



CAPITAL

April 2019

Welcome to CAPITAL, AELP London's membership newsletter, designed to keep our members up to date with the latest developments across London's employability and skills sector.

The AELP London Strategic Forum

This month's Strategic Forum, kindly hosted by our colleagues from the Mayor's Office at the iconic GLA building, saw us discuss a packed agenda and hear from a range of guest speakers.

We changed the format a little for this Forum, making much more time available to our members to discuss the agenda items most important to them. This generated some great insights, and enabled members to share ideas with one another more effectively, so we'll make sure we do more of the same in our future Forums.



A brief summary of the highlights and the key issues discussed follows. And, we haven't forgotten to add links to guest presentations... it's just that for this Forum our speakers provided more informal updates that weren't supported by presentations! We have provided links to key documents, where relevant.

Recognising success

Our Chair, Nichola Hay, was delighted to kick off the Forum with a well done to all of the London based providers that were successful in winning awards at the AAC Apprenticeship Awards. It's quite a long list, so we won't shower praise on the winners here, but please do take a look at the excellent [AAC Apprenticeship Awards](#) website for full details.

There's also a full awards write-up via our friends at [FE Week](#)... and if you check out their [twitter feed](#) then you'll be treated to some rather impressive pictures of awards hosts Mark Dawe and Shane Mann sporting some very stylish outfits. You have been warned!

GLA Skills Team Update

Simon Lowe, Senior Policy Officer, joined us this month and provided us with a short, but informative, update.

The GLA has published a framework consultation for the AEB budget for 2020/2021 and is looking to seek feedback from our members on potential areas for change for Year 2. This consultation follows on from the publication of the Mayor's Skills for Londoners Framework last year.



The Skills for Londoners Framework sets out the Mayor's plans for the AEB and long-term vision for skills in the capital. The Mayor committed to making minimal changes to the AEB in Year 1 to maintain stability for the sector during the transition to devolution. From Year 2, the Mayor will begin to phase in some of the changes to the AEB proposed in the Framework.

The Mayor is keen to hear your views on these proposed changes which are outlined in the AEB Consultation Year 2 (2020/21) report which is now published on City Hall's website. The consultation will close at **10am on Monday 20th May**.

AELPs Devolution Director, Harminder Matharu will be submitting a response on behalf of the membership. If you have any comments/suggestions, we encourage you to send these to Harminder at hmatharu@aelp.org.uk. As part of the process the GLA will also host a series of roundtables across the capital.

Simon also provided a short update on the AEB Procurement process but, of course, was unable to go into too much detail due to the process being an ongoing one. Simon did take feedback from a number of members regarding the process and provided advice on how any 'appeals process' would work – which will be managed through the TFL portal.

Outside of the AEB procurement, Simon intimated that there would likely be further funding opportunities for members... and obviously we'll make sure details are passed on as they become available.

London Councils

We were delighted to be joined once again by Peter O'Brien of [London Councils](#).

We've mentioned in the last two editions of Capital that a number of boroughs are collaborating on the recruitment of social workers. The project has been moving forward successfully and Peter informed us that a website is being created that will share all relevant details with our members. Please visit the [London Councils website](#) for further information.



Peter reported how London Councils is “ever more concerned” regarding the introduction of T-Levels. They have provided a detailed submission to the recent consultation that points out their concerns with the “numerous flaws” in the process... at ‘time of writing’ they are currently awaiting a response.

Peter also pointed our members in the direction of their Apprenticeship Report, which is due at the end of June, and will contain a wealth of useful qualitative and quantitative information and insight. The report will be made available through the London Councils website. In a similar vein, Peter also recommended that members take the opportunity to read the '[Better Ways to Work](#)' report, which outlines the steps needed to deliver a more localised and responsive employment system.

Peter also kindly took feedback from members on their frustration with the number of portals they have to ‘navigate’ when engaging with the numerous different boroughs across London. The reasons for this are understood by members, and the issue was acknowledged by Peter and it is an issue that extends beyond the capital. AELP requested an invite to talk at the national Local Authority meeting to try and raise this issue further, and discuss potential approaches for reducing the number of portals that providers have to tackle. We don't anticipate this being an issue that's resolved quickly, but we will keep members up to date with developments.

AELP Policy Update

As mentioned at the start of our Forum update, we took a slightly different approach to our policy update, dedicating more time to discussion and feedback from members. AELP CEO, Mark Dawe, did, of course, provide his customary “canter” through the national policy agenda. Edited highlights follow:

Ofsted Education Inspection Framework Consultation

– the Ofsted consultation (please see [Capital – December 2018](#)) closed on Friday 29th March and, overall, AELP strongly supports the proposals included within the consultation, for example, the Lead Ofsted inspector visiting providers as part of the planning process for short inspections. We have also challenged some proposals, however, for example, increasing the duration between inspection from providers graded as ‘requiring improvement’ from 24 months to up to 30 months, as we feel this should be reconsidered. A full copy of our response can be found on the [AELP website](#).



ESFA Account Managers – the introduction of the new ESFA account management structure is being met with cautious optimism, although it's clear that the experience and quality of individual account managers will determine success. AELP is keen to hear from members on their experiences with new account managers, and is keen to work with the new account management

structure to support and accelerate their learning/sector knowledge to ensure providers receive a continually improving service.

Funding – 5% is here!! As of 1st April, the co-investment rate has been reduced from 10% to 5%... a move that we welcomed some time ago... and are glad that the changes have finally been introduced, having been first announced by the Chancellor way back in October 2018 in the Autumn Budget. And staying on percentages... the increase in the amount of funding that levy payers can transfer to their supply chain has now increased from 10% to 25%! Again, a welcome move.

RoATP Register – feedback indicates that the registration process is “ticking along” and seems to be working smoothly. Welcome news indeed. Providers are being invited to re-apply in tranches to manage the refresh process.

Non-Levy Contracts – AELP is forecasting a 20% to 50% drop in apprenticeship starts next year. Creating a sustainable funding model for apprenticeships is obviously a complex challenge, and AELP is looking to be central to this discussion. AELP’s views are outlined through the recently published discussion paper, [‘A Sustainable Future Apprenticeship Funding Model’](#) and we recommend that our members read it, and share their thoughts with us.

Functional Skills – Mark shared his view that both policy makers and civil servants are well aware of the issues surrounding Functional Skills and there is an acceptance that it is an underfunded area. AELP is providing a range of support services in this area, including a series of practical workshops that explore how members can support learners ahead of, and during assessment.

Traineeships – we are seeing “amazing traction, like never before” and there is a commitment from all stakeholders to make improvements. The challenges are well understood, but AELP’s engagement is working well and we will continue to work hard to influence the agenda. We are hopeful there will be positive changes for FY19-20.

T-Levels – it’s very much “as you were”. Nothing positive to report unfortunately.

Let’s talk

Our discussion section with members covered four main topics... edited highlights follow... but we’d recommend that to get maximum benefit it’s definitely worth being in the room. After all, there’s decades of experience in the room, from providers of all shapes and sizes...

20% Off The Job Training

In a recent article in the TES, AELP London’s Simon Ashworth talks about [‘Off-the-job training in apprenticeships? Clear as mud’](#). Pretty much sums it up? That certainly seemed to be the sentiment in the room, with our members expressing their frustration about the lack of flexibility in the system when it comes to OTJT.

Some suggestions were put forward for, at a minimum, at least standardising the time required for OTJT for a full-time role. AELP will continue to fight the good fight and try and influence policy makers into bringing some common sense to this issue.

Accredited Prior Learning

There was generally an agreement in the room that reviewing APL is sensible and should contribute to an apprenticeship, but of course the key here is ensuring that prior learning is reviewed and assessed effectively. There was recognition that the initial assessment was key, and that if done correctly, it is possible to safeguard the quality of an apprenticeship while reducing the overall time and cost of the qualification. This, in turn, enables providers to increase their learner numbers.

Members talked about the importance of the initial assessment when looking at APL and suggested that a set of accredited guidelines to provide consistency in the system would be welcomed. Mark Dawe is discussing APL with policy makers on an ongoing basis.

End Point Assessment

Everyone seemed to agree that the fact that there is no single regulatory body for EPA was a huge oversight/error! AELP anticipates that there will be a large increase in the demand placed on EPA organisations in the coming months... and while members are currently not experiencing issues, they agreed that this is likely because of the relative small volumes currently. Until the ‘tap is turned on’, it’s unlikely that we’ll have a clear picture of the situation. Members might find a recent publication from AELP useful when working with an EPA organisation, as we’ve received feedback that there can be a lack of consistency over who is responsible for paying for particular elements of

assessment. [Reasonable Adjustments – A Best Practice Guide](#)

Levy Transfer

The increase of the levy transfer from 10% to 25% was universally welcomed. The main issue is that the burden of effort for processing paperwork related to the transfer lies with the employer... who is naturally reluctant to commit resources to this activity.

Both AELP and our members agreed that the process needs to be simplified and that a change should be made that enables the provider to take responsibility for the administrative elements. Of course, it's not as simple as that and employers would naturally be reticent to open their systems up to providers...so perhaps sub-accounts are a more sensible option.

The discussion also covered key sectors in the capital that could/should be targeted to support the transfer of funds into areas where that funding is particularly needed.

Useful information, guides, resources and more

With so much happening across the sector, we thought it would be useful to provide a quick a summary of a few things that you might find useful:

AELP Best Practice Guidance

There are a range of best practice guides available through the [AELP website](#). We've provided some easy links below to guides that we think our members might find useful. It's definitely worth keeping an eye on the website for the latest updates, as well.

EPA/EPAO

[Reasonable Adjustments – A Best Practice Guide](#)

Many of the new Apprenticeship standards make reference to reasonable adjustments but stipulate that you should refer to the EPAO Reasonable Adjustment Policy. Having carried out a review these differ and in some cases do not yet exist, which does not give a valid, reliable and manageable approach to supporting individuals with support needs.

[Pricing and Eligible Costs – A Best Practice Guide](#)

There have been questions raised by providers and employers about what is included in an EPA price and what has to be paid for additionality. Furthermore, EPAO members have been concerned that providers and employers do not release the expectations as to who pays for what.

Subcontracting

[The AELP Good Practice Governance Guide](#)

Subcontracting has become an integral element of the FE system. It has grown and evolved mainly because of the changes to the funding system and policy development, and, as such, little has been written on what good practice looks like. To fill this vacuum AELP, Collab Group and HOLEX have worked together to produce a short good practice guide to support both the prime and subcontractor on the key principles of subcontracting.

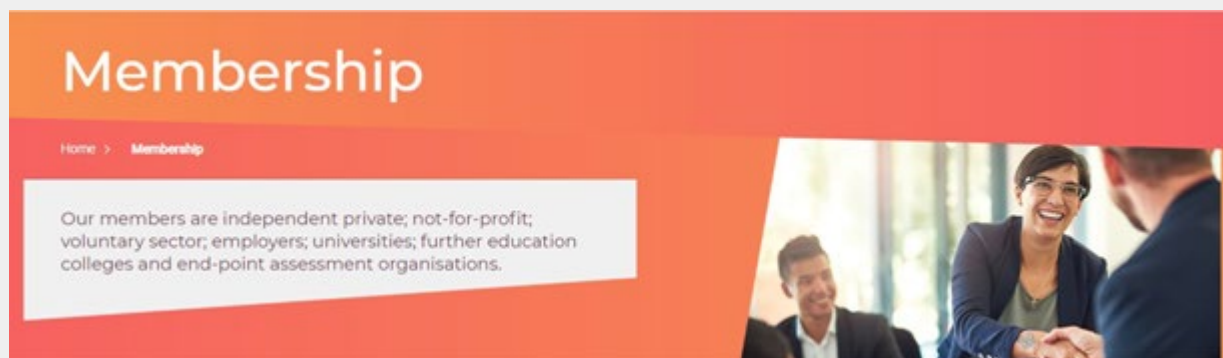
Free online assessor training course

[Online Assessor Training](#)

A reminder that EPAO and provider AELP members can access a free online assessor training course, developed in partnership with Innovate Awarding and Pearl Assess.

You can also access a range of other useful guides via the AELP London website at our [Resource and Information](#) section.

Building the membership



Since AELP London was formed earlier this year, we've been working hard to forge links with key stakeholders, such as the GLA and London Councils.

We've also been working to expand our membership, because we know that the best way to make a network work is to increase its number, make it more diverse and expand its reach.

For this reason, we encourage you to speak with your peers, customers and stakeholders to let them know about the benefits of joining AELP London, either as a member or a Patron. Need a reminder of the benefits? No problem.

Membership Benefits 2018 – 2019

- Access to AELP's broader policy knowledge
- Lobbying to support London-based providers objectives
- Up to date information about changes to the skills and employability agenda in London
- Regular AELP London e-newsletter - *Capital*
- Access to the AELP London webpage on the AELP website
- Opportunities to network with other London members
- Support from the AELP Research Team
- Access to the half-day, bi-monthly AELP London Strategic Forums
- Access to AELP London member only events
- Discounted delegate fees to attend AELP events, webinars and conferences
- Complimentary Subscription to e-publication FE Week (worth £60)
- AELP Project Delivery Team support or AELP Events Team support for webinars and conferences
- Discounted AELP Full or Associate Membership

Membership Fees

Membership of AELP London is available to any organisation that delivers government funded skills or employability programmes to learners, apprentices or jobseekers.

- Turnover under 2.5m - £450.00 + VAT
- Turnover over 2.5m - £650.00 + VAT

Associate Membership is also available for an annual fee of £100 + VAT

AELP London Patron Benefits 2018 – 2019

- Branding on the AELP London website
- Patron profile on the AELP London website
- Discounted opportunity to deliver own webinars to members
- Patron footer branding on the AELP London Newsletter '*Capital*'

Patron Fee

£2,500 + VAT or £1,000 + VAT for an existing AELP Patron

The AELP London Strategic Forum

Our next Strategic Forum will take place at [City Hall](#) on Thursday 18th July at 9.30am -11.30am.

The meeting will be hosted by Advisory Board Chair, Nichola Hay, and a policy update will be provided by Simon Ashworth and Mark Dawe. We will provide an in-depth update of the discussion points and outcomes in the December edition of CAPITAL.

Please be aware that only full members of AELP London are able to attend our Strategic Forum meetings.

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 18th July 2019	9.30am – 12pm	City Hall
Thursday, 3rd October 2019	9.30am – 12pm	City Hall
Thursday, 5th December 2019	9.30am – 12pm	City Hall

As we updated last month, we'd like your feedback on our Strategic Forums, so we can keep evolving them to meet your needs. The feedback on our inaugural Forum was broadly positive, but we don't rest on our laurels so please continue to let us know your thoughts by emailing aelplondon@aelp.org.uk

Continuing the conversation

We're committed to engaging with our members, working with you to understand how we can best support you and designing services 'with you, not for you'.

Last month we let you know that we're working on a new AELP London website. We're making good progress and we'll be able to share an update with you very soon. Our aim is to deliver a website that provides a great user experience; enables members to communicate with one another; and provides a showcase for the excellent work taking place across London.

You can also talk with us via Twitter [@AELPLondon](#), or the more 'old fashioned' way by email at aelplondon@aelp.org.uk or over the phone at 0117 440 9525

Best wishes,

Jane Hickie
AELP COO
janehickie@aelp.org.uk



We want to make sure that CAPITAL evolves to meet the needs of our members. If you have any feedback, or are interested in writing a comment piece, then we would love to hear from you. Please email us at aelplondon@aelp.co.uk.



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