



CAPITAL

December 2020

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.

An introduction from Nichola Hay

As we reach the end of 2020, I, like many other people I suspect, have been reflecting on the last 12-months and looking ahead to 2021. I decided to look back on my introduction to the first Capital newsletter of the year, from back in January, to see what we anticipated the challenges and opportunities of 2020 were going to be. This is what I wrote,

"I suspect that even more than normal, this year we're looking at a whole raft, as the cliché goes, of 'known knowns', 'known unknowns' and 'unknown unknowns'.

"To mention just a few things... we have, if not a new Government then certainly a radically different one; the ever-looming presence of Brexit; potential reforms to the Apprenticeship Levy; and, of course, the normal 'day-to-day' things like off-the-job-training, inspections, T-Levels. You name it!"



It's safe to say 'the unknown unknown' of Covid-19 dominated the landscape over the last 12-months... and will continue to do so for a little while yet. As I have said before, and do not apologise for saying again, what gives me great optimism for the future is the commitment I see from the skills sector (on a daily basis) across the capital to working together to address the

challenges we face. This year has definitely seen the sector come together from independent training providers, colleges, awarding organisations, councils, the GLA, Ofsted, DfE... I could go on.

Our own Strategic Forum has been a microcosm of this cooperation and I would like to thank all of our members and guest speakers for the contribution they have made this year. Our guest speakers have been engaged, keen to provide updates, take questions and have done everything they can to keep our members up to date and informed. And, of course, our members have been working collegiately to share ideas, solve problems and ultimately to do everything they can to support their learners at this difficult time. Your work has been vital.

On the [AELP London website](#) homepage, front and centre is our mission statement: "AELP London supports its members to deliver programmes that increase London's workforce productivity and improve social mobility." Our challenge for 2021 is clear, and I look forward to working with you all to deliver on this mission.

Nichola Hay
AELP London Chair

The AELP London Strategic Forum

We're getting the hang of holding our Strategic Forum virtually now... December's Forum was our third on the trot. That said, we're definitely looking forward to the time when we can get together in the same room and share a coffee and a pastry while we discuss the business of the day!

As usual, we kick-off this edition of Capital with 'a high-level canter' through the latest Strategic Forum, which was held on 3rd December. And, as ever, we always recommend that our members 'attend' the Forum to get the most out of it.

Forogh Rahmani: Senior Manager - Strategy, Policy & Relationships: Skills & Employment at GLA

Forogh provided us with a really useful progress update on the Covid-19 recovery board/programme covering what's been happening since our last Forum. The board is made up of key anchor institutions (police, transport, education) and is tackling a number of issues at present, including ensuring the most vulnerable are able to access the Covid vaccine, and that staff are in place to administer it – this is something that the GLA is working with the NHS on currently. Looking forward, the GLA is now working to ensure the economy is supported during the recovery and is focused on the actions that need to be done on a London-wide level to ensure that the resources announced by government are in place, including driving the digital skills agenda forward.



Forogh has kindly shared the overview of the [Mission Programme](#) with us.

Forogh let us know that additional funding was allocated to GLA at the start of the academic year to top up the **Adult Education Budget** (AEB) to deliver more sector-based work academies, high value courses (topped up with additional support for [JETS](#) and Jobcentre Plus customers). They are currently looking at Level 3 provision and how this is brought together with AEB to avoid duplication and have established joint working group with Jobcentre Plus to better integrate and co-ordinate services, and to make it easier for residents to understand the support offer depending on their personal circumstances. They are also focused on ensuring that front line offices (work coaches, community representatives etc) have the information they need and know what is available.

GLA's immediate challenge is, understandably, to ensure that the **Covid-19 fund** is used to ensure as many people as possible can continue their learning and are able to access their learning online. The data for the full academic year shows a drop in the participation rate from March 2020 onwards, but online learning has increased compared to last year, which is encouraging. There are, however, still some challenges around restoring the confidence of London's residents to return to 'in-person' learning in learning settings. The GLA has established a 'task and finish group' that will report to the Skills for Londoners board, reviewing aspects of the recovery programme and what can be done in the future to create more (and better) learning opportunities and quality jobs (rather than just any job).

The GLA has been working with London Councils to ensure **Kickstart** placements are good quality with a training offer and support to progress into a job at the end.

In terms of **AEB**, Forogh updated that there will be a focus over for next 2-3 years on responding to the recovery effort and demonstrating how AEB is helping and supporting residents with skills needs, delivering wrap around care and improving integration with other employment support programmes. They are looking to launch an AEB grant commissioning exercise in mid-March 2021, with £10m of funding potentially going out to tender. Again, the focus of the funding will be on recovery and supporting the priorities outlined above across key sectors including tech, digital skills, green economy, and Health & Social Care.

There are plans in place to promote the benefits of adult learning and in the new year the Mayor will launch a campaign to promote the benefits of adult education and to raise awareness of the opportunities available across London. There will then be a series of more focused events in the summer, supported by anchor institutions in collaboration with local boroughs and Jobcentre Plus.

Forogh also took a number of questions from members, relating to a range of issues including Level 3 learning and ESF targets. Forogh welcomed the feedback and resolved to take the questions and feedback to her team for further discussion.

Dave Pack: West London Alliance

We were delighted to welcome Dave who provided us with an engaging update on the work of the West London Alliance, which started with a providing some context regarding the impact of Covid-19.

Pre-Covid:

- 2m+ residents; £80bn GVA
- Bigger economy than Glasgow, Leeds and Birmingham combined
- UK's second biggest economy after central London (on some measures)
- Plentiful supply of jobs



And now, 9 months + since Lockdown 1

- Sectoral exposure high
- Changed labour market - far fewer jobs
- Out of work benefits claimants up by 72,000 since March
- Still 123,000 furloughed – among worst affected in UK

The West London Alliance framework for a collective response

- A collective response to the disproportionate economic impact of the pandemic on West London
- Seven themes of work, underpinned by principles of inclusion, green recovery and innovation

- Clear, achievable actions for Local Authorities and partners – and opportunities for Government (e.g. investment, policy change/flex)

The Seven themes:

1. Growth sectors
2. Aviation communities
3. Skills and employment
4. Entrepreneurs and microbusinesses
5. Green recovery
6. Town centres
7. Housing and infrastructure

A few highlights of the work to date:

- Aviation Communities Conference
- Making the case for Aviation Communities Fund and for expansion of Skills Escalator
- Expanded employment support to help 9,000+
- Finalising data insight on skills demand/supply
- Feeding into London-level thinking on sector skills academies
- Green skills – opportunities through retrofitting grants
- Health skills – mass vaccination hubs; academy thinking
- West London Innovation District

Next steps:

- Refining the high level ‘offers’ and ‘asks’ and taking that through to delivery
- Drawing on wider stakeholder input and engagement
- Ensuring alignment with London Recovery work
- Making the case for investment of existing resources in line with plan

Dave invited (and encouraged) members to contribute their view via the **Skills and Employment Board (S&EB)** - Crawford Knott (AELP London Advisory Board member and MD of Hawk Training) attends the Board behalf of AELP London. There was a specific request for any providers specialising in the ‘green’ or ‘health and care’ sectors to contribute to support the case for growth.

Crawford provided a short update on the work of the **S&EB**, stating that it has been moving at pace and there is a plenty of cohesion and progress. He echoed David’s requests for members to contribute, singling out providers involved with apprenticeship opportunities to feed in their thoughts, particularly for the West London area, to ensure they reach as many people as possible. Nicki Hay provided a quick update on how providers in London West have recently delivered upskilling to careers advisors on apprenticeships, which was found to be really useful. It may be obvious, but any initiatives that improve communication and integration are key.

Tim Gallagher: London Councils

Tim gave an update on the recent activity at [London Councils](#), including their involvement in the recovery programme (including involvement in the key areas referenced above). They have been working closely with GLA on the development of their Mission Programme (see link above) to ensure skills and employment provision is more joined-up and that the system is easier to navigate. Three ‘task and finish groups’, created over the summer are focusing on the newly unemployed. Most boroughs and sub-regions in London have their **own local recovery plans** which London Councils is supporting and ensuring there is coordination and



integration with London wide initiatives. Research has also been commissioned to support the understanding of the people/groups that are most at risk of becoming unemployed., alongside the existing provision that is already out there and may be able to offer support.

With regard to **Kickstart**, many boroughs are 'getting involved', taking people on and acting as 'Gateway organisations'. London Councils has also produced a Practical Guide on what a good Kickstart placement looks like. The document is awaiting sign-off so this will be circulated once available.

In terms of **Apprenticeships** in the capital, the data has now been collected on how the Apprenticeship Levy has been used across boroughs. Pre-pandemic 26% was spent, which is double last year, but remains a low amount at a time when the need for support is clear. The data also indicates that there is use of levy-transfer, but that take up is limited and incentive payments do not seem to be making a significant difference.

Sarah Hernandez: DWP

Sarah has taken over from Dave Keogh and will now be the DWP representative for engaging with AELP London and will attend our Forum meetings going forward.

Sarah advised that **Jobcentres remain open**, and social distancing measures are in place to provide people with Covid-19 secure environments that are enabling people to attend face to face interviews and access support.

Universal Credit can be accessed by customers through a range of different channels including, telephone, digital and face to face. As is to be expected, claim numbers are high; the key to addressing this is clearly going to be to provide people with meaningful routes back into work in 2021 and funding will be in place to support this. There is also a recognition that the influx of new Universal Credit claimants does not result in longer-term claimants, with complex and multiple barriers to employment, receiving a reduced service. Senior leaders are in place across the four London districts to ensure that this issue is monitored closely.

Jobs entry target support will be delivered, via sub-regional partnerships, to ensure that there are healthy volumes going into these programmes. There is a focus on finding new ways to work closely with stakeholders and community partners to ensure that there is a consistent supply of good quality referrals to ensure that the right people are referred, in the right way, onto the right employment support programmes.

In the New Year, Job Finding Support will launch, providing short, intensive programme of support for those individuals that are relatively close to the labour market. In the longer-term the **Restart** programme will be nationally tendered early in 2021 and further updates will be provided to members through this Forum.

Sarah reported that there had been a great response from individuals and organisations looking to work with DWP on the **Kickstart** programme. DWP is looking at a local account management model for vacancies, in order to ensure that robust employer relationships are established, maintained and developed and that an optimal service is available to young people.

DWP has local autonomy on how the **Flexible Support Fund** is spent, which is mostly on addressing barriers preventing people from getting into work i.e. travel, childcare. DWP is also considering the support available to address the current circumstances Londoners are confronted with and is looking at ways to help the digitally excluded, to provide them with the technology to access opportunities they wouldn't be able to otherwise access. Grants and community budgets will be made available via a dynamic purchasing system.

Sarah let us know that there has been a significant recruitment drive for **Work Coaches**, with 6,500 additional roles in place London and the South East. AELP London has agreed to work with DWP to support the development of virtual events that enable new Work Coaches to access information that supports their understanding of key partners, stakeholders and how to access support across the skills sector.



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Priscilla Hansberry – London Borough of Hounslow Matt Lent - Spark

We were delighted to welcome two new speakers to the Forum, with Priscilla and Matt providing an update on the partnership work taking place in Hounslow through the **Hounslow 14 to 25 Strategic Group**. This innovative partnership has a remit of looking at local provision; advocating change; and promoting collaboration across providers to ensure the right provision is in place and that learners are effectively moving into employment and further training.

One of the elements the group has been considering is the Kickstart programme, which resulted in a Kickstart subgroup focused on agreeing a Quality Standard for wraparound support, and ensuring placements lead into employment beyond Kickstart. The group is made up of the following partners:

- Hounslow Education Partnership (Employer)
- Spark Education Business Partnership (Provider of wrap around support) – see further information below
- LB Hounslow (Employer/ Provider of wrap around support)
- Gateway providers
- Jobcentre Plus

The subgroup is looking to form proactive relationships with Independent Training Providers (we can help there!) from the outset to support learner progression into Apprenticeships.

Matt from Spark has been leading on researching need in the Hounslow area, around Kickstart, with Spark providing flexible and holistic wraparound support and working closely with gateway organisations to ensure the best support for learners and meet the needs of employers. Employers involved in Kickstart can buy into a package of support from Spark, which gives Young People access to a portal where online tools can be accessed including webinars, CV builders, job search functions, top tips and more great content... all designed to support and further learner progression. There is also clear guidance for employers on how they can provide appropriate placements and support and transition learners into permanent roles.



Cheryl Swales – AELP

And our final Forum speaker was Cheryl Swales, who provided a brief policy overview of current AELP activities and key points of focus, including:

- Meeting the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and rules/flexibilities that might need to be extended
- FE reform paper and the importance of ITPs
- Spending review headlines – extension of employer incentives to March 2021... but is this enough? There is mixed feedback on whether incentives are making a difference to overcoming barriers
- The IfATE funding band consultation



- Provider accountability – a different approach in 2021
- Announcement that Ofsted ‘full visits’ are not resuming until Summer 2021
- Levy funding – the AELP view is that this should be for Apprenticeships only, with ringfenced budget for SMEs
- Functional Skills – equal funding and solution for current backlog
- Level 3 entitlement – we are still waiting for the list on qualifications that will be in scope. It appears the focus is on STEM and Digital, but this leaves concerns about other sectors i.e. hospitality

Members can, of course, access much more information about all of the above through the [AELP website](#).

£11m allocated to help London skills providers shift to online learning and training

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, alongside a raft of other measures, recently announced that an additional £11m of funding would be injected into the Adult Education Budget to support the capital’s recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The announcement was made against the backdrop of figures showing that London’s economic output is set to fall by £44bn this year. Naturally, we welcome any increase in funding that will support learners to access opportunities that support their learning journey.

Full details can be found on the [Mayor of London’s website](#) where there is a press release that gives details.

Upcoming events

There are a range of virtual events and webinars that we believe our members may be interested in.

Please find all key details below.

- 15th Dec [Planning the Curriculum using The Education Inspection Framework](#)
- 16th Dec [Creating a winning Study Programme offer and curriculum](#)
- 12th Jan [Building English Resilience](#)
- 12th Jan [Succeeding at your full inspection](#)
- 13th Jan [Seal that long term Levy deal](#)
- 13th Jan [An Introduction to forming a consortium](#)
- 18th Jan [A Day with Ofsted](#) – NOW OPEN FOR BOOKING
- 19th Jan [Succeeding at your short inspection for ‘good’ and ‘outstanding’ providers](#)
- 21st Jan [Creating supportive learning environments for those with low academic self esteem](#)
- 27th Jan [Tendering for Devolved AEB Funding SC and WYCA regions](#)

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Did you know... you can now view and book AELP events, member meetings and webinars via our AELP Connect App (kindly sponsored by The Skills network and developed in partnership with LearnBox)! Log in is still required for booking using your membership details, but it’s now quicker and easier to keep up to date with all of our events and meetings from the comfort of your smartphone!



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Exploring the Chief Inspector's Report

Preparing for the resumption of inspections

Monday, 18 January 2021 | Online

BOOK NOW!

The website is now live for AELP's 'A Day with Ofsted'

The absence of full Ofsted inspections since mid-March 2020 does not detract from the importance of this year's annual report from the Chief Inspector nor the need for the providers to be fully prepared for inspection related activity when the Covid-related restrictions end.

AELP's **A Day with Ofsted** annual event will be taking place online in the new year and will include the following aspects:

- Overview of the 2020 annual report
- Ofsted's intended approach to inspection related activity in 2021
- Experiences shared from the autumn interim visits
- The impact on learning and the quality of remote delivery of learning during the lockdown

Chaired by AELP's Paul Warner, the keynote address will be made by Paul Joyce HMI, Ofsted's Deputy Director for Further Education and Skills and the event will have input from Richard Pemble HMI and Richard Beynon HMI. There will also be a provider roundtable and input from providers to hear from their perspective.

Delegate Fees

AELP Member Rate

First Delegate: £99 + VAT | Subsequent Delegate: £75 + VAT

Non-Member Rate

First Delegate: £199 + VAT | Subsequent Delegate: £175 + VAT

Register an additional attendee from your organisation and benefit from our special offer of 'Buy two places, get one free'.

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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. And remember the [Resource and Information section](#) of the AELP website is regularly updated with useful resources.

Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Guidance and Patron Support



AELP has pulled together set of resources to help support providers, their employers and their learners in the response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Lockdown Lift-Off: Bouncing back after COVID-19: Training Qualifications UK - Patron Think Piece

After months of virtual pubs, family quizzes and video conference calls, the national lockdown is slowly lifting... In this Patron Think Piece, Andrew Walker considers how the sector can bounce back after Covid-19.

AELP News

AELP's latest press releases provide a great summary of the latest news and responses to what's happening in the Skills sector. They often link to useful AELP papers and other sources of guidance.

Ask Ashworth



Simon Ashworth is the Chief Policy Officer at the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP). Through the Ask Ashworth blog, Simon provides key policy information and answers to FAQs

[AELP Webinars](#)

AELP hosts regular webinars that address the key issues and challenges of the day. Please use the link above to check in on the latest webinars.

[Index of Briefing Papers and Submissions](#)

View a range of policy documents relating to key topical issues and consultations.

The AELP London Strategic Forum

Our next Strategic Forum will take online on Thursday 3rd December.

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

Date	Time	Venue
Wednesday, 3rd February 2021	9.30am – 11.30pm	<u>Online</u>
Wednesday, 7th April 2021	9.30am – 11.30pm	<u>Online</u>

Please continue to let us know your thoughts on the Strategic Forum, and advising of us of agenda items that you'd like covering by emailing aelpplondon@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'.

You can also talk with us via Twitter [@AELPLondon](https://twitter.com/AELPLondon), or the more 'old fashioned' way by email at aelpplondon@aelp.org.uk or over the phone at 0117 440 9525 / 0117 986 5389

Best wishes,

Jane Hickie
AELP Managing Director
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 aelp-london@aelp.co.uk.



AELP London

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