

28 July 2010

South East National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) Update

Dear Provider

As we are approaching the end of the 2009/10 academic year I thought this would be a good time to update you on a few areas in relation to Apprenticeships.

09/10 Performance

I would like to start by passing on my thanks to you and your teams for all their hard work this year in increasing the take up of South East resident apprenticeships. For 16-18, as at the end of period 11, we have increased performance by 11% when comparing against the same time last year. Whilst it is unlikely that we will achieve this year's 16-18 starts target we have already exceeded last year's period 15 position, so overall there has been an increase in starts volume.

For 19+ Apprenticeships, at the end of period 11 we have increased starts by 5% against the same period last year and have already hit and exceeded the combined 19+ target for 09/10.

10/11 Apprenticeship Priorities/Single Budget

The priorities for apprenticeships in 10/11 have been confirmed and are as follows:

- Continue to grow 16-18 apprenticeships
- Support progression and strengthen the supply of technician level skills, particularly through Level 3 apprenticeships
- Reduce 18-24 NEETS
- Through Apprenticeships we must:
 - (i) Develop a clear ladder of progression through the Apprenticeship brand;
 - (ii) Give priority to disadvantaged groups; and
 - (iii) Prioritise level 3 apprenticeships, but also provide access to more level 4 and level 5 qualifications, which support progression to Higher Education and recognise the value of practical learning.

The specific age range group of 19-24 apprentices was a priority for the last government. The new coalition government's policy places equal importance on all those aged 19+, taking the above priorities into account. The recent announcement on the single budget should enable you to respond more favourably to all 19+ referrals from my Employer Services Managers within the region. I am aware that the 25+ apprenticeship budget in 09/10 caused some challenges, but the new funding arrangements will allow for greater flexibility which I am sure is welcomed by us all and will enable us to be much more responsive to employer needs.

The responses that a number of you made to our request for 19-24 demand you were unable to meet will therefore no longer be taken forward. However, I am sure you will have read in the Skills Funding Agency Guidance Note 5 this week, that additional 19+ Apprenticeship funding has been made available and will be distributed across the network.

It is expected that those providers in receipt of Train to Gain funds look to re-prioritise delivery into Apprenticeships.

16-18 Recruitment in 2010/11

We hope that early indications on recruitment for 10/11 are looking promising and once again I would like to remind you that all high quality 16-18 apprenticeship provision will be funded.

Direct Marketing by NAS

Lastly it is important that you are aware that NAS will not have a budget in 2010/11 for any marketing to young people, as the current DfE policy is that information about Apprenticeships should be provided through IAG services. Provider's own marketing/ awareness raising will therefore be of greater importance in the future to enable a continued increase of Apprentices year-on-year.

I do hope you enjoy your summer holiday and we look forward to continuing our working relationship with you in the new academic year.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel McKellar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachel McKellar
Regional Apprenticeship Director – South East