

July 2018

Welcome to this month's Sector Round Up where we highlight policy updates and important news from across our sector.

Top Stories



Call for evidence to NAO review on apprenticeships

The National Audit Office (NAO) has announced their follow-up review on apprenticeships in England and UK Apprenticeship Levy. Energy & Utility Skills is among the first to be invited in to give oral evidence this week.

[Read More](#)



Help shape NOS and Qualifications for the Sector

A series of National Occupational Standards (NOS), Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) and Modern Apprenticeships for the Gas, Waste Management and Water Industries are now under review and you're invited to take part. A full list of NOS and Qualifications under review, as well as details of how to get involved, can be found on our website.

[Read More](#)

Cross party group recommends change for English Apprenticeship Reforms

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Apprenticeships launched their 2017-18 Annual Report detailing eight recommendations for government, politicians and educators. It has acknowledged some of the concerns we raised on behalf of the sector.

[Read More](#)



Costs of employment rising as we approach Brexit

Energy & Utility Skills' Brexit labour market dashboard has been updated. Employment remains at a record high, with unemployment decreasing to a 42-year low. This will result in the tightening up of the labour market and costs of employment rising.

[View Here](#)

Policy Updates

Scottish Flexible Workforce Scheme extended

The Flexible Workforce Development Pilot has been extended by the Scottish Government for another year. The fund can be accessed by levy paying firms in Scotland and allows a maximum spend of £15,000 per company. [Read more here.](#)

Committee publishes robust judgement on STEM delivery

The Public Accounts Committee released a robust report on '[Delivering STEM skills for the economy](#)'. We have reviewed and analysed the report – read the [summary here.](#)

First National Infrastructure Assessment released

The National Infrastructure Commission's assessment aims to take a long-term, sectoral view of the needs of the UK and to support sustainable economic growth, improve competitiveness, and quality of life. [Read more](#) or [access the full report.](#)

Construction Leadership Council publishes procurement reform strategy

Joining up with the recent [construction industry sector deal](#), this new strategy aims to focus clients on quality, rather than price, by advocating reform and standardisation. Employment and skills is also recognised as a key strategic theme. You can read the [full report here.](#)

Apprenticeship service starts down 39%

There were 24,100 starts recorded in April 2018, compared with around 39,400 in April 2016 according to the latest [Education and Skills Funding Agency's monthly apprenticeship statistics update](#). Recent analysis has revealed that starts are 22% down from where they need to be for the government to meet its target of 3m apprenticeship starts by 2020. [Read more.](#)

2-month notice period for reduced apprenticeship funding rates

Apprenticeship funding bands currently under review by the Institute for Apprenticeships will be given a minimum two-month notice period if their funding rate is reduced. But in the case of standards whose funding rate increases, the change will be immediate. [Read more.](#)

Reviews and Consultations

Have your say on apprenticeships

Energy & Utility Skills will be responding to both the APPG and NAO reviews on apprenticeship reforms for the sector. We are seeking input from interested parties, if you would like to contribute please contact **Somia Nasim**, Policy and Research Manager.

Workforce resilience to be a big feature in PR19 this September

The deadline for water companies in England and Wales to submit their draft business plans to the water regulator Ofwat is coming up. The new 'resilience in the round' approach to price setting by Ofwat, needs companies to demonstrate their long-term thinking for workforce resilience. More information can be found [here](#).