

Education Committee

Further Education and Skills

Curriculum and qualifications in further education

- The assessment system.

The End Point Assessment for practical skills, and the multiple choice exams used for apprenticeships puts too much pressure on the candidates, especially as there is a cost implication for the retakes if they fail.

Continual assessment would be much better, and encourages engagement throughout the course. It helps those that feared and possibly failed exams at school

- Driving better standards in further education; the quality and consistency of provision and outcomes.

We need the best and brightest from industry attracted to teaching the future generation... to do this salaries need to be on par with both industry and other educational sectors. Some apprentices are being paid more than their tutors!!

- Post-16 numeracy and literacy, including GCSE resits.

Numeracy and literacy are essential life skills in our modern world... if students have failed to achieve these qualifications at school, this should be an impetus to try something different - they may be square pegs, so stop trying to force them into round holes!... embed these skills into the qualification... we have students that can calibrate a sprayer, and apply pesticides, but fail their apprenticeship because they cannot pass the GCSE!

Delivering further education

- Funding for further education, including whether the additional £300 million announced by the Chancellor in last year's Budget is sufficient and how it should be distributed.

This is a drop in the ocean, this sector has been underfunded for decades. Colleges are struggling to keep their facilities up to industry standards, when they should be higher than industry standards - we should be teaching the future, not the past.

- Workforce pressures, including college teachers' pay and the recruitment and retention of staff in all further education settings.

College teachers pay has not kept pace with inflation for decades, and has resulted in an overall pay cut... this does nothing to attract the best from industry to train and inspire our future generations.

Technicians have been cut which affects the quality of the delivery, as tutors often only get paid for teaching time, not to prepare and tidy away after practical lessons.

- Quality of facilities and capital investment strategy.

Capital investment is so limited, and colleges are struggling to maintain the existing infrastructure/facilities.

Skills and apprenticeships

- How to resolve the skills shortage and narrow the gap between the skills that employers want and the skills that employees have.

Running short specialist courses tailored to the local industry needs. This is a quick way to inject skills into the local businesses. Colleges need funding to facilitate these.

- The level of collaboration between the further education sector, local government and employers in responding to the skills shortage.

Colleges have been used to 'mop up' those not in education or employment after school... they need to get back to being centres of vocational excellence - valued and supported by local industry.

- Current challenges for apprenticeships, including employer engagement, funding issues, and apprentice pay.

Employers still do not appreciate the financial support there is out there for them to take on apprentices. Apprenticeship pay is below the living wage which puts many off.

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