



## **AELP Webinar: Future Apprenticeships - Maximising Apprenticeship Recruitment Questions and Answers**

**Webinar chair:** Paul Warner, Director of Policy and Strategy, AELP

**Facilitator:** [Claire Cummings](#), Senior Manager – NAS Communications and Events, SFA

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### **Q: What plans are in place to inform schools of the changes in apprenticeships and the digital apprenticeship service?**

A: We have recently put out an ITT for organisations to bid for an IAG in schools project. The successful organisations will be expected to inform schools about the apprenticeship reforms which will include the digital apprenticeship service and changes to apprenticeships. The ITT closed on the 11 July at 5pm and we are in the process of evaluating the bids. The successful organisations should be announced at the beginning of September.

### **Q: What do we tell current and new SME employers about funding after April 2017 if there is no relevant standard in place to replace any existing SASE frameworks. The vast majority of these SMEs will not be large enough to meet SFA requirements to create a new standard.**

A: We will be shortly launching a new Business Support Service telephone helpline that will help and support employers of all sizes no matter how small with all matters relating to apprenticeships and of course training providers will continue to play an important role in supporting SME's. The SFA have confirmed that Frameworks will not be withdrawn until new standards are in place.

### **Q: We have had a few bright students that finish their Apprenticeship hours and learning before the end of the year, is there a way they can progress onto level 3 instead of being held back until they finish the year?**

A: I think there was a bit of confusion when I answered this question during the webinar. I mistakenly assumed that the apprentices had completed their level 2 apprenticeship and were having to wait until they started the level 3.

The Funding Rules states:

..... the apprentice, after achieving all mandatory qualifications, can stay in learning until they meet the minimum duration. During this time, they will, in their workplace, use and embed the skills they have gained during learning. You must make sure that throughout the apprenticeship, the apprentice is involved in active learning or **monitored workplace practice**.

There is nothing to stop the provider from getting the apprentice to start some of the learning at the next level but they cannot register then on the ILR and draw down funds until they have completed the level 2.

### **Q: We do have low attendance on interview sessions. If there is anything we can do to**

**increase attendance this would be a big help.**

A: This is an issue raised by a lot of providers. Have you tried contacting the candidates the day before the interview to remind them they have an interview? Some organisation actually ring or text candidates on the actual day of the interview to confirm their attendance.

**Q: Do you have any tips when creating a title for the Apprenticeship role to help catch candidate's attention?**

A: This will have been covered in the slides. However, the space given to create a vacancy title on the vacancy template has a restricted number of characters.

You should always make it clear what level the apprenticeship is at e.g Advanced Apprenticeship.....and give the title of the role.

The short description is where you need to sell the vacancy. This is the headline that will attract candidates.

Make the job role sound exciting. Use language that will make a reader take notice e.g:

` A great opportunity for the right candidate to join ..... as an apprentice. If you're interested in progressing in a career as an administrator which includes supporting the Service Plan Department team on daily basis then apply now!`

**Q: Do you have any tips for promoting and attracting candidates for vacancies based in rural locations?**

A: We appreciate that it is difficult to fill vacancies in rural areas due to travel issues etc. you should work with the employer to see if there is anything they can do to support apprentices with travel. Some hotels have staff transport which can help with some hospitality roles.

It is important to manage employer expectations. This is where you can work together to create an appealing job description to make to job sound so good that people will want to apply.

If the employer is willing to help with transport etc, mention this in the vacancy as this will help candidates make an informed decision.

The Find an apprenticeship system includes maps and information on travel times to employer locations so candidates can make an informed choice before applying.

**Q: Is there a particular time you would start to advertise positions to attract school leavers?**

A: This will depend on the recruitment process for your organisation. Some large, engineering companies have a lengthy assessment process so they tend to start advertising early in the year (February/March) for starts in September.

We do find that applications are higher in August/September/October (after the A level/GCSE results) and in January/February (some students that decide to go back to school/college drop out after Christmas so they start looking or an apprenticeship.

**Q: How are providers finding the impact in the raise of participation age in recruiting candidates?**

A: With RPA we did see a drop in the number of 16-18 year olds applying for apprenticeships.

We believe the reason for this is that people have not been aware that apprenticeships can count as being in education and training. We have put this messaging out in our collateral and with the IAG in schools projects we are making sure that the organisations delivering sessions in schools are informing students of all options post 16.

**Q: Does the language (informal/formal etc.) that the vacancy is written in attract a certain calibre of candidate?**

A: I believe I covered this in the webinar

**Q: Do you feel that the quality of the advert is one of the reasons why quality candidates are not attracted? Do you feel that the rate of pay for what some employers expect is a reason some vacancies are left unfilled?**

A: Yes, this was covered in the webinar

**Q: One of our biggest issues is that young people don't attend Apprenticeship interviews? Is this a common issue?**

A: See Q4.

**Q: Do we think high outcome targets are adding to some of the problems being talked about, not enough time is taken to carefully search and select the right Learners in my view.**

A: Linked to response/comment in Q56.

**Q: Does the feedback on the AVOL system for unsuccessful applicants get sent by email to them via the system?**

A:

**Q: Hi, is the webinar also going to focus on maximising apprenticeship recruitment under the new scheme as well please?**

A: I don't understand what they mean by `new scheme`. The information given during the webinar applies to any type of recruitment for any job role.

If the question refers to the new funding rules and levied employers, the most important thing for providers is to make sure that they are registered on the Register of Training Organisations and that the apprenticeships they deliver are up to date as this information will be pulled on to the DAS and employers will use the information to find a training provider.

Once a provider is selected, it will be up to the employer and provider to work together on the content of the vacancy.

**Q: Could we have more characters in the short description in order to attract attention? Maybe extend to 350 instead of 250?**

A:

**Q: I thought you were not allowed to say "possible full-time position" as they were supposed to be taken on as an employee even though it's an apprenticeship?**

A: Yes, this is correct, but there are some providers who include this as a progression route. This is not something that will encourage a candidate to apply for the vacancy which is why I suggest that phrases like this are not used.

The vacancies team will challenge providers who include this in their adverts as we do need to make sure that the apprenticeship is a true, `employed from day one` job.

**Q: Career progression - difficult to offer career opportunities until near or completion of Apprenticeship as the employer will often offer on successful completion. What we do say is**

**career progression is dependent on their achievements and success in achieving the Apprenticeship qualification. Suggestions how to address this as cannot guarantee employment but our employers always take on an Apprentice with the goal to keep them and either offer further training or permanent work offer.**

A: if this is the case, then it will be good practice to include this information in the advert so that candidates are clear on what will happen once they have completed the apprenticeship.

**Q: How can we advertise the vacancies with less than the minimum requirements as listed on the framework? I'm all for giving an apprenticeship a chance but surely we can't set young people up to fail!**

A: Apprenticeship frameworks and standards do identify the requirements for entry and where these are stated, it is expected that the vacancy adverts will stipulate these requirements. However, we have seen vacancies advertised where providers are saying that candidates must have 5 GCSE's at grades A to C yet the framework/standard has not set this as a requirement for entry. This is what I was referring to in the webinar.

There are young people out there that, for whatever reason, may not have gained the expected grades but this does not mean they are not capable, with support, to achieve an apprenticeship. If a candidate submits a good application and can demonstrate personal skills etc, they should be considered for vacancies where minimum requirements aren't a requirement in the framework/standard.

**Q: Are we not trying to show that apprenticeships are valuable and are an alternative to HE. Surely it is important to set standards for entry. Parents and learners see apprenticeship training as an avenue when their children fail GCSEs. Therefore it is important to IA their grades? We feel in some ways you are dumbing down the apprenticeship entry standard with what you are saying.**

A: See response above

**Q: In terms of fair salary, what are the stats? Do the majority of companies pay over minimum wage or do most pay NMW?**

A: Our last review of new vacancies advertised on Find an apprenticeship showed that over 50% of vacancies advertised above the minimum wage although this varies from sector to sector and by region. The majority of higher and degree apprenticeships pay in excess of the NMW.

**Q: When we add the employer name, we find that other providers are calling our employers.**

A: (Paul Warner) A perpetual problem, I'm afraid! There's a trade-off between finding the best possible candidates by naming the employer but which will attract the attention of the competition. However if you name them and get better candidates, then hopefully the employer will be pleased with what you've done and be more loyal. It's a tricky balance though.

**Q: Could we have more characters in the short description in order to attract attention?**

A:

**Maybe extend to 350 instead of 250?**

A:

**Q: The feedback box only permits 100 characters which can be difficult to give good feedback. We have emailed applicants to give them further information, is there an opportunity to expand the characters permitted on giving feedback?**

**A:**

**Q: Would it be possible to have more characters on the feedback box. I find I run out of characters when trying to give feedback?**

**A:**

**Q: Can we possibly add a send feedback to candidate's box to the new system? Also we are trialling the new system and there is no drop down or feedback system:-)**

**A:**

**Q: On the new recruit an apprentice system there is no drop down to give feedback to unsuccessful candidates. Can this please be looked at?**

**A:**

**Q: What advice would you give regarding providing feedback when this is due to lack of relative A levels etc.?**

A: any feedback given should be tailored to meet the `situation`. If it is due to the lack of required qualifications, then this needs to be made clear to the candidate. An unsuccessful candidate can get further careers guidance support from the National Careers Service if they wish to get advice on taking up further qualifications.

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

**Q: When did that change - I thought it was no longer contractual to use AV? Or it hadn't been a couple of years ago?**

A: It is still contractual requirement for providers to post vacancies on the Apprenticeship vacancies system. This is stated in the Funding Rules (page 66) where it states:

252. To receive funding for an apprenticeship you must:

252.1. be satisfied that for all apprentices this is the most appropriate learning programme and that they are carrying out:

a new job role, or

an existing job role, where the individual needs significant new knowledge and skills

252.2. make sure that the job allows the apprentice to gain the wider employment experience as part of the apprenticeship

*252.3. advertise new apprenticeship vacancies on the Apprenticeship vacancies (AV) website. (New apprenticeships are job opportunities where the employer is looking to recruit someone to do an apprenticeship. If an apprenticeship is taken up by someone already working at the company, they do not need to be posted on AV.)*

252.4. complete the advert on the AV website once the vacancy has been

**Q: Is this what I've heard termed as DAS rather than NAS?**

A: (Paul Warner) DAS is the Digital Apprenticeship Service which will be the portal for accessing levy funding as from April 2017. As a provider you should register on this when it opens later this year, and also ensure you are registered on the Register of Apprenticeship Organisations when that opens as well – as well as maintaining your current ROTO registration!

**Q: Regarding progression we have some students who have passed their level 2 qualification within the year. Is there a framework for them to register onto a higher qualification within the year rather than having to hold them back? This is of concern to our employers and students. These students are still in their apprenticeship role. However, they have completed their qualification before the one year apprenticeship is over. So cannot do a higher qualification within this time?**

A:

**Q: Can just go on to a level 3? For 16-18 years olds apprenticeships have to take a year and one day. I don't understand why you are saying this - it doesn't seem to agree with the funding rules.**

A:

**Q: The minimum duration for an apprenticeship is 12 months. Are you saying we can progress them from a level 2 onto a level 3 in less than 12 months?**

A:

**Q: Under current funding rules an apprenticeship cannot be less than 12 months from their start date. Therefore are you saying they can start their level 3 before the 12 months?**

A: (Paul Warner) The *framework* itself cannot be deemed as completed within a year, but I don't think there is anything to stop a learner moving on to a higher qualification, even if they have not yet completed the original framework. They can therefore for example complete a Level 2 tech cert within a year and then commence work towards a Level 3 tech cert. In many cases such progression would count towards their Advanced Apprenticeship as and when they get there.

**Q: Claire said all apprentices are able to progress to Level 3 from Level 2, but I thought their job role has to meet the criteria for a Level 3, such as in charge of another member of staff or responsible for budgets and targets?**

A: Apprentices should be able to progress to a level 3 only if their job role meets the requirements of the framework/standard. When I spoke about this, I should have said that progression should be encouraged only if there is the opportunity to demonstrate the required competencies for the apprenticeship level. It is recognised that there will be times where progression on to a higher level is not possible due to the nature of the sector or employer business.

**Q: Does recruit an apprentice apply to apprenticeship vacancies in Wales?**

A: No, Recruit an apprentice is in England only. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own apprenticeship programme. Careers Wales have a vacancy website and they can be contacted on <https://www.careerswales.com/>

**Q: Please can you repeat who cannot use the system. Thanks**

A: Recruitment agents will not be able to use the new service. The small number of providers that use recruitment agents will therefore have to manage their own vacancies.

**Q: Will there be training/webinar for the new system?**

A:

**Q: Will there be a new employer's support guide to link with the new recruit an apprentice system?**

A:

**Q: In terms of using the 'find an apprenticeship' search engine, we find it difficult sometimes to make our vacancies easy to find. Especially compared to the previous NAVMS search engine. Are there any tips for how to make vacancies appear in candidates search results? Thanks.**

A: Candidates can search for vacancies on Find an apprenticeship using key words, job title, reference number or employer. The search facility picks up words from the job title first then a secondary search will pick up words from the vacancy short description You will need to make sure that the title of the vacancy is relevant to the job (should also include the word `apprentice/apprenticeship) so that any key words associated with that role will be displayed. Then, include as much information about the role in the short description (within 256 characters) so that the vacancies will be displayed.

**Q: Is this on top of digital app service or is this the digital app you are talking about**

A: Recruit an apprentice will form part of the Digital Apprenticeship Service. It will be one of the tools to support apprenticeship recruitment

**Q: How do we organise an eshot for vacancies?**

A: There is a document on GOV.UK that gives guidance on how to request support from NAS for promoting vacancies. This is the link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-apprenticeship-vacancies-through-the-national-apprenticeship-service>

**Q: Is there a cost for the support of NAS - eshots etc?**

A: No, support from the National Apprenticeship Service is a free service.

**Q: We promote extensively on Twitter and Facebook but find that there is little re-tweets or likes even when we tag in @appvacancies or #appjobs**

A: If you have tried all avenues in attracting applications, then you can contact NAS to promote vacancies via e-shots to registered candidates

**Q: Will the new system prevent potential applicants from submitting incomplete applications, i.e giving details of GCSE quals/grades?**

A:

**Q: Do we know when the National Apprenticeship Week will be in 2017?**

A: The provisional date is 6-10 March 2017. We are still waiting for ministerial approval on this.

As soon as we know we will send out communication through Provider Update

**Q: Our vacancies used to automatically show in universal job match etc but in recent searches they do not appear. I have made enquiries about this but have not had any resolution. Can you advise?**

A: There have been some intermittent issues with vacancies streaming from Find an apprenticeship to Universal Jobmatch but these have been resolved. I have just checked UJM and the apprenticeship vacancies are all showing up on there.

**Q: Would it be possible to send out some good examples of the short vacancy description so we can see the sort of things you are suggesting**

A: Vacancy short descriptions can be seen by searching on Find an apprenticeship as this is the information that pulls through when a candidate does a search. The short description should include key words regarding to ensure that it is picked up when candidates search for vacancies.

A description of `Advanced apprentice in Business and Administration` does not give a candidate any idea of what the role involves and it will probably make them overlook this vacancy even though it could be a good opportunity.

Compare that description to this: `..... has launched a new Medical Supply e-commerce site. This is an exciting opportunity for someone with drive and ambition to join the team working on the day-to-day aspects of the site.`

This description gives an insight to the type of work to be done and is likely to encourage a candidate to click on the advert and read on for further information.

**Q: Will vacancies, especially higher apprenticeships, now also be advertised on the UCAS website**

A: We are currently working with UCAS and are looking at getting an online presence on the UCAS site. The plan is to have a direct link to `Find an apprenticeship` for those higher and degree apprenticeships where the standards have been approved for delivery.

We are also working with some large employers who are planning to advertise higher/degree apprenticeships for starts in September 2017 to look at ways we can advertise a short pre-vacancy description to GOV.UK and the UCAS portal so that students can express an interest. This is all work in progress.

**Q: How long would you expect a young person to travel to a vacancy?**

A: There is no set guidance on this. This will be down to the individual and how far they are willing to travel.

**Q: As the recruitment service is free is there anything we can do as providers when an employer lets us advertise and do recruitment and then pulls out or are uncontactable?**

A: this will be something that you, as providers, will have to address. The Skills Funding Agency do not have a stance on this

**Q: How will providers be notified of when the new Find Apprenticeship service is going to go live?**

A:

**Q: What type of generic and non industry specific activities do you recommend to aid the selection process?**

A: Not sure what they are after here. However, there are some suggestions in the Employer Guide to Recruitment on our website:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/499039/NAS\\_Employer\\_Support\\_Pack-090216.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/499039/NAS_Employer_Support_Pack-090216.pdf)

**Q: Does NAS have the capability of bulk communicating to candidates via the system? For example, notifying people about interviews etc**

A:

**Q: Are there any plans for NAS to introduce a central applicant job texting service like that of Get My First Job?**

A:

**Q: How will non levy paying SME's tap into funding beyond April 2017?**

A: (Paul Warner) We believe that funding will look similar to the current Trailblazer funding model but we are awaiting further guidance from the department, which is due this month.

**Q: If some training providers were less focused on targets and more focussed on learner needs and quality placements apprenticeship recruitment would work better with more positive outcomes?**

A: yes, I think that is a good point. It's all about getting the right candidate for the job and all applications should be considered if they meet the requirements of the job being advertised (and the application itself is of good quality)

**Q: Are there any plans for a national campaign to raise the profile of junior vocational apprenticeships in particular for Chefs?**

A: There is currently a national campaign Get in. Go far and all activity is channelled through this campaign. If you have any good case studies in this area you can contact BIS on [getingofar@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:getingofar@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

You can also send case studies to [pressoffice@sfa.bis.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@sfa.bis.gov.uk). Alternatively we have the Apprenticeship Awards. Applications for the current awards have closed but if you wish to be added to the mailing list contact [apprenticeshipawards@sfa.bis.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeshipawards@sfa.bis.gov.uk).

**Q: We have so many no shows to interviews both in college and at the employer. This is after phone calls, texts, emails, they still do not turn up! How can we stop this? Why are they applying and engaging then going quiet?**

A: Refer to previous question.

We have had some information that some JCP customers applying for apprenticeships as they have to be seen to be looking for work. In areas where providers have close working relationships with JCP, it is good practice to liaise with JCP advisers to see if these `no shows` are registered with them so they can share information on customer activity.

**Q: When does the tender process end to bid for the aig in schools project?**

A: The ITT closed on the 11 July at 5pm and we are in the process of evaluating the bids. The successful organisations should be announced at the beginning of September.

**Q: Are you able to give advice for employers and providers on the two additional question section?**

A: The two additional questions are there to give the employer to ask questions, which are relevant to the job, to be used as part of the sifting process. An example could be where the apprenticeship role relies on a candidate being able to work as part of a team. You could ask the question `Tell me about a time when you have worked as part of a team?` the candidates should then give an example of situations where they have worked with others. In the vacancy guidance we have on our website, there are some other examples of the things you should consider. This is the link:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/470567/Guidance\\_on\\_submitting\\_a\\_vacancy\\_on\\_Av\\_-\\_Oct\\_15.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470567/Guidance_on_submitting_a_vacancy_on_Av_-_Oct_15.pdf).

Some employers/providers state in the advert that if candidates do not respond to the questions, they will not be considered for interview. This encourages candidates to respond.

**Q: Under current funding rules an apprenticeship cannot be less than 12 months from their start date. Therefore are you saying they can start their level 3 before the 12 months?**

A. See previous questions on this

**Q: We are finding a lot of schools are holding on to young people to undertake Health and Social care with functional skills level 2 wanting to go on to a level 3 in childcare, as they have been told this is valid, however with the GCSE requirement for childcare sector they need their GCSE's not functional skills. Looking forward to the careers advice changing in schools.**

A: A comment rather than a question?

**Q: Do you have any tips on making the bimonthly and monthly apprenticeship reviews less laborious for employers and apprentices?**

A: This is a funding rules question and therefore is not really a question I can answer as carrying out reviews is part of the contract requirements.

**Q: When the new apprenticeship website is ready to use how will I know where to log on or how to log on and start using it?**

A:

**Q: When will the old apprenticeship vacancy website be taken down?**

A:

**Q: When will we be moving over to the new recruit an apprenticeship website?**

A:

**Q: Will apprentice training agencies be able to advertise on the new service? (as recruitment agencies are no longer allowed to- are they considered the same)**

A:

**Q: Is there any way I can pull a report off of all unsuccessful candidates so we can target new vacancies to all candidates that have been previously unsuccessful?**

A:

**Q: What is the website for the new system?**

A:

**Q: Will we still be required to submit a request to extend a vacancy when using the new system? Many thanks.**

A: No. Once `Recruit an apprentice` is live, providers will be able to extend their own vacancies without having to send requests in to the vacancy team. This will avoid delays in extending vacancies.

**Q: Claire's answer regarding level2- 3 progression is confused. Earlier she said that it was ok to go straight to level 3 and now she has said that an apprentice must be there for 12 months???**

A:

**Q: In terms of the level 2 to level 3 progression, we could not enrol or fund level 3 until level 2 has been completed (12 months min duration)**

A:

**Q: If an apprentice is employed towards the end of the year however wish to complete their apprenticeship? What would be the process for this?**

A: (Paul Warner) An Apprentice needs to be employed in order to follow an Apprenticeship, i.e. they cannot be unemployed and considered to be an Apprentice. If they are employed by a different employer to the one that started them on the Apprenticeship before they completed it, but they wish to continue their studies, then they would need to discuss with the employer and the provider how best to facilitate this.

**Q: I am currently a level 2 apprentice working for a training provider and I want to progress onto a level 3 but I can't afford the first year of 3.30ph why is it only the first year on level 3 why not start on higher wage straight away?**

A: (Paul Warner) The wage level is down to the employer to set, as long as it complies with minimum wage legislation. There is no inherent reason why an employer cannot pay more than the minimum wage should they be able and willing to do so at any point.

**Q: Is the new system able to be used like a CV library website whereby candidates can register their interest in a particular framework without applying for a specific vacancy similar to Indeed or CV Library website?**

A:

**Q: when the new standards arrive do training providers / colleges advertise the vacancies still on the recruit an Apprentice rather than the employer?**

A:

**Q: will vacancies automatically transfer over or do we have to re-enter them all again?**

A:

**Q: Will any current vacancies on the current system be automatically transferred to the new**

**system?**

A:

**Q: Will live vacancies automatically be changed over or will we have to input them into the new system?**

A:

**Q: Will the traineeship website also change with the apprenticeship website**

A: Yes. The new site will be called `Recruit a trainee`

**Q: When the new system is in place, will the website be available?**

A:

**Q: Whilst its being transferred will the website be available?**

A:

**Q: What will be different with the new website?**

A:

**Q: Will the new website be available for Apprenticeship ATA using a number of providers across England**

A:

**Q: Will subcontractors be able to use the recruit an App system or will they need to go through the lead provider?**

A: Yes, subcontractors will be able to use the Recruit an apprentice system.

The change to the new system means that subcontractors will no longer need lead provider authorisation to post and manage vacancies. This will make it easier for subs to post vacancies as they will no longer need to wait for permission from the lead provider.

### **Recruit an apprentice**

In the absence of responses to questions about the new Recruit an apprentice system, the following article will be included in the provider Update:

During August, we will launch the new Recruit an apprentice service on GOV.UK.

This will enable users to advertise apprenticeship vacancies and traineeship opportunities in England online and will replace the [Apprenticeship vacancies](#) (Av) service.

We have designed the new service to make the process of posting and managing vacancies quicker and easier. We are moving existing accounts from Av to the new Recruit an apprentice service on a gradual basis, starting next week.

We will inform users through their Av log-in when their data has moved successfully and how they can access the new service.

Later this week, we will also send users further detailed communications about the new service.