

**Labour's
Policy
Review**

A revolution in apprenticeships: a something-for-something deal with employers

The Husbands Review of
Vocational Education and Training

Introduction

Economic success depends on the supply and utilisation of well-trained employees. Young people depend on the quality of training to prepare them for work and responsible adulthood. The last Labour Government's target to get 50% of young people into university expanded opportunity and increased the skills of the workforce. But not enough attention was paid to the options available to those who do not go to university. This 'forgotten 50%' of young people are faced by a complex mix of vocational courses, too many of which do not offer any progression to good jobs or further study. The failure to tap into the talent of these young people caps aspiration and holds back businesses that can't get the skills they need to succeed. Other countries do better. We can too.

This independent Skills Taskforce was set up by Ed Miliband to examine how to improve the quantity and quality of vocational education and training in England¹. Its aims are bold: to address historic weaknesses in skills development and training in order to improve the country's competitiveness and ensure people across all sectors and occupations have opportunities to develop and use their skills at work. This country will only thrive economically and socially if it builds opportunities for all young people.

The Skills Taskforce published an interim report, *Talent Matters*, in May 2013 that identified major challenges in the English training system. It concluded that weak involvement of employers in the design and delivery of vocational training, a lack of high quality college- or work-based vocational training, and poor information, advice and guidance have contributed to an increasingly long and risky school to work transition for young people.

This is the first of three papers setting out the Taskforce's final recommendations on how to strengthen vocational education and training. We call on Labour to embark on a national mission to **double the number of high quality apprenticeships** offered by employers in England within five years. We also set out reforms to ensure that apprenticeships are gold-standard qualifications that employers and young people can trust.

A further paper will then examine how to reform the further education sector to raise the standard of classroom-based vocational learning that supports high quality 14-19 vocational training. A final paper will then set out how to ensure that young people leaving school are better prepared for the world of work through high quality vocational education for 14 to 19 year olds. Together, they offer a radical agenda for reforming vocational training.

The problem: a lack of high quality apprenticeships

The Skills Taskforce's interim report identified problems with both the quantity and quality of apprenticeships available for young people.

Quantity

England has relatively low levels of apprenticeships compared to many of our main competitor countries. Australia, Austria, Germany and Switzerland have between three and four times as many apprentices as England, where just 8% of all employers and less than a third of very large firms offer apprenticeships.¹ One reason for this is that, in these countries,

¹ Although some of the data in this report refers to the UK, skills policy is a devolved matter and therefore the recommendations apply only to England.

many jobs that in England are low skilled require a higher level of skill and broad entry-level training, which is met by apprenticeships. Apprenticeships can also offer a route into public sector occupations, but only a small minority of public sector employers offers apprenticeships in England. One recent study found that the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) – the government department that is responsible for apprenticeships – and its partner organisations employ 24,500 officials but together offer just 137 apprenticeships, with the majority offering none at all.ⁱⁱ

Demand for apprenticeships from young people far outstrips supply. According to the National Apprenticeship Service, more than 1.4 million online applicants competed for 129,000 vacancies posted online in the last year, up 32% on the previous year. This represents an average of 11 applicants per apprenticeship. In some job areas young people were competing with over 30 applicants for every place.ⁱⁱⁱ The process for a young person seeking to get onto one of the nation's top apprenticeship schemes is far more competitive than for those applying to Britain's top universities. In 2012 a young person seeking a place at Oxford University had to compete with an average of 5 applicants^{iv}, but in the same year Rolls Royce reported 4,000 applicants for just 200 places, or 20 applicants per place.^v

Quality

England has some excellent apprenticeship schemes that ensure a channel of well-trained workers for employers and provide young people with clear routes into skilled work. However the quality of apprenticeships is extremely variable and the proportion of courses of questionable value, mostly in low skill, low wage sectors, has increased in recent years.

In most other northern European countries, apprenticeships are level 3 qualifications that last between two and five years and include at least a day a week of off-the-job learning as well as significant on-the-job training. In England, most of the growth of apprenticeships in recent years has been at a level that would not be recognised in these countries.

- The majority (57%) of the increase between 2009/10 and 2011/12 was in level 2 apprenticeships. In total, nearly two-thirds of all apprenticeships are at level 2.^{vi}
- One in five apprenticeships lasts for less than six months^{vii}, and 20% of all apprentices report receiving no training at all.^{viii}
- A total of 70% of apprentices are not new job entrants but existing employees, up from 48% in 2007, and 94% of these apprentices are over 25 years old.^{ix}
- The wage returns to a level 2 apprenticeship have declined over time^x, and the return to female apprentices, who tend to be concentrated in these lower level apprenticeships, is low.^{xi}

Why it matters

This situation is bad for business and for the economy. In England many employers say they cannot get the skills they need to succeed and in some sectors the lack of training has led to severe skills shortages. Improving skills and training is vital to meeting the economic challenges we face and to building a more competitive and more balanced economy. The

lack of high quality apprenticeships also prevents young people from achieving their potential. The time it took the average school-leaver to find secure and well-paid work increased from a matter of weeks in the 1970s to six years in the late 1990s.^{xii} Too many young people, particularly those who do not do A levels or go to university, spend years in low skilled and temporary jobs with poor progression prospects before finding a proper foothold in the labour market.

Labour's goal

Our main competitor countries in Europe offer up to four times the number of apprenticeships offered in England. To compete with these countries we recommend that a Labour Government must embark on a national mission to double the number of apprenticeships offered by employers and significantly raise the quality of training.

This paper sets out how Labour could drive a revolution in apprenticeships through a 'something-for-something' deal with employers – giving them more control over skills funding and standards, and in return asking that they create more high quality apprenticeships in their sectors and supply chains. Nearly half of employers say that the prospect of trained staff being poached by rival firms deters them from training employees. So we also recommend asking business what powers they need to ensure they can deliver the expansion in apprenticeships we need to rebuild the economy, such as the power to introduce levies or training requirements. It will then be up to employer representatives, working with unions in employer-led sector bodies, which of these powers they will use.

This represents a significant break from the approach adopted by successive governments over the last 30 years, with more focus on increasing employer investment in training and apprenticeships, alongside attempts to improve the skills of the workforce. Our approach seeks to better meet the long term training needs of employers by putting decision-making power and resources in the hands of their representatives at sector level. This, combined with more rigorous training standards, will also reduce the bureaucracy and complexity for small employers who are otherwise not always able to navigate the system or effectively articulate their collective skills needs.

By providing incentives for employers to create more high quality apprenticeships, our recommendations will ultimately expand the opportunities available to young people. At the heart of this is the need to see skills policy in the context of wider economic and labour market policy. Decisions about whether to take on an apprentice and offer training and progression opportunities to other staff depend on the business models and competitive strategies adopted by employers. Efforts to increase employer involvement in apprenticeships and training should be seen as part of a broader goal to build a more sustainable and fairer economy that draws on the talents and creativity of all citizens and is built on fewer low wage, low skill jobs and more high wage, high skill jobs.

1. Involve employers in apprenticeship design – underpinned by a universal gold-standard

Successive governments have boosted apprenticeship numbers in part by broadening the definition of what counts as an 'apprenticeship'. This has resulted in a lack of clarity for employers and learners, and concerns by some employers that the apprenticeship 'brand' has been devalued. A universal gold standard for apprenticeships would reduce much of the

low quality provision that is of no value to either employers or learners, and would minimise 'deadweight', where public funds are spent on training that would have taken place anyway.

To remedy this situation, Labour should work towards a situation whereby all apprenticeships:

- Are level 3 or above, which is the norm in Germany and other countries with strong apprenticeship systems;
- Last a minimum of 2 years for level 3 (equivalent to A level) and 3 years for level 4 (university level);
- Include at least a day a week (or the equivalent) of off-the-job training, ensuring that young people receive the broader theoretical training that underpins mobility and progression in the labour market alongside work-based training; and
- Are focused on new job entrants rather than existing employees.

To protect the apprenticeship brand, level 2 training should be renamed as a traineeship or similar, and the frameworks for vocational training should have statutory underpinning, as is the case for academic qualifications. However, given that two-thirds of all apprenticeships in England are now at level 2, these measures would inevitably lead to a dramatic fall in apprenticeship numbers if introduced suddenly. Employers and providers should therefore be given time to improve the quality of their apprenticeships over an agreed period. It is also vital that young people achieving at level 2 are able to progress to higher levels, so level 2 apprenticeships should be redesigned, as well as renamed, to ensure courses provide a platform for progression to a level 3 apprenticeship.

The design and content of vocational training has also too often been set by central government – from the introduction of national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in the 1980s to the decision to base apprenticeship frameworks on these qualifications. NVQs have been criticised by employers and others for simply accrediting skills for specific, often low level, jobs rather than providing a platform for a career or further study. The large number of low level vocational qualifications – with nearly 250 apprenticeship frameworks covering 1,400 job roles – can be confusing for many employers, particularly small firms, and relatively low levels of employer involvement in the design or delivery of vocational training mean that employers have limited opportunities to design training solutions that meet their needs.

Employers and their representatives should be far more actively involved in the design of apprenticeships. Training standards should be set at sector level by institutions that genuinely represent the interests of employers and young people. Giving employer representatives more control over skills standards ensures that the training is relevant to employers operating across the given industry and provides transferable, rather than firm-specific, skills for employees. Below (see section 4) we explore how to build strong employer-led sector bodies, based on reforms to existing skills and labour market institutions. These sector bodies should have the power to design apprenticeship frameworks: the broad content requirements that the apprenticeships must cover. The requirement to base apprenticeships on NVQs should be removed, enabling employers to choose the most relevant qualification for their sector. Employer representatives should be able to adapt and update the design to ensure the content stays current, based on active

engagement with employers across the sector. The design should also leave space for employers and training providers to tailor curriculum design to local economic skills needs.

Entirely employer-led design risks leading to narrow training that meets the needs of employers, but not those of young people. As the manufacturers' organisation the EEF said in a submission to the Taskforce, "it is important for [employers] to work closely with unions, colleges and quality training providers to ensure that the partnership works for both the employer and the learner".^{xiii} In other countries employee representatives have ensured that apprenticeships are broad qualifications that include the underpinning academic subjects that enable learners to gain broad theoretical understanding and also underpin mobility and progression in the labour market. Apprenticeship training should provide the grounding for a career, not just an entry level job. Trade unions and professional bodies should therefore also have greater involvement in apprenticeship design, working alongside employers to develop a smaller number of apprenticeship frameworks of higher quality.

Key recommendations

- Labour should work towards a system whereby all apprenticeships: are level 3 qualifications or above; last 2 to 3 years; include a day of off-the-job training a week; and are focused on new job entrants not existing employees.
- Level 2 apprenticeships should be renamed as traineeships and redesigned to ensure that all young people who want to progress to higher level training are able to do so.
- Training standards should be set at sector level by employer-led institutions that genuinely represent the interests of employers and young people. Employer representatives, working with employee representatives, should be able to choose and adapt the vocational qualification underpinning the apprenticeships for their sector.
- Employer representatives should create a smaller number of apprenticeship frameworks of higher quality that are trusted and have currency with employers across the sector. These should be broad enough to provide access to an occupation, rather than a large number of entry level jobs, as well as allowing local employers and colleges the flexibility to respond to local economic needs.

2. Give employers more control over skills funding – in return for apprenticeships

Under the current system most skills funding is paid directly to training providers, which are not always willing or able to provide more specialist training. Too many training providers offer rigid 'off-the-shelf' training programmes that are ill-suited to employers' training needs. The result is a lack of specialist vocational training in many areas and small but persistent skills shortages in some sectors. More employer control over skills funding would ensure that training providers answer to their collective needs and priorities, and not those set by central government.

A proportion of the skills budget should be designated for strategic investment by employer-led sector bodies to meet their specialist training needs. The total budget for youth and adult apprenticeships in 2012/2013 is £1.5 billion, split between BIS and the Department for

Education (DfE).² This budget should be redirected to create a strategic fund, channelled through employer representatives at sector level, to raise training capacity and delivery in their sectors and supply chains.

Local training providers and colleges would still receive central government funding for their core academic provision, but our proposed reforms would ensure that a proportion of skills funding is directed by employers as part of sector-led workforce development strategies. Not all sectors will operate in all localities. Employers should have the freedom to invest skills funds as they see fit in the locations where their industries operate, without restrictive prescriptions from government departments. However sector bodies must be required to work with the relevant local and regional authorities to prevent duplication and ensure a joined up approach with wider skills funding.

In return for more control over skills funding and standards, employers should be asked to develop plans to increase the number of high quality apprenticeships in their sectors, areas and supply chains. Sector plans, set by industry representatives, should include a target or commitment for the number of apprenticeships they think they can deliver. This would form the basis for negotiations on the amount of funding they receive.

Key recommendations

- Responsibility for the £1.5 billion youth and adult apprenticeship budget should be given to employers, working collectively at sector level, to raise training capacity in their sectors and supply chains.
- In return for more control over funding and standards, these bodies would be required to develop sectoral plans to increase the number of high quality apprenticeships.
- Employer-led sector bodies should have the freedom to invest as they see fit, but must be required to work through the relevant local and regional authorities to prevent duplication and ensure a joined up approach with wider skills funding.

3. Give employers new powers to overcome collective failures to train

The concern that trained employees will be ‘poached’ by free-riding rivals can lead to a market failure, where all employers are trying to recruit the best staff, but not enough are providing the necessary training. Individuals and small employers can also find it difficult to fund the cost of training in such an environment. Together this has led to a lack of training and damaging skills shortages, particularly in fragmented sectors and those with high numbers of self-employed and temporary workers. We believe employer-led sector bodies may need new powers to overcome these coordination problems and drive up the numbers of apprenticeships.

In other countries with strong skills systems, industry-led bodies use a range of hard and soft mechanisms to tackle this problem, including:

- **Licences to practice:** Some industries have introduced legal requirements for a level of training and qualifications, notably in the professions with chartered status,

² Rhodes C (2012) “Apprenticeships Policy”, *Standard Note 3052*, London: House of Commons Library

but most other countries (including the USA, Australia and Germany) with strong economies and high skill standards make far greater use of licences to practice. This ensures a minimum benchmark for skills and helping to protect consumers.

- **Professional registers:** Professional registers, such as that in place for fitness instructors, can help to improve training standards and consumer confidence by certifying that registered practitioners meet certain criteria.
- **Membership:** In some countries mandatory membership of professional or trade bodies ensures that employers contribute to collective training provision and are better able to articulate their collective training needs.
- **Training levies:** Training levies, such as that operated in the construction and media sectors, raise funds which can then be reinvested in meeting the collective training needs of employers and employees in a sector. In some countries this also operates as an incentive to train: employers either submit training plans to the relevant body, or pay into the collective fund.

It should be up to employers which of these powers they will use. Employers, not central government, are in the best place to determine the appropriate mechanisms for their sectors. They would specify in their plans the powers they think they will need to increase the number of high quality apprenticeships. Sector bodies may also wish to set benchmarks or targets for their sectors such as the percentage of payroll to invest in training or continuing professional development requirements for employees at all levels.

Together these measures will ensure employers have the tools they need to meet their collective training needs. Beyond this, employer-led sector bodies will need to deploy different approaches to increase training capacity depending on the challenges facing their particular sectors and regions. Good practice already exists in many higher skilled industries, and should be consolidated through proactive employer engagement strategies. Yet more fragmented industries, low skilled sectors, and those with a high proportion of small employers may require more proactive approaches. For example, employer-led sector bodies may choose to fund business support services to help local businesses to set up new apprenticeships, and investment in Group Training Associations can help small employers to pool the costs of training at local level. In low skill sectors, reform strategies to tackle job quality problems that create high turnover, low levels of productivity or innovation, poor workplace standards and recruitment problems would create new demand for skills that can be met by apprenticeships and training.

Labour should also consider how to ensure that a sectoral approach to workforce development and training relates to wider labour market reform and local economic development strategies. For example, sector bodies could be given the responsibility and resources to develop strategies to raise workplace standards, productivity and innovation in their sectors, setting sector-specific labour market regulation, and to work with local and regional partners to drive up business performance and job quality across the economy.

Key recommendations

- Labour should give employer-led sector bodies the powers they think they need to increase the quantity of high quality apprenticeships in their sectors and supply chains.

- It would be up to employer-led sector bodies to decide which powers they use to increase apprenticeships in their sectors and supply chains.

4. Build employer-led institutions capable of driving a revolution in apprenticeships

The weakness of the existing institutional landscape for skills represents a key barrier to this agenda in England. Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) were set up by the Labour government to provide collective skills organisation at sector level. They already have a remit to articulate employers' skills needs in their sectors and are responsible for approving changes to apprenticeship frameworks put forward by employers or other stakeholders. However, while some of these are very good, others are not seen as sufficiently representative of employers, particularly small employers, or to have strong links to employees in their sectors. They have limited powers and their remit does not encourage an active, industry-facing role to increase the quality and quantity of vocational training in their sectors.

Furthermore, frequent state-led reorganisations of the skills system have resulted in high levels of flux, complexity and a lack of coordination between national, sectoral and local levels. The lack of coordination between different government departments and the various skills bodies is a common complaint from employers – with some larger employers saying that they are approached by multiple organisations promoting different skills initiatives and many small employers feeling that the system is too complex and fails to address their needs at all.

The goal is to create a more coordinated system, with employer involvement at every level, with the agenda driven by active sector-facing institutions that are capable of building training capacity across all sectors, including those that are traditionally seen as low skilled. A set of core principle should underpin Labour's efforts to strengthen the institutional environment governing the skills system. The approach should:

- Be based on existing institutions
- Be employer-led
- Involve other stakeholders that represent the interests of young people and employees, including trade unions and professional bodies
- Represent sectors with high levels of low skill, low wage employment as well as those that already require high levels of trained staff

Employers and employees, not ministers in Whitehall, should lead training policy. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), a social partnership body set up to raise skill levels, is already leading in efforts to boost work-based training in the UK. UKCES is industry-led. It has guaranteed spaces on its board for the CBI and the TUC, and brings together employers, unions, providers and other stakeholders to inform skills policy at national level. More recently UKCES has supported the formation of new employer-led 'industrial partnerships' to raise levels of employer investment in training. It has considerable expertise in the issues facing young people in the labour market and the policies required to improve both the supply and demand for skills.

UKCES should be given a national leadership role in driving through our proposed reforms to raise the number of gold-standard apprenticeships. UKCES should be given responsibility for reforming and building the capacity of sector bodies to ensure they are capable of raising standards and levels of training in their sectors, changing their leadership, composition and board-level representation if necessary. SSCs that do not have the sufficient confidence of their sector should be reinvented as powerful employer-led partnerships, with guaranteed spaces on the board for the relevant trade associations, trade unions and professional bodies operating in that sector. There should also be guaranteed board-level representation of small employers. In some cases UKCES may choose to work through an alternative sector body that has greater legitimacy with and is more accountable to the industry.

The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England – the minimum legal requirements for what counts as an apprenticeship – should also sit with UKCES, preventing future governments from undermining the standards in order to drive up numbers artificially.

The remit of SSCs should be extended from simply articulating employers' skills needs to raising levels of training and skills utilisation in their sectors. As above, each SSC would submit a sector plan to UKCES detailing how they plan to increase levels of apprenticeship training. Once approved by UKCES, sector bodies would be eligible for the new freedoms set out above. They would be given more control over skills funding and standards, and given the powers they think they need to set standards and overcome the coordination problems that affect levels of training in their sectors.

The goal should be a hub-and-spoke model, where UKCES builds the capacity of sector bodies, which in turn work to improve training provision at local level. This relationship should work both ways, with local and sectoral practice and experience also informing national strategic decisions. Some SSCs already have a regional structure that will facilitate this but their links with local industry should be strengthened where necessary, for example through representation of local employer organisations such as Chambers of Commerce and Local enterprise Partnerships. National sector bodies should identify key geographic clusters for their industries for investment, and their regional branches would then engage local employers and training providers to tailor investment to local needs, working with the relevant authorities to ensure skills investment is integrated with wider education and training provision in the region. This local coordination is even more important given that the local institutional landscape is currently changing, including some experimentation with local control over budgets for economic development.

The regional arms of national sector bodies should also be responsible for the development of effective quality assurance and assessment procedures for apprenticeships and should provide support to local employers and training providers to tailor curriculum design to local skills needs. Over time, Labour could consider giving them the power to license apprenticeship providers, including colleges, private training providers, and employers themselves.

Key recommendations

- The institutions governing the skills system should: be based on existing institutions; be employer-led; involve other stakeholders that represent employees' interests, including

trade unions and professional bodies; and represent sectors with high levels of low skill, low wage employment as well as those that already require high levels of trained staff

- As an industry-led body, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills should be tasked with building the capacity of employer-led sector bodies to drive up training in their sectors. They should also be given responsibility for the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England.
- Sector Skills Councils should be reformed as powerful employer-led partnership bodies, with guaranteed board-level representation of the trade associations, small employers, trade unions and professional bodies operating in the sector. SSCs should have a remit to increase skills demand and utilisation in their sectors and supply chains, rather than simply articulate or meet existing skills demand as is currently the case.
- These national sector bodies would identify regional clusters where employers in their sectors operate and, working through their regional branches, work with relevant authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and local employer representatives to improve the quality of training provision. The regional tier of SSCs should also be responsible for quality assurance and assessment procedures.

Conclusions and next steps

This paper has set out a strategy to dramatically increase the number and quality of apprenticeships in England. Unlike previous attempts, this seeks to ensure this is done in a sustainable way, built on the genuine skills needs of employer, rather than simply re-badging existing forms of training to count as an ‘apprenticeship’. More funding would help, but we have sought to set out how existing skills funding – the apprenticeship budget – could be better spent. The key point is simple: give more ownership of the skills system and funding to employers, collectively, and ask in return that they create more and better apprenticeships. Above all, our advice is to seek to build on existing good practice and to work with the grain of what good employers are already doing.

Going forward, the Taskforce also believes that Labour should examine the case for additional strategies to encourage more employers to offer high quality apprenticeships. These include:

- **Apprenticeship requirements in the public sector:** There are far too few apprenticeships in public sector bodies and arms-length organisations. Labour has already committed to creating a new high quality apprenticeship for the civil service and should also consider the case for a numerical target for publicly-funded bodies, such as a requirement that 5% of their workforce are apprentices. Guidance and support should be made available on how to set up a high quality apprenticeship.
- **Procurement:** Labour has already said that they will examine how to use procurement to encourage employers to train. Many other countries use government procurement contracts to favour companies that provide training and apprenticeships and some UK government departments already ask employers to provide apprenticeships or explain why not. Labour should look at how to ensure that all

public bodies follow suit. Some estimates suggest that one apprenticeship should be created for every £1m spent on procurement.

- **Tax incentives:** Tax relief, structured effectively, can provide behavioural incentives for employers. The goal should be to ensure that the tax system encourages employers to provide high quality training – for example there may be a case for investigating new forms of tax relief that benefit small employers, such as relief on employers' National Insurance Contributions.
- **Reporting requirements:** Stronger requirements on employers would enable shareholders, the public, and employees to see how much an employer invests in training, improving oversight and accountability mechanisms. To support management decision-making, evidence could also be gathered on skills utilisation, for example through a staff survey that asks staff how well they feel their skills are being used effectively.
- **Employee involvement:** Employee involvement in strategic decision-making processes in firms can encourage investment in more and better training. Unions or other representative bodies can play a vital role in facilitating this. Sector lead bodies and the UKCES are partnerships, led by employers. Those bodies should encourage training in the workplace to follow the same partnership approach.

Annex 1

Membership of the Skills Taskforce

- **Professor Chris Husbands (Chair):** Professor Husbands became Director of the Institute of Education in January 2011. He has directed numerous research projects, including the National Evaluation of Children's Trusts (2004-2009) and the evaluation of the leadership development programme for Directors of Children's Services (2009-2010), as well as a comparative study of high performing education systems for the UK government. Before his appointment as Director of the Institute he led large schools of education at the Universities of Warwick and East Anglia.
- **Stephen Alambritis:** Stephen is the Leader of the Council at the London Borough of Merton. Formerly Head of Public Affairs at the Federation of Small Businesses, he is currently a member having set up his own successful small business in the property sector. He is also a Commissioner at the Equality and Human Rights Commission and is also on the Board of the London Pension's Fund Authority. He was formerly a member of the Better Regulation Task Force and was also Chair of Enterprise UK.
- **Graham Cole:** In 2011 Graham became Chairman of AgustaWestland Ltd and was also appointed to the Board of the parent Company Finmeccanica UK. Graham is also Chairman of Vix UK Limited and a member of their global board. In 2012, Graham was appointed Chairman of the CBI South West and he is also President of The West of England Aerospace Forum and a member of the Ministerial Aerospace Committee.
- **Jacqui Henderson CBE:** Jacqui is Managing Director of Creative Leadership and Skills Ltd, a consultancy and project management company. She was previously Chief Executive of Tec National Council and UK Skills and Regional Director of The Learning and Skills Council in London. Jacqui was awarded the CBE in January 2001 for services to Education and Training. She is Vice Chair of Newcastle University and was until March 2012 Chair of Northumberland Care Trust.
- **Dr Ann Limb OBE DL:** A former FE College Principal, Anne is Chair of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership and she has worked in the private sector for the last 8 years. Following her successful career in the FE sector, Ann was responsible for implementation of the UK government's flagship e-learning initiative learndirect and was a member of the government's Digital Inclusion Panel. In the 2011 Queen's Birthday Honours list, Ann was appointed an OBE for her services to education.
- **Bill Thomas:** Bill is a former Senior Vice-President and General Manager of EMEA at Hewlett-Packard. He is the Proprietor of Hopton Estates, and holds nonexecutive directorships of Xchanging plc; and of GFI Software Sarl, a leading supplier of software to the SME market. He chairs the International Advisory Board at the Cranfield School of Management and sits on the Advisory Board of Leeds University Business School. He was formerly Executive Vice-President at EDS.
- **Tom Wilson:** Tom was appointed Director of unionlearn – the learning and skills organisation of the TUC - in July 2009. Prior to that, Tom had been Head of the Organisation and Services Department at the TUC. He was previously head of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education's Universities Department for five years and Assistant General Secretary at the Association of University Teachers from 1988.

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