ Dudley College of Technology, West Midlands
- ✓ Leeds College of Building, Yorkshire and the Humber

# New Technical Excellence Colleges

The creation of a further 19 technical colleges, specialising in the following growth sectors –

## Defence

- Blackpool and The Fylde College
- City College Plymouth
- Lincoln College
- RNN Group
- Yeovil College

## Clean Energy

- Colchester Institute
- South Bank Colleges
- The City of Liverpool College
- The Education Training Collective
- University Centre Somerset College Group

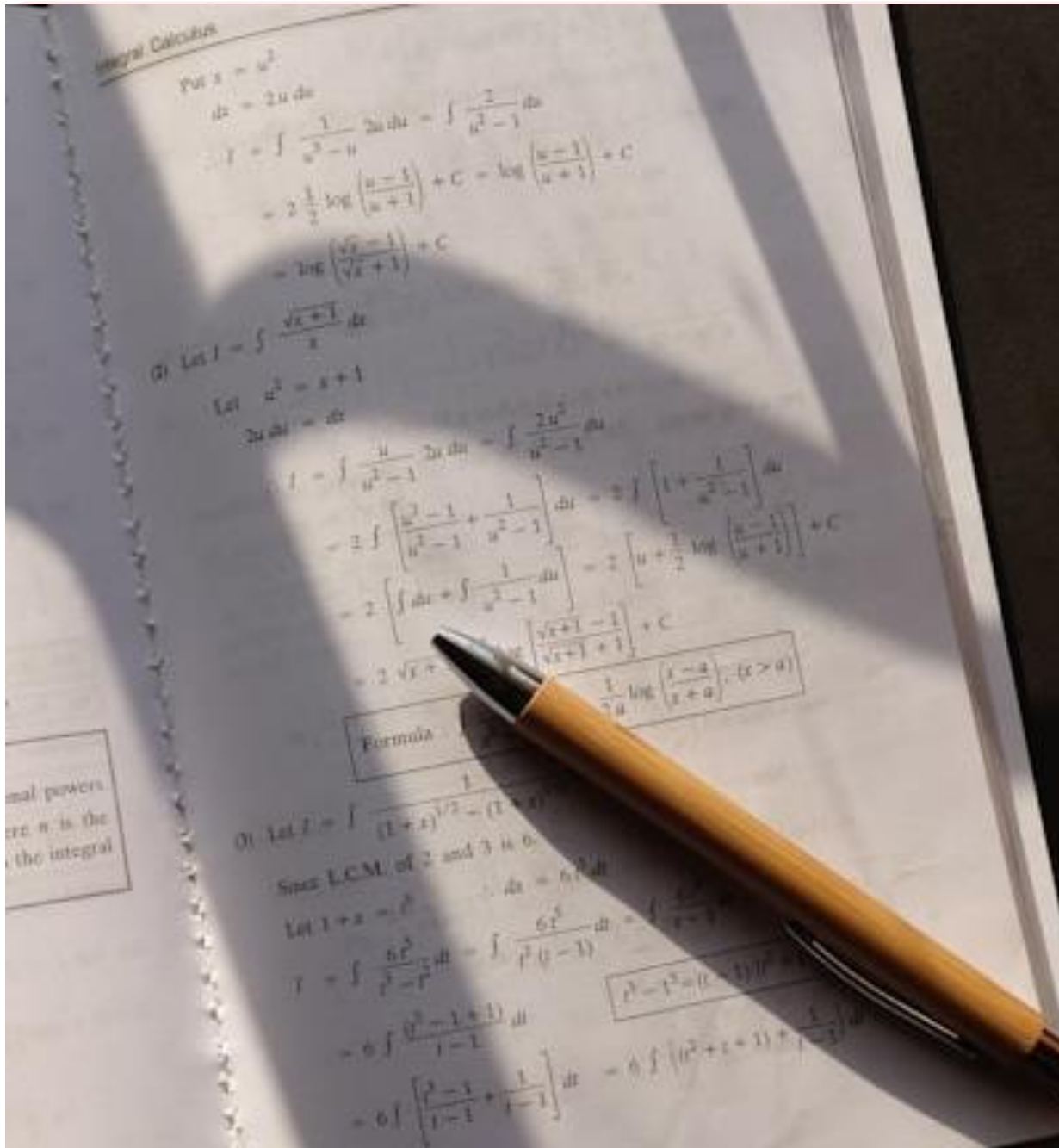


## Digital and Technologies

- Birmingham Metropolitan College
- Capital City College Group
- Gloucestershire College
- LTE Group
- Milton Keynes College

## Advanced Manufacturing

- City of Wolverhampton College
- New College Durham
- Newcastle and Stafford College Group
- Weston College of Further and Higher Education



## 16-19 English & maths *Consultation*

Gov are seeking views on new proposed lvl 1 English & maths provision for 16–19-year-olds with prior GCSE attainment at grade 2 or below

**Deadline** – 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2026

This will include views on the:

- Cohort
- Qualification structure
- Content
- Qualification achievement & grading

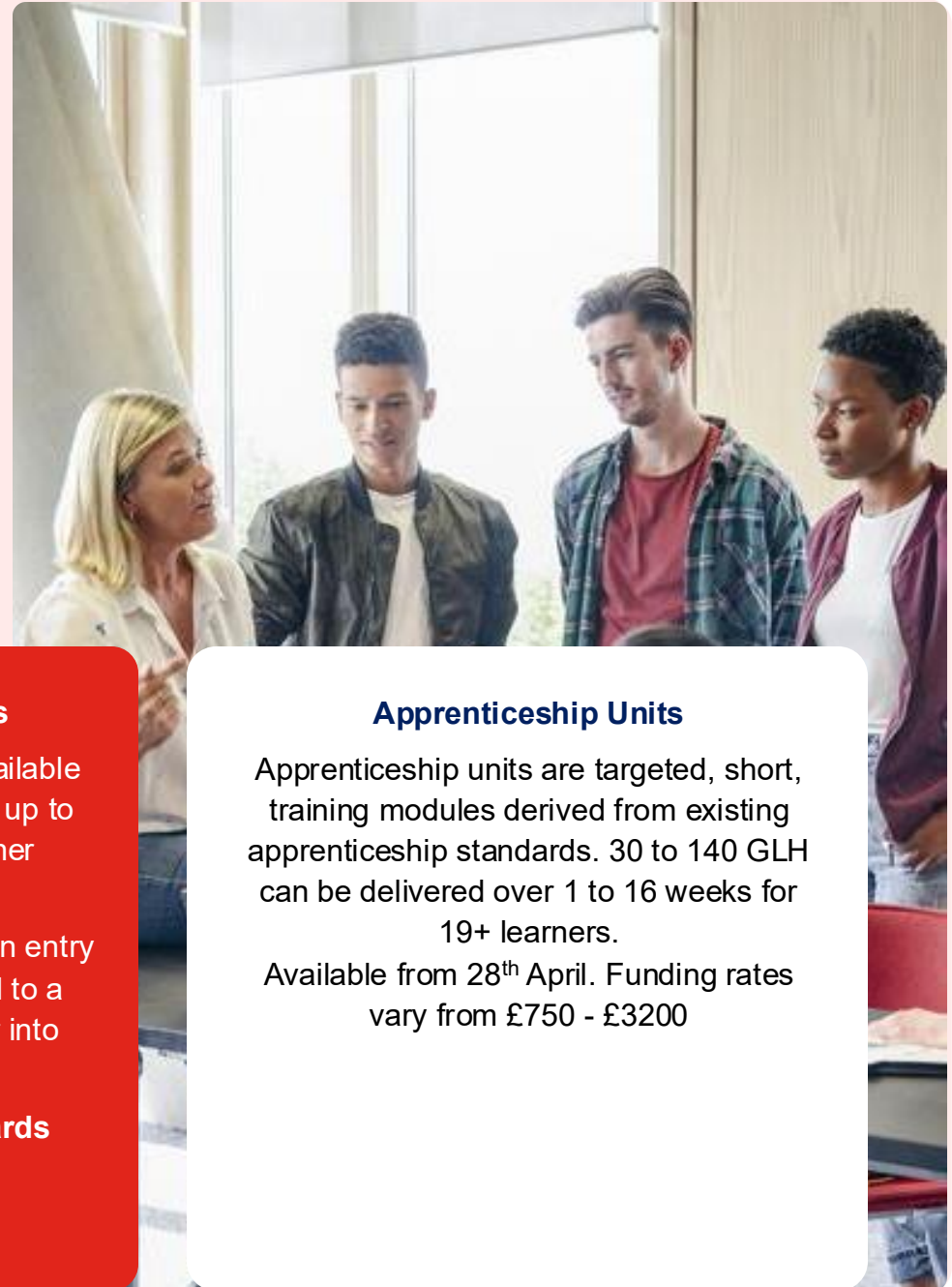
[16–19 Level 1 English and Maths Qualifications - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#)

# Apprenticeship Update

# Apprenticeship Reforms - *overview*

The Government are making changes to the apprenticeship offer. These changes will affect employers, training providers, EPAO's and learners.

[Apprenticeship search / Skills England](#)



## Reforming the offer

Government is reforming the apprenticeship offer to align with the Industrial Strategy and the skills needed for the future.

The reforms introduce a more youth-focused funding approach, streamlined assessments, modular training units, and expanded entry-level opportunities to support workforce growth and skills development.

## Foundation Apprenticeships

Foundation apprenticeships are available for young people aged 16 to 21, or up to 24 for learners with ECHP or other challenges.

They provide a broad grounding in an entry level occupation, which could lead to a specialism in higher level study or into employment.

**There are 9 Foundation Standards available**

## Apprenticeship Units

Apprenticeship units are targeted, short, training modules derived from existing apprenticeship standards. 30 to 140 GLH can be delivered over 1 to 16 weeks for 19+ learners.

Available from 28<sup>th</sup> April. Funding rates vary from £750 - £3200

## Why is the apprenticeships offer being reformed?

Over the past 10 years, apprenticeship starts among 16–24-year-olds have fallen by 40%.

Meanwhile, there has been an increase in older apprentices studying Standards at higher levels that are also, on average, more expensive

The apprenticeship offer has grown to more than 700 apprenticeship standards. To ensure funding is directed at the highest priority skills challenges, Gov will withdraw funding from a number of standards from September 2026

The standards being defunded will remain available for employers to fund privately if they wish. Government co-funding will not be provided for these standards after the defunding date

National Insurance exemptions for eligible apprentices under the age of 25 will continue for privately-funded apprentices

Importantly, there will be no change for existing learners. They will be able to continue and complete their apprenticeship, and funding will be maintained to support completion



# Foundation Apprenticeships

Foundation apprenticeships are set at level 2 and are designed to help young people get started in an industry

Foundation apprenticeships are available across a range of sectors, including construction, engineering, digital and social care

Anyone between 16 and 21 can start a foundation apprenticeship

<https://skillsengland.education.gov.uk/apprenticeships/?types=FoundationApprenticeship>



- Building service engineering
- Finishing trades
- Onsite trades
- Hardware, network and infrastructure
- Software and data
- Engineering and manufacturing
- Health and social care
- Retail service, supply and administration
- Catering and Hospitality

# Apprenticeship Units *New Offer*



From **28<sup>th</sup> April 2026**, Gov are introducing the first wave of courses called apprenticeship units. These courses are designed to help employers respond quickly to evolving skills needs and invest in workforce development

The first 10 units available in critical skills are:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Leadership – AI Strategy and Opportunity
- AI Leadership – AI adoption, procurement and governance
- AI Leadership – AI delivery and organisational transformation
- Battery Manufacturing
- Electric Vehicle Charging Point Installation and Maintenance
- Electrical Fitting and Assembly
- Mechanical Fitting & Assembly
- Permanent Modular Building Assembly
- Solar Photovoltaic Installation and Maintenance
- Welding (mechanised)

Apprenticeship units are for those aged 19 and over who are already employed. They last between 30 and 140 delivery hours and can be delivered over a period of 1 to 16 weeks

The reduction of duration and price due to ROPL is not applicable to apprenticeship units. However, if a learner has skills or knowledge which overlap with 50% of the unit, they will not be eligible for funding

# Training Provider *Responsibilities*

Initial Assessment	Training Plan	Delivery, evidence, and reviews	Assessment Method (Unregulated)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree Unit with employer</li> <li>• Age criteria 19+</li> <li>• Check prior learning support needs</li> <li>• Confirm employer agreement to suitability and funding eligibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define structure</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> <li>• OTJ hours, and assessment strategies</li> <li>• Tailor delivery to learner needs</li> <li>• The employer must agree with the provider which approach to assessment they will take</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligibility criteria</li> <li>• Provide and record OTJ training to statutory minimum</li> <li>• Confirmation that the skills test passed by employer and learner</li> <li>• Evidence that the skills test is passed</li> <li>• Acknowledgement that the training plan is complete by the provider, employer and learner</li> </ul>	<p>A skills test to assess whether the learner has acquired the skills and knowledge in the apprenticeship unit</p> <p>Evidence that the skills test has been developed by a <b>suitably qualified person who is independent from</b> training delivery</p>

# Apprenticeship Units *Funding*



Apprenticeship unit name	Funding rate	Minimum delivery hours
Permanent modular building assembly	£3,200	140
Welding (mechanised)	£2,100	90
Mechanical fitting and assembly	£1,650	70
Electrical fitting and assembly	£1,650	70
Battery manufacturing	£1,650	70
Electric vehicle (EV) charging point installation and maintenance	£950	35
Solar PV installation and maintenance	£950	35
AI leadership - AI delivery and organisational transformation	£750	30
AI leadership - AI adoption, procurement and governance	£750	30
AI leadership - AI strategy and opportunity	£750	30

## Points to Consider

- 30% is paid after 30% of the provision is delivered
- The funding payment schedule is heavily loaded to achievement, with 70% of the funding paid to the provider once the learner completes all training and has a positive outcome
- There has been some criticism regarding the funding milestones
- Questions about final assessment

## Apprenticeship Units- *Delivery*

To be eligible to deliver units, providers must:

- ✓ Deliver the standards or tier 2 SSAs from which app units are drawn (24/25 data)
- ✓ Be on the APAR and actively delivering apprenticeships
- ✓ Not have any indicators rated as 'at risk' on the accountability framework
- ✓ Be free from contractual funding restrictions

The department will carry out a verification check against the published eligibility criteria. Once this is complete, eligibility will be confirmed to the provider



# Apprenticeship Levy Funding *Changes*

**The Government is reforming the apprenticeship offer. Some of these changes affect employers.**

## Co-investment

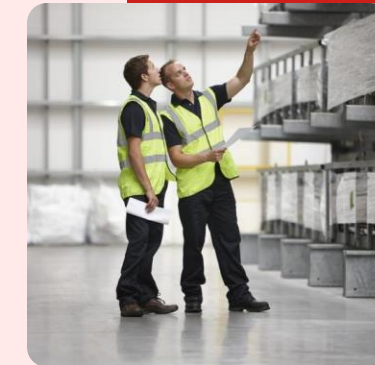
- ✓ Currently, when an employer's levy funds run out, they can continue to take on apprentices with the government paying 90% of the cost (employers contribute 10%). In August 2026, the Government contribution will drop to 75% and employers will be expected to contribute 25% of the costs
- ✓ However, for SME's, the government is removing the cost of co-investment for all apprentices taken on who are under 25 (previously, SMEs had to contribute 5% of costs)
- ✓ Non-levy co-investment rate remains at 5% for those 25 & over



# Apprenticeship Levy Funding *Changes*

**The way that funds enter and are used in the employer apprenticeship service account will change**

- ✓ Employers will continue to receive levy funds each month based on your pay bill in England
- ✓ The 10% government top-up will stop from 1st August 2026.
- ✓ The oldest funds in the account will continue to be used first
- ✓ However, new funds entering the account will expire after 12 months if you do not use them (currently they expire after 24 months). Funds that entered the account on or before 31 July 2026 will continue to expire after 24 months





## Employer Incentives

The provider and employer can get £1,000 to support apprentices in the workplace if, at the start of their apprenticeship training, they are one of the following:

- ✓ 16 to 18 years old (or 15 years old if the apprentice's 16th birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31 August)
- ✓ 19 to 24 years old with an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- ✓ 19 to 24 years old and have been in care
- ✓ Employers do not have to pay employer national insurance contributions for apprentices aged under 25 when the apprentice earns less than £50,270 annually.

You can spend it on any costs related to their employment, for example their salary, travel costs or uniform

Employer-providers can receive both payments, if the apprentice meets criteria



## Employer incentives

The £1000 incentive is paid in two instalments, with the first payment being made 90 days into the apprenticeship.

The second payment is usually made 365 days after the learner's start date.

In the instance that a learner is on a shorter apprenticeship or a foundation apprenticeship, the second payment will be made 242 days after the start date.

If the apprenticeship has a typical duration over 12 months, and the learner completes in under 12 months, the second payment will not be made

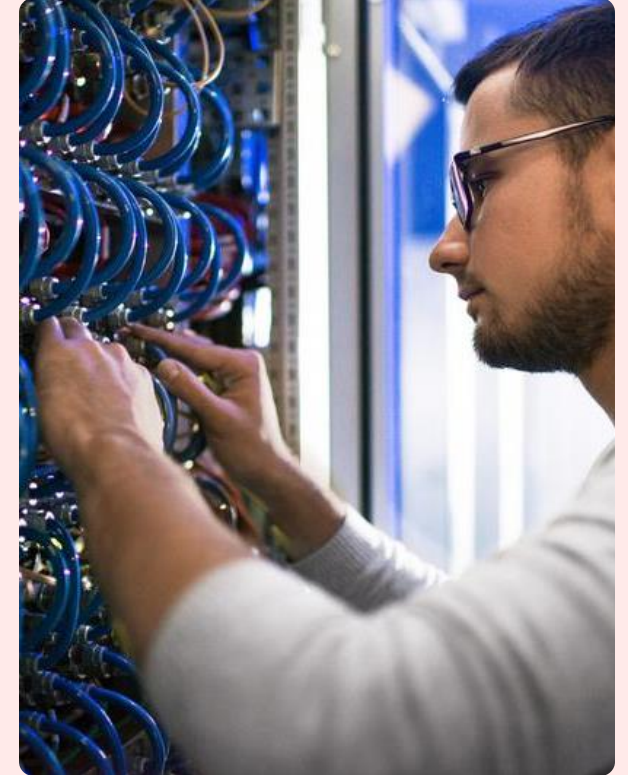
# Apprenticeship Incentives for non levy payers

Government are introducing additional investment to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) hire young apprentices

From the 2026 to 2027 academic year, Gov will be fully funding apprenticeships for non-levy payers for under 25-year-olds

Additionally, from October 2026, non-levy paying employers (typically SMEs) will be able to get an incentive of up to £2,000 when recruiting new apprentices aged 16 to 24

This will apply to those starting an apprenticeship from 1 October 2026, providing they've joined their employer within the past 3 months. The first payment will be made once the learner has completed the first 90 days of their apprenticeship



## Foundation Apprenticeship *Incentives*

Employers may be able to get up to £2,000 to support your apprentice if they're doing a foundation apprenticeship and they're one of the following:

- ✓ 16 to 21 years old
- ✓ 22 to 24 years old with an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- ✓ 22 to 24 years old and have been in care
- ✓ 22 to 24 years old and are in prison or leaving prison

You can spend the money on any costs related to their employment, for example their salary, travel costs or uniform





## Foundation Apprenticeship

### *Incentives Cont...*

The training provider will pay you once they've confirmed that an apprentice is eligible. This will be paid in 3 instalments.

You'll get:

- ✓ the first payment of £667 - 90 days after the apprenticeship started
- ✓ the second payment of £667 - 242 days after the apprenticeship started
- ✓ the third payment of £666 - 90 days after the apprentice moves onto their next apprenticeship

Training providers must pay you within 30 working days of receiving the money from the government.

You'll only get paid if the apprentice is still employed by you when each payment is due.



## Funding Rules *Updates*

The lvl 2 Admin standard will *only* be available to those aged 16-24. Due to be available for new starts from the 1<sup>st</sup> August

Currently, the working hours of a learner must be regular, planned and known at the start of the apprenticeship to ensure that 50% of the learners working hours are spent in England. This will no longer be requirement, providing some more flexibility for providers on the borders (though learners must still spend 50% of their working hours in England).

If a learner requires learner support, this must still be reviewed every 3 months. However, DFE have clarified that this can be light touch where the support need is stable due to a permanent disability and unlikely to change.

There have been a handful of clarifications on maths and English in an apprenticeship, including clarification that 19+ learners can withdraw from functional skills without failing the rest of the apprenticeship (unless the maths & English in mandatory in the particular apprenticeship or mandatory qualification).

## Funding Rules *Updates*

There must now be a section in the training plan which allows the employer, learner & provider to sign off that the content of the training plan has been delivered.

DFE clarified that progress reviews should usually take place every 3 months. If there is an estimated delivery reason which means an alternative frequency is required, this can be changed, but progress reviews must not be more than 6 months apart.

Non-mandatory qualifications must *not* be a higher level than the level of the standard.

Some small contract changes for the contract with the employer & provider including: the contract for services with the employer can now be at programme level rather than learner level and there is no longer a requirement for the provider to break down the cost into eligible cost areas (but they must confirm that the funding band will only be used on eligible costs).





## Funding Rules *Updates*

Employers will no longer need to agree pricing splits between TNP1 (apprenticeship delivery costs) & TNP 2 (EPA costs). The employer only needs to agree to pricing changes when the total price increases.

Providers can now subcontract to organisations not on the APAR, even if the provider has not achieved the subcontracting standard if the subcontractor delivers less than £25,000 of training between 1<sup>st</sup> August – 31<sup>st</sup> July each year. If the subcontracting amount is £25,001 - £99,999, the provider must have written confirmation that they have passed the subcontracting standard to subcontract. This is to increase flexibility and allow subject matter experts to deliver training with fewer prerequisites.

If using a standard with reformed assessment plan, the provider must approach an assessment organisation at the *start* of the apprenticeship because under the reformed approach, assessment is likely to occur throughout the duration of the apprenticeship rather than just at the end.

Where a mandatory qualification forms all the assessment the provider must claim the certificate. It is unclear if the provider must also update the LRS

AO's/providers cannot claim certificates without all evidence, including verification of behaviours.

## Apprenticeship Standard *Withdrawals*

Funding is being withdrawn from a selection of apprenticeship standards. The government feel the Standards do not support young people, align with the Government industrial strategy, or form a core part of career pathways

The apprenticeships being withdrawn are:

- Cleaning Hygiene Operative Level 2
- Coaching Professional Level 5
- Custody and Detention Professional Level 3
- Facilities Management Supervisor Level 3
- Improvement Leader Level 6
- Improvement Practitioner Level 4
- Lead Practitioner in Adult Care Level 4
- Learning and Skills Assessor Level 3
- Learning and Skills Mentor Level 4
- Outdoor Learning Specialist Level 5
- Professional Security Operative Level 2
- Public Sector Compliance Investigation Officer Level 3
- Security First Line Manager Level 3





## Withdrawal of Leadership & Mgmt Standards

Government are also withdrawing funding from 3 leadership and management apprenticeships from 1<sup>st</sup> Sept 2026.

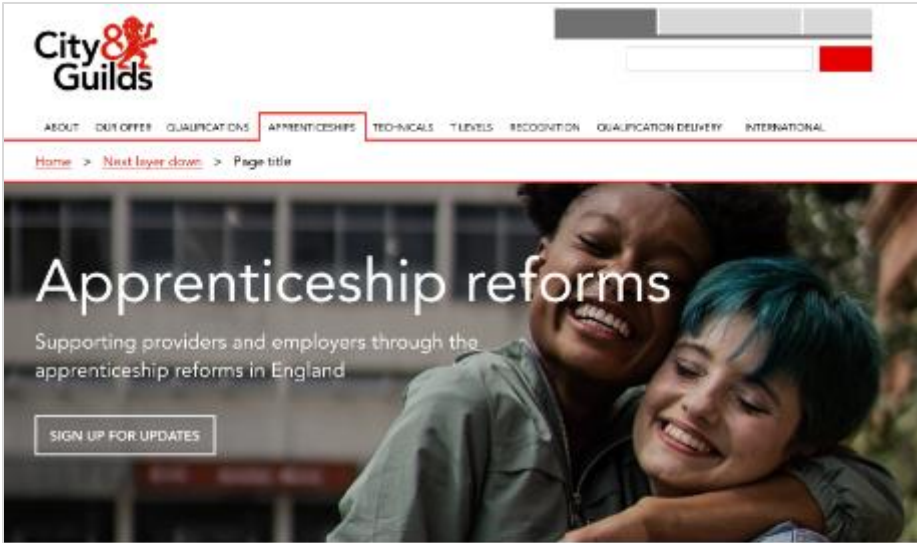
The apprenticeships being withdrawn are:

- Chartered Manager (degree) Level 6
- Operations Manager Level 5
- Team Leader Level 3

To help ease the transition, a small number of providers who already deliver these apprenticeships have been given a short extension beyond this date with a limited number of starts, so they can shift their delivery to other Standards where this is possible. However, we are aware that this offer is already over-subscribed in many regions.

Level 7 quals already defunded

# Apprenticeship Reforms *Web Page*



## What you need to know about apprenticeship reforms

You will find key policy updates, guidance on end-point assessment changes, new products in development, and upcoming events to help you navigate the future of apprenticeships with confidence.

### A new chapter for work-based skills development

The government has announced a major overhaul of the apprenticeship system, designed to boost opportunity, streamline assessments, and better align training with national skills needs.

#### Key drivers of reform include:

Apprenticeship reform in England is driven by the need to boost economic growth by addressing skills shortages through simplifying and streamlining the education and skills system. The Department for Education's 'Plan for Change' prioritises flexibility and increasing accessibility. The changes reflect a strategic shift toward inclusive, employer-led, and economically impactful targeted training pathways to better drive regional economic growth.

The reforms include a new target to have:



65%

10%

## Key policy changes

There are a lot of changes to keep up to date with. As the leading apprenticeship awarding organisation in a world-class apprenticeship system, we continue to engage regularly with the regulator and government departments to work on behalf of our customers and bring you the latest updates.

We're not just responding to reform - we're helping shape it.

- Evolving Assessment
- Foundation Apprenticeships
- Reduced Minimum Duration
- Revised English & Maths Rules
- Flexible Off-the-Job Training

### End-point assessment is evolving for learners

Awarding Organisations, like City & Guilds, will not be restricted to designing assessments to be taken at the end of an apprentice's journey. As such, the term 'end-point assessment' is being replaced with 'apprenticeship assessment'.



## What's next?

Skills England are going through a process of revising and releasing assessment plans. City & Guilds will review every apprenticeship assessment plan that is released. A range of factors go into our review process such as, feedback from our customers, advice from our industry boards, estimated demand, progression pathway options, and how it fits with our existing portfolio and development roadmap.

We are committed to our current sectors and will be exploring new opportunities with our customers. We will continue to engage in conversations with Skills England and customers as assessment plans are released.



### Foundation apprenticeship construction launching early

This foundation apprenticeship is 8 months in duration.

- Combines classroom learning with real-world experience.
- Focuses on core skills, safety, and industry knowledge.

We are in the process of engaging with industry stakeholders, training providers and colleges to deliver this for the construction sector.

## What to look for in an Awarding Organisation

As apprenticeship reforms evolve and new assessment plans are released by Skills England, choosing the right awarding organisation has never been more important. You need a partner that responds with confidence, clarity, and a commitment to quality.

### Flexibility in design and delivery

City & Guilds adapts to your delivery model and apprentice needs.

- Built-in flexibility for scheduling assessments
- Seamless integration into training plans
- Enables providers to deliver learning their way

### Deep expertise in assessment types

We bring proven experience across all assessment formats.

- Expertise in internal assessment, observation, professional discussion
- Robust quality assurance and expert guidance
- Over 100,000 EFAs certified with robust quality assurance

### Proportionate and streamlined assessment

We focus on what matters to reduce unnecessary burden.

- Practises essential competencies
- Eliminates duplication of knowledge, skills, and behaviours
- Broad provision and pathways enhance efficiency
- Reduces admin and streamlines delivery

### Smart digital tools for delivery

Our platform simplifies apprenticeship management.

- EFA Pro: comprehensive online delivery platform
- Supports registration, evidence upload, tracking, and results
- Designed for multi-cohort and multi-employer delivery
- Improves efficiency and ease for providers

### Capacity to deliver at scale

We ensure reliable assessment bookings, even at peak times.

- Infrastructure built for high-volume delivery
- Over 98% of preferred booking dates secured
- Confidence in timely apprentice assessment

### Exceptional customer support

Our support model helps providers achieve success.

- Dedicated customer service teams, technical advisors and apprenticeship partnership managers
- Proven impact with a 95% achievement rate
- Delivers high-quality outcomes

Award winning excellence

100% 90%

<https://www.cityandguilds.com/apprenticeships/apprenticeship-assessment>

# Other Updates

# Youth Guarantee

The Government is investing **£900 million** over three years to expand the Youth Guarantee. This includes -

Extension of the Jobs Guarantee scheme to 22–24-year-olds

Hiring incentives for employers recruiting young people on Universal Credit who are at risk of long-term unemployment

The scheme will offer a guaranteed, fully subsidised 6-month paid job to every eligible 18- to 24-year-old who has been on Universal Credit and looking for work for 18 months.

The government will cover 100% of employment costs for 25 hours a week at the relevant minimum wage, alongside additional wraparound support to help participants succeed in their job and transition into sustained employment.



[Jobs Guarantee - GOV.UK](#)

Gov will begin delivery of the Jobs Guarantee in 6 areas from spring 2026, across:

- Birmingham and Solihull – Catch 22
- East Midlands – Ingenus
- Greater Manchester – The growth company
- Hertfordshire and Essex – Reed & partnership
- Central and East Scotland – the King’s trust
- Southwest and Southeast Wales – Itec skills & employment

## Free Courses for Jobs - *Engineering*

£47 million is being invested to expand the engineering sector over three years, with an additional £16 million being invested in the 26/27AY

Level 2 engineering & manufacturing courses will be added to the FCFJ list for the 26/27AY – The specific new courses will be announced in the Summer

In non-devolved areas: providers with a good engineering delivery track record can expect an increase in their funding allocations

In devolved areas: any additional funding will be managed by the combined authority



Q&A