



SPRING CONFERENCE 2019

A New Age for Welsh Apprenticeships

Conference notes:

- A. The Welsh Government's target of creating "100,000 quality apprenticeships in this assembly term."
- B. The Welsh Government's Employability Plan, released in March 2018 and their paper 'Aligning the Apprenticeship model to the needs of the Welsh economy,' released in February 2017.
- C. The central role EU funding has played in funding apprenticeships in Wales, principality through Jobs Growth Wales.
- D. The UK Government's Apprenticeships Levy, which has been described as 'confusing' by the Assembly's Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee in 2017 and as a 'massive lost opportunity' by the CBI in 2018.
- E. The crucial role apprenticeships can play in developing skills, driving economic growth and increasing opportunities.
- F. That both higher and further education play a vital role in the future prosperity of Wales and the success of its citizens.
- G. Effective and accessible careers advice is essential to help young people make informed and smart decisions about their futures, including whether to pursue higher or further education.
- H. The potential of higher and degree apprenticeships to provide learners with sought-after qualifications and vocational experience whilst providing an alternative route to a conventional university degree.
- I. The excellent work being undertaken by Kirsty Williams to strengthen links between education and businesses.
- J. The potential for apprenticeships to help reduce inequalities within industries and sectors.

Conference calls on Welsh Government to:

1. Research how many apprenticeships Wales is likely to require over the course of the next Assembly, at what levels these apprenticeships are required and how this demand could be met.
2. Research in which sectors these apprenticeships are needed and whether any sectors now have a surplus of apprenticeship places.
3. Ensure colleges, businesses and training providers have the funding and support necessary to meet this demand.
4. Improve the availability of careers advice to improve awareness of apprenticeships, help prospective learners secure these apprenticeships and allow young people to make the best decisions about their futures.
5. Put student and learner representatives on Regional Skills Partnership's boards so the voices of students and learners are properly heard when devising skills and employability policies across Wales.
6. Ensure that apprenticeships support clear and effective progression routes so learners participating in lower level apprenticeships can develop further skills as they progress to higher level apprenticeships.
7. Prioritise higher and degree level apprenticeships when funding additional apprenticeships.
8. Promote equality and diversity within apprenticeships to improve the diversity within specific sectors. For example, improving the number of women entering the construction sector and the number of men working within social care.
9. Ensure apprenticeships are accessible to those with disabilities and supportive of those learners with mental illness.

Conference calls on the UK Government to:

1. Immediately begin preparations to end the Apprenticeships Levy and consult with businesses, training providers and the Welsh Government to create a more effective and equitable replacement.
2. Ensure that regardless of the outcome of Brexit, Wales does not lose a penny so that existing levels of funding for apprenticeships can continue.