



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Appendix F – Skills Work Programme Post COVID-19

The purpose of this paper is to raise awareness of the key Skills issues (Post COVID-19) the CPCA could be facing over the next year. It is the view of the Skills Team within the CPCA that we will need to work hard with all providers, businesses, policymakers, other MCAs and key government departments to address, the issues we foresee; namely,

Workforce Skills

- The transition from “learning to training/upskilling to earning” will take longer and it may require learners to be in learning/training for longer until sustainable employment is available. This could potentially create an increase in young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment and Training).
- Decide on the priority groups to target in the short, medium and long term
 - Sector and occupations where growth and decline will reside.
 - Apprenticeships – if there is no allocated job at the end of the Apprenticeship or they are made redundant within programme – this will create further unemployment.
 - Young adults less than 25 with low barriers to entry are easier to furlough followed by redundancy.
 - Low skilled adults – need reskilling and upskilling.
- Understand the data in both growth sectors and declining sectors before we retrain people to ensure maximum impact of the National Retraining Scheme. Monthly COVID-19 impact data received from Cambridge Insight is being used to inform the Talent Portal and the Retraining Scheme. This data analyses unemployment and job vacancies in order to ascertain gaps in the employment market.
- The phasing out of the furlough scheme will ultimately create phased redundancies month on month as businesses return to business as usual.
- Working with DfE on an Apprenticeship Recovery package signed off by Ministers to agree salary incentives for employers to take on apprenticeships. We are expecting “golden hellos” for redundant apprentices to encourage an employer to take on a redundant apprentice, targeted at the young people and SMEs.
- Further development of the Talent Portal to add a redundant apprentices’ register to redirect them into employment.
- The Talent Portal run by the CPCA offers a bespoke service who speak to applicants and employers to understand both needs to connect to other CPCA programmes such as AEB and apprenticeship levy.
- The STAR Hub will launch on the 1st October and we will use the first year as a response to COVID-19 and Skills recovery.
- Apprenticeship levy – requests for levy transfer to support sectors ie. health and social care.
- Working with employers and providers to utilise the £5M accumulative levy pot. The risk maybe that levy may reduce as a % investment from companies as numbers of employees also reduce. This will put considerable pressure on the non-levy apprenticeship budget.
- Contracts with CEC will support careers advice and guidance - IAG and National Careers Service are key to supporting this.

AEB reprofiling of delivery to meet post COVID-19 impact

- Quality of teaching and learning - Distance learning is the dominant mode of learning. It requires an enhanced level of learner support to motivate attendance and maximise retention. The quality of the pedagogy is under constant review.
- Finances - CPCA have provided financial surety to the AEB providers by agreeing to allocate the same funding in 2020/21 as in 2019/20. Their financial viability is a constant risk. AEB is not their only source of funding. Any fee income from businesses or residents will be harder to access. Central government and the CPCA are reviewing the sustainability of co funding and co-financing expectations from existing policy.
- Inclusivity - The establishment of an innovation fund will alleviate any concerns about any disadvantaged learners unable to access remote or distant learning.
- Function, Framework and Funding - Clarity of the AEB framework and function to access more AEB funding. This is what AEB is successful at and does and this is why it needs more funding. Need to work with other MCAs to achieve

Higher Education concerns

- Fall in HE student numbers with an estimated prediction of up to 20% of prospective students deferring their place for this academic year as a new starter or a returner. A national plan is needed from the Government, setting out what universities' approach will be in September to reassure new and returning students over finances, students' rights on accommodation, curriculum model for teaching and learning as well as setting out what additional support will be needed to address the needs of vulnerable and less advantaged students.
- A fall in student numbers will cause some Universities to merge and/or seek Government bailouts. The impact of this could affect the commercial viability of the new University of Peterborough, however as this is set to open in September 2022, there is time for the market to recover as long as the HE partner selected does not run into financial difficulties.
- Lack of international students will affect monies into Universities.
- The new University of Peterborough curriculum model via. blended learning and distance learning will support delivery of degrees, Degree Apprenticeships and Masters.
- University pension schemes will put pressure on them to decrease staffing budgets. This will have a knock-on effect for delivery too.
- The Stronger Universities with Research attached will survive, unfortunately smaller Universities in the market-place will run the risk of bankruptcy or merging.
- The Augar Review – reduction in fees will not help the market to recover.
- The business model of the new University of Peterborough which is being created to meet the needs of local businesses and employment will support recovery of skills if there is sufficient student demand to study.
- Incentives attached to degree apprenticeships for both employers and students will be key to reviving the economy.
- Marketing and promotion of student is tough in a competitive market and this will become more so in a recovering market. It will be key for students to investment their time and money into degree programme were jobs/employment are the key outcome.
- Bespoke degree programmes for large corporates and new degree apprenticeship standards will help to revitalise the local economy using the local labour market.

We are currently updating the current Employment and Skills Board Work Programme to reflect the issues raised above and will table the POST COVID-19 work programme at the next Employment and Skills Board in September. It will be necessary to align the Employment and Skills Board Work Programme with the work being undertaken by the Business Board, Skills Committee and CA Board to improve the interface and eliminate overlap between the Boards. We are mindful that this work needs to inform the Overview and Scrutiny work programme as well as aligning to the Skills Strategy/Local Industrial Strategy's deliverables/activities/interventions which are currently being refreshed over the next 3-6 months.

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26.5.20