



2022-0012259ABPO

**Alex Burghart MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills

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Tim Gallagher  
Policy Adviser, London Assembly  
By email: [Tim.Gallagher@london.gov.uk](mailto:Tim.Gallagher@london.gov.uk)

08 April 2022

Dear Mr Gallagher,

Thank you for your email of 24 March, and for kindly providing a copy of the London Assembly Economy Committee report, 'You're Hired: A Bright Future for Apprenticeships in London'.

I would first like to extend my thanks to the Committee for taking the time to conduct this work and construct the report. As noted in your report, apprenticeships are a fantastic opportunity for employers to develop the skilled workforces they need and for individuals to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to pursue their chosen career. I welcome the insight you have provided on apprenticeships in London and your recommendations on how the programme could be improved.

I am encouraged that we have so far seen over 21,280 apprenticeship starts in London this year, up from 18,400 starts in the same period last year and 19,800 in 2019/20. However, I recognise that there is more to be done to ensure we are improving access to apprenticeships so that the programme continues to grow. I can assure you that this remains a priority.

In the past year, we have been working to make apprenticeships more flexible to better reflect modern models of employment and better work for employers. We have introduced flexi-job and front-loaded apprenticeships, which will support industries that may need a flexible training arrangement. We have also made it easier for young people to progress onto apprenticeships from skills bootcamps, traineeships and T-levels. Those with relevant experience can now progress their apprenticeship more quickly by using their prior learning and tailoring the apprenticeship to meet their needs. This has formed a solid base from which we can continue to grow the programme.

I want to ensure that apprenticeships are widely known to young people. Our Apprenticeship Support & Knowledge programme ensures that students are made aware of the benefits of apprenticeships in the final years of their education. In National Apprenticeship Week in February, I wrote to all Year 11, 12 and 13 pupils and their parents to tell them about the great opportunities offered through apprenticeships.

I also want to make sure that businesses see the benefits of taking on young apprentices. This is why we are providing £1,000 to both employers and training providers when they take on apprentices aged between 16 and 18 years old, or 19 to 24 year old apprentices who either have an Education, Health and Care Plan or have been in the care of their local authority.

Making apprenticeships more accessible for those with disabilities is a priority of mine. In partnership with Disability Rights UK, we have launched a Disabled Apprentice Network to provide valuable insight and evidence on how to attract and retain disabled people into apprenticeships. We also provide additional funding and support to disabled apprentices who require reasonable adjustments.

I recognise the important role SMEs play in creating apprenticeship opportunities, particularly for younger people and those in disadvantaged areas. We are supporting SMEs by paying 95% of their training costs and they can now benefit from an improved online levy transfer system that makes it easier for larger employers to support smaller businesses. Over 145 employers, including Amazon UK, DPD and HomeServe, have pledged to transfer over £8.97 million to support apprenticeships in businesses of all sizes.

I am committed to protecting the quality of the apprenticeship programme and improving the system to respond to the legitimate concerns raised by employers. The transition of all employers onto the apprenticeship service last year has been a time of significant change for the sector. I have heard from stakeholders that this has introduced some additional administration and complexity which can be particularly burdensome for providers and SMEs who are time poor.

I want to reassure you that we will be having more in-depth discussions with provider groups over the coming months to fully understand the impact of this and to identify areas where we can make improvements to our systems and our ways of working.

I hope my response has provided helpful insight on some of the actions we are taking to develop the apprenticeship programme.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alex Burghart', with a long horizontal line extending from the start of the signature across the top of the page.

**Alex Burghart MP**  
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills**