



multiverse

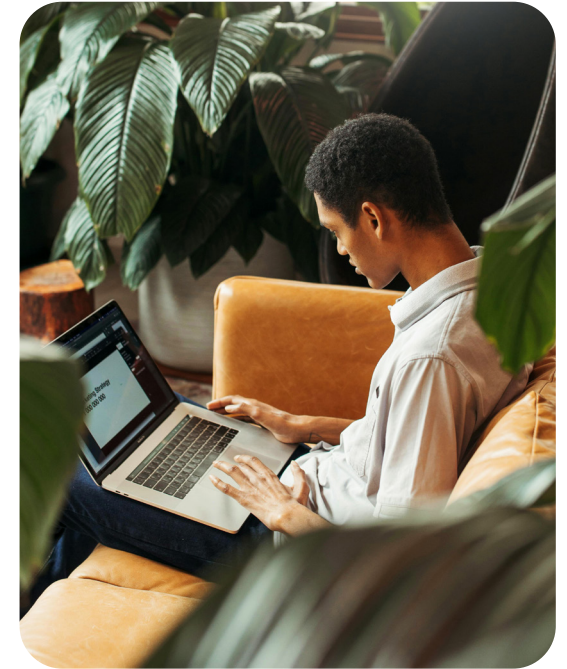
Skills Mission

Putting the 'growth' in the Growth and Skills Levy



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Executive summary

At Multiverse, we identify, close and prevent skills gaps for people at every age and every stage, through personalised on-the-job learning. Our work with over 1,500 employers and thousands of learners has given us a clear perspective on the skills needed by organisations today.

The rapid evolution of technology and the age of AI are transforming the world of work. With this in mind and with changes to the Apprenticeship Levy on the horizon, we commissioned policy and research agency Public First to explore how the new Growth and Skills Levy can help employers future-proof their workforces.

Together we consulted with experts from across the skills sector, polled members of the public and surveyed the employers Multiverse works with most closely.¹

Our work shows that, if implemented successfully, the Growth and Skills Levy should incentivise greater employer investment in flexible, structured, ongoing reskilling programmes – helping to close critical skills gaps and unlocking economic growth.

To maximise its effectiveness and mitigate against potential risks, we believe it should be guided by four principles, so that it is:

- **Employer-led:** putting employers at the forefront of addressing workforce skill needs by allowing them to choose the eligible provision most appropriate to them. Training funded by the Levy should take what is great about an apprenticeship and focus only on employees undertaking on-the-job learning and the skills required for a specific occupation. It should be delivered in the workplace and demonstrate positive economic return.
- **For everyone:** enabling workers of all ages to learn new skills throughout their careers, regardless of where they live and ensuring policy is kept consistent across England, to avoid a 'postcode lottery' of access to skills.
- **Easily accessible:** minimising barriers which limit the uptake of training, including appropriate and proportionate regulation and flexible delivery. This includes reducing current barriers to apprenticeships, maintaining quality while removing regulatory requirements that limit how businesses can use them.
- **Excellence-driven:** delivering only high-quality in-work training by maintaining high standards for providers and criteria for training. This should ensure Levy funds are used for additives for individuals, and not diverted to pay for general workplace training like health and safety.

By embracing this kind of flexible, employer-led training and leveraging cutting-edge technology, we can empower the workforce with the skills they need to succeed and drive the UK's economic future.

1. Multiverse commissioned Public First to carry out polling, which was conducted through an anonymous, online survey of 2,007 adults from 16-22 August 2024. Results were weighted by interlocking age and gender, region, and social grade to nationally representative proportions.

Introduction

“Technological change is revolutionising at pace the labour market and the skills workers need to succeed.

For the UK to capture the huge economic benefits increasing digitisation will create, we need a new approach which supports people to develop their skills at every stage of their lives.

We need routes which enable people to upskill and reskill multiple times, that support a range of training beyond traditional education and allow people to pick up new skills alongside their work and family commitments.

The new Growth and Skills Levy can help deliver this by building on the existing successes of the apprenticeship system, while enabling employers to train workers in ways that better meet their needs and those of the business.

To do this, the Levy will need to provide greater flexibility than the previous system, focusing only on high-quality training which is more responsive to the rapidly changing skills requirements of employers.

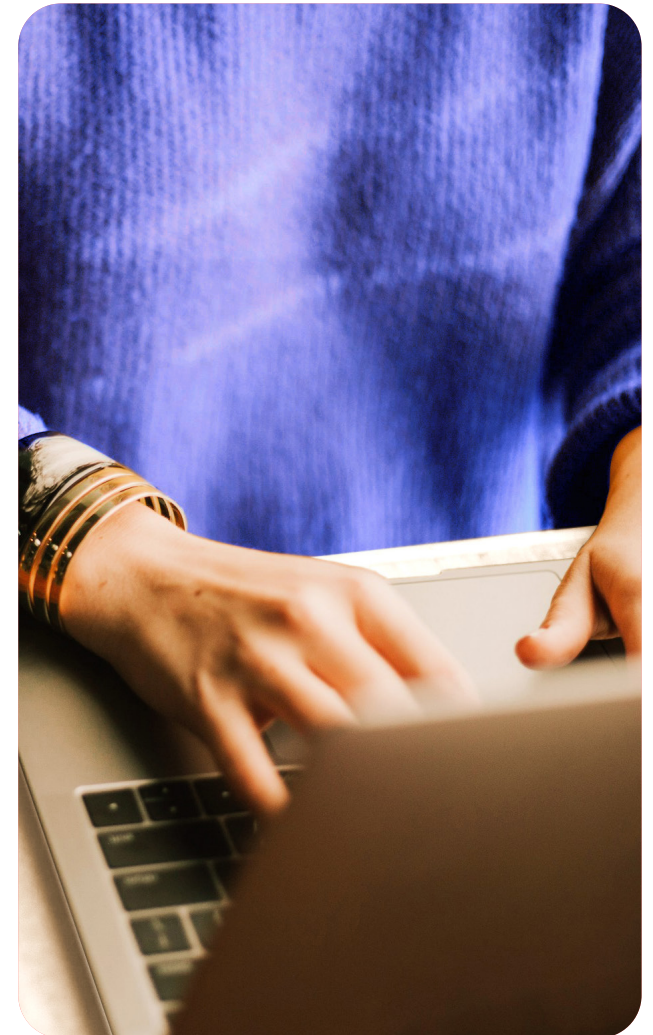
It must also provide greater transparency about how the government and employers contribute to training costs and it must sit within a stable, national skills system, which accounts for the needs of local economies.

Finally, it should be introduced in parallel to wider changes that focus on how we help young people master essential skills for work and life, support people into careers and help people stay in the workforce.

Getting all this right will be challenging. But if implemented successfully, the Levy could spark the revolution in skills training that we need to see - encouraging far greater use of flexible, in-work training that helps people to progress throughout their careers.

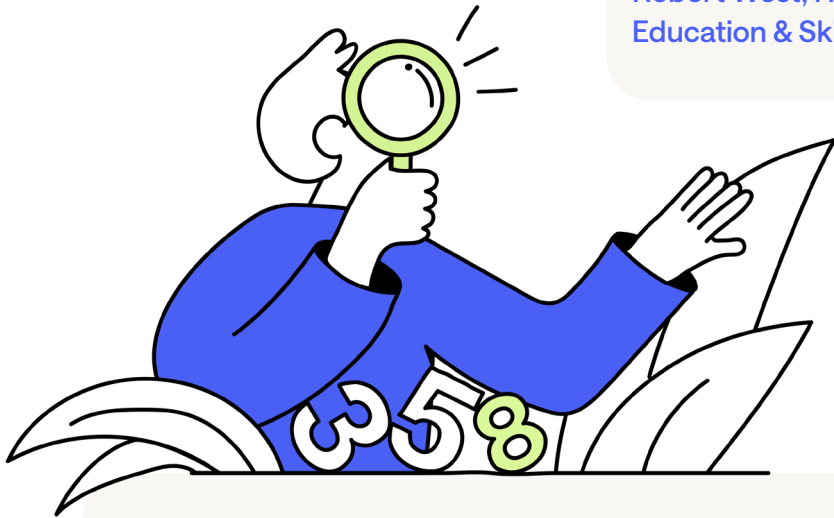
Against this backdrop, I'm pleased to see Multiverse set out detailed proposals for how the Levy could be implemented, which I hope Ministers and policymakers will pay close attention to as this reform is brought in.”

Baroness Martha Lane-Fox of Soho



As part of the research process for this Skills Mission report, we spoke to experts from across the skills sector, bringing together insights from businesses, civil society groups, unions, charities and more.

Reflections from these conversations have helped shape this report, and some highlights are included here.

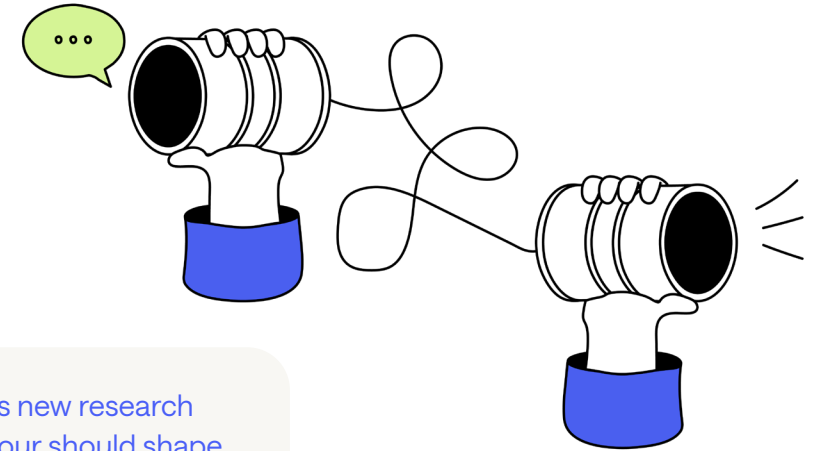


“This report provides a valuable contribution to the future of the Growth and Skills Levy. It highlights the necessity of keeping the apprenticeship system an employer-led system, open for all ages, and focused on high-quality in-work training, both of which will be crucial to filling not only digital skills gaps, but gaps across the country.”

Ben Rowland, CEO of The Association of Employment Learning Providers

“Businesses welcome proposals on a Growth & Skills Levy and are encouraging government towards enabling the full flexibility and modularity needed to address emerging skills needs.”

Robert West, Head of Education & Skills, CBI



“Multiverse’s new research on how Labour should shape the new Growth & Skills Levy could not be more timely. The new Levy is the Government’s chance to prioritise faster, more agile qualifications and training – including modular training, NVQs and VQs – in addition to a stronger, sustained push for apprenticeships at all levels. Research couldn’t be clearer: the UK needs a cultural shift to embracing lifelong learning, and the new Levy must be fit for purpose by supporting a range of tailored training offers to meet the diverse needs of workers and employers of all backgrounds.”

Chris Oldham, Senior Policy & Programme Manager, City of London

“As the UK’s largest private sector employer, Tesco relies upon a diverse range of talent and skills to ensure our future success. We will not invest £1 into poor quality training but are a true advocate for apprenticeships and now fund more than 1,000 every year. The Growth and Skills Levy is a once-in-a-generation chance for skills reforms which truly break down barriers to opportunity across the country.”

Emma Taylor, Chief People Officer, Tesco Group

Chapter 1

What is the challenge?

Emerging technologies like AI are reshaping our economy and labour market, creating both opportunities and challenges. These have the potential to unlock huge benefits, with Microsoft estimating that AI could ultimately contribute up to **£550 billion** to the UK economy by 2035.²

To secure these benefits, we will need to change the mix of skills in the UK's workforce, so that people can take advantage of the latest technologies.

²[Microsoft: Unlocking the UK's AI Potential](#)

A rapidly changing workplace

There is a growing skills gap that threatens to hold back our economy and leave the workforce unprepared for the changing demands of work. This gap is broad: it ranges from what are often termed digital skills, to tool-specific expertise, to durable, cross-domain abilities like communication and project management.

Over two-thirds of business leaders believe that their organisation's workforce will need different skills to stay competitive by 2030, with AI named as their most significant skills gap (45%).³

In just the next three years, 83% of UK business leaders anticipate that at least 25% of their workforce will need to re-skill due to AI and automation, with 38% saying over half of their staff will require re-skilling.⁴

But we cannot recruit our way out of this challenge or rely solely on the next generation of workers.

To close the digital skills gap, we will need to help existing employees adapt to rapid technological change.

This is a particular challenge given the UK's ageing workforce. Nearly a quarter of over-50s report difficulty adapting to new technology and almost two-thirds believe that the digital transformation is progressing faster now than at any other point in their careers.⁵

Over a third of those over 50 considering leaving their jobs in the next 12 months say that not being able to keep pace with new skills and knowledge in their industry is a key factor in their decision, with nearly 40% of those likely to retire early indicating that they would remain in their current jobs if offered training courses to develop new skills.⁶

As we increasingly expect people to have longer working lives, better training throughout their careers will be essential to help them stay in the workplace and remain productive.

an estimated

7.5 million

adults already lack the essential digital skills needed for the workplace, let alone those that may be needed in the future; far more than the number of young people who will enter the workforce between now and 2030.^{7,8}

82%

of people are interested in additional training to help them adapt to technological change.⁹

An education system struggling to keep up

Technology is evolving so quickly that many traditional forms of training are struggling to prepare people for the changing demands of work. This is a challenge for every part of our education system.

Traditionally Higher Education has provided most of the advanced data and digital skills employers have needed. However, current graduation rates are well below the rate of demand. An official government study on the UK economy's skills gap found that 178,000 roles require hard data skills, but the estimated number of data scientists graduating from UK universities is unlikely to be more than 10,000 per year, leaving a substantial gap.¹⁰

Whilst many of the roles that are set to be changed by AI and other technologies do not require a specialist degree, we clearly cannot rely on universities alone to supply all of the higher-level skills we now need.

To complement this, we will need a step change in the delivery of other forms of training. However, at the same time that the economy has been undergoing a digital transformation,



government spending on adult skills has fallen by **23%** since 2010.¹¹ This has seen the number of adults taking publicly funded adult education courses roughly halving over the same period.¹²

Total public spending on education in the UK is around £116 billion but only £4.4 billion – less than **4%** – of this goes towards adult education and skills at a time when the experience of work is about to be transformed.¹³ Or, put another way, **96%** of public spending on education and training is invested in young people up to the point at which they begin a career.

While more public support is vital, employers also play a critical role. Unfortunately, rates of workplace training in the UK have also been in decline over the last decade, with the amount employers spend on training in the UK falling by **27%** in real terms



since 2011.¹⁴ **47%** of workers report having received no workplace training at all in the last five years,¹⁵ meaning many people already in work are struggling to get the skills they need to succeed.

One key barrier to this has been the inflexibility of existing training, with those in full-time work or who have caring responsibilities finding it difficult to sign up for long courses, study outside of work hours or meet the costs of training. The Learning and Work Institute found that work commitments were the third most cited barrier to learning, with **20%** of adults saying so, while **7%** said caring responsibilities made it hard to find time for study.¹⁶

The number of students studying part-time in traditional higher education settings has fallen by 40% between 2008/09 and 2020/21, showing the need for more new pathways to enhance lifelong learning.¹⁷

Existing rules around publicly funded training, including for apprenticeships, have not moved as fast as employer needs when it comes to more flexible forms of training, or content focussed on the latest technologies - meaning they do not encourage investment as effectively as they could.

10.DCMS 2021 11.IFS 12.IFS 13.IFS 14.IFS 15.Multiverse: Impact Report 2024
16.Learning and Work Institute 17.House of Commons Library: Higher education student numbers

The digital skills gaps holding us back

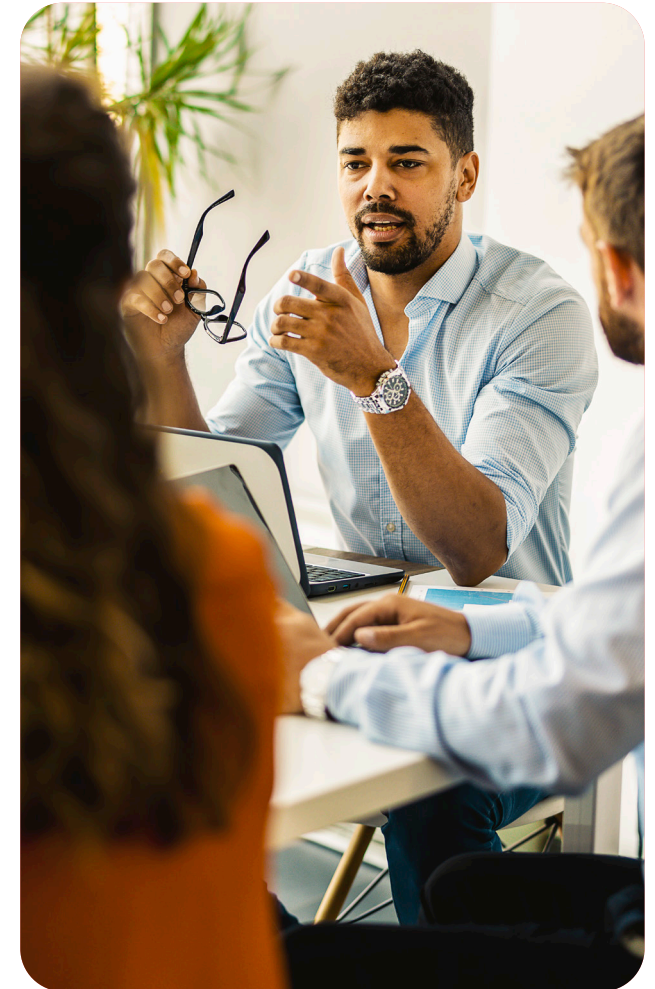
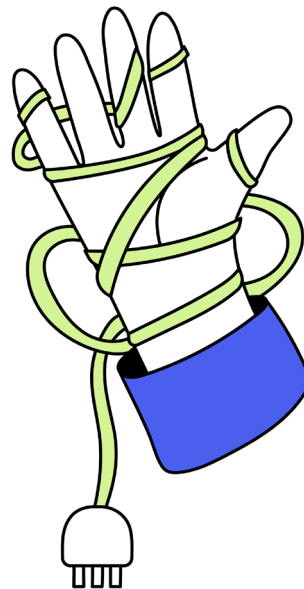
The digital skills gaps in our economy are already a significant barrier to increasing economic growth and productivity.

One in every 11 minutes of company time in the UK is estimated to be spent attempting data tasks unproductively. This adds up to **8.5%** of annual revenue lost on average as a result of poor data literacy.¹⁸ Half of business leaders report reduced productivity and profitability due to digital and data skills gaps,¹⁹ with almost half (**45%**) saying AI skills are their most significant skill gap currently.

Despite this, our polling found that **47%** of people said they had not completed training because they had never been offered it at work.²⁰ This shows an urgent need to support employers to engage more with workplace training to support their employees' development.²¹

The digital skills gap is already estimated to cost the UK economy £63 billion per year in lost potential economic output,²² making us less well off as a nation and a society.

It also holds back our international competitiveness. Though the UK's universities, tech companies and research institutions have put us near the forefront of the development of AI and other technologies, we are less well placed with the ability of our workforce to use these tools – with one study placing us ninth in the world for digital skills.²³



Chapter 2

What is the opportunity?

In response to these trends, there has been growing interest from employers in on-the-job learning as a means of meeting their skills needs.

Business leaders have a strong preference for training through work, with more than **70%** saying it is the best way for young people to develop the skills needed for the workforce of tomorrow, compared to only **26%** who said this of learning through academic study.²⁴

Expanding access to on-the-job training

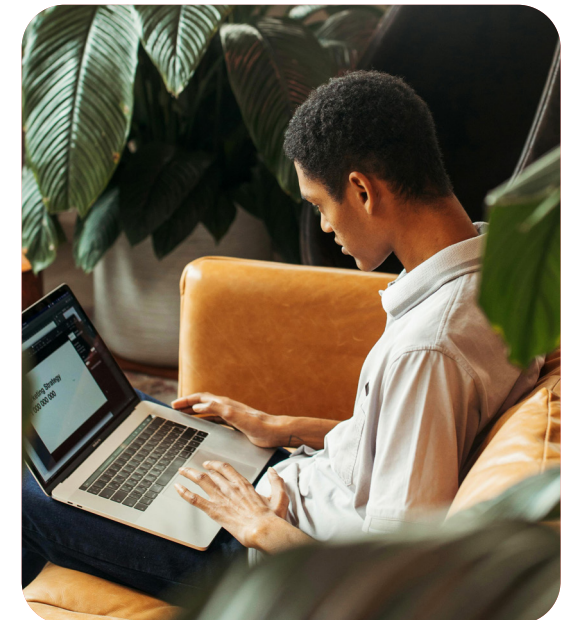
Apprenticeships, which combine foundational knowledge with real-world application, are particularly effective in supporting employees to develop in-demand skills and enhance their career prospects.

When asked to rank the best ways to develop the skills needed for their company in the future, half of business leaders placed professional apprenticeships as their first choice, while just **28%** selected university degrees.²⁵

Average additional earnings per apprenticeship have increased **44%** over the last decade, while the wage premium enjoyed by graduates has fallen.²⁶ Reform to apprenticeships begins on strong foundations.

Unlike traditional education routes, which are dominated by young people gaining qualifications before moving into work, apprenticeships enable employees of all ages to develop their skills, while earning and learning.

As rapidly changing technologies transform the economy, apprenticeships and other forms of on-the-job learning are better placed to keep pace with the changing needs of the economy, since they are directly linked to a specific role and can be applied immediately in the workplace.



Using new technology to transform learning

Technology is also rapidly transforming how skills training can be delivered, with AI tools allowing for a more individualised learning experience than ever before.

At Multiverse, we have built Atlas – an AI coaching tool, that supports and supplements coaching from human experts – to deliver on-demand coaching, meaning we can provide personalised support to apprentices whenever they have questions, with no delays.²⁷

These technologies mean there is now more scope than ever for training to be delivered flexibly and for people to learn at their own pace, enabling a far wider cohort to develop new skills, including alongside their work.

They may also be particularly useful for meeting the needs of some historically underserved communities, supporting more equitable access to high-quality training and education. Use of Atlas so far has seen a higher rate of adoption amongst those with additional learning needs, compared to those with no additional needs.

Case study: How technology learning is transforming apprenticeships

A 28-year old apprentice is undertaking a Data Literacy programme with Multiverse. He uses Atlas to help create the right macros in Excel, or for PowerBI if he needs it to do something specific that he can't figure out.

“I just drop the code in there and it will tell me where my code is breaking, how to fix it, as well as an explanation and what I need to do going forward.

“Previously I would have spent hours on Google searching for the solution or had to ask my colleagues, but Atlas takes me straight to it – and explains it properly so I'm actually learning.

“I have used ChatGPT before but Atlas is a lot more specific. It understands that I am looking for something within data literacy and pinpoints what I need.

“I always have Atlas open on one screen and my project on the other, so it's there when I need it.

“I am someone who prefers to solve problems on my own if I can, rather than asking other people for help and I really like that Atlas makes that possible.”

Chapter 3

Delivering a Growth and Skills Levy

To seize the opportunities of a rapidly changing economy, we need a new approach to how we train our workforce.

One that incentivises investment in flexible, structured, ongoing reskilling programmes that enable workers to keep pace with technological change. The new government's plan to transform the Apprenticeship Levy into a Growth and Skills Levy is central to this.

Delivering a Growth and Skills Levy

The plan's focus on funding a broader range of training, by allowing employers to spend some of their Levy funds on non-apprenticeship training, is welcome.

It should also provide increased resources for skills training, with the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasting that Levy receipts will increase by an additional £1 billion each year by the end of the Parliament.²⁸ A new Growth and Skills Levy should aim above all to expand the amount of high-quality training being delivered to workers.

When designing the new Growth and Skills Levy, the focus should be on building upon the successful elements of the current system, for example the introduction of apprenticeship standards, which have increased the effectiveness of apprenticeships, and the link between training and a clear map of occupational requirements for different roles.

Reform should focus on fixing the parts of the system which are not working well, especially Levy rules which do little to enhance the quality of training provided but do prevent employers and employees from being able to engage with it.

Multiverse surveyed 1405 employers on their opinions of the current Apprenticeship Levy. Diversity of opinion across employer responses was striking, with responses ranging from 'failure' and 'rigid' to 'beneficial' and 'positive'. There is anything but consensus on the performance of the existing Levy.

Employers Multiverse surveyed shared a range of views when asked about the Apprenticeship Levy:



²⁸Office for Budget Responsibility: Economic and fiscal outlook

In delivering greater flexibility, it will be essential to avoid any reduction in the quality of training being funded or an inadvertent fall in starts on apprenticeships or other forms of training.

Employers need certainty around what they can spend their Levy contributions on. To allow for considered business and workforce planning, it will be vital to publish the ratio of apprenticeship to non-apprenticeship training well ahead of any changes, and the ambition should be to keep this consistent over several years, to allow a long-term approach to be taken.

We believe a Growth and Skills Levy, and the training it delivers, should be guided by four principles, so it is:

- **Employer-led** – putting employers at the forefront of addressing workforce skill needs
- **For everyone** – enabling workers to learn new skills throughout their careers
- **Easily accessible** – minimising barriers which limit the uptake of training
- **Excellence-driven** – delivering only high-quality in-work training

Explainer: The Growth and Skills Levy

The Apprenticeship Levy was established in 2017 as a tax on large UK employers. It ringfences 0.5% of eligible employers' wage bills for apprenticeships, with smaller employers also subsidised by the Levy.

The new government has committed to replace this with a Growth and Skills Levy. This would increase flexibility by allowing businesses to spend some of the levy on non-apprenticeship training for the first time.

In the July 2024 King's Speech, the creation of a new body, Skills England, was announced. This will consult on eligible courses which Growth and Skills Levy funds can be spent on, to ensure qualifications offer value for money. Labour has previously suggested these will include modular courses in priority areas, including digital and green skills, training in functional skills and pre-apprenticeships training.



PRINCIPLE 01

Employer-led

A new Growth and Skills Levy should continue to focus on delivering high-quality on-the-job training, with employers at the forefront of making decisions about the skills needs of their workforce.

We know employers favour this form of training and it creates a more positive economic return, making it the most effective way to support the Government's overarching goal of increasing economic growth.

This means that all training funded by the Levy should focus only on employees and the skills required for a specific occupation, as apprenticeships do now.

Non-apprenticeship training funded by the Levy should also be delivered to employees or have a direct link to employment. To be approved, courses or qualifications should be able to demonstrate a positive economic return, as apprenticeships and other publicly funded qualifications do now.

Skills England should also move quickly with updating occupational standards to respond to the evolving needs of employers. The current pace

of change, where updates to standards can take up to two years, is too slow and risks leaving critical areas like AI out of date.

Other skills development programmes not linked to a specific role, for example, Skills Bootcamps for those not currently in employment or basic digital skills training, should also continue to be funded from outside the Levy. The government already invests billions in training that supports people into work via programmes funded by the Department for Work and Pensions, as well as basic skills training funded by the Department for Education.

"An employer-led system is essential for businesses of all sizes to upskill and equip colleagues for the agile needs of the labour market. Delivering a genuinely employer-led system would unlock additional investment into both apprenticeship and non-apprenticeship training, helping colleagues of all backgrounds to get on at Tesco"

Emma Taylor,
Chief People Officer, Tesco Group



The Growth and Skills Levy should instead focus on maximising growth that can be generated by employers. This would ensure the maximum possible budget is available to deliver effective training and that the Levy genuinely adds to what is already funded by employers or through the wider education system. Previous government initiatives, such as the Train to Gain programme, have shown that having too wide a definition of what training is eligible or an insufficient focus on quality is likely to lead to funding being wasted.^{29 30}

Potential non-apprenticeship training which meets these criteria and the Government's wider ambitions for the skills system include:

- Existing content from approved apprenticeship standards which can be delivered as modularised courses;
- Pre-apprenticeship training delivered in the work place to employees in order to help them prepare for a specific role;
- Skills Bootcamps used by employers to support their existing workers to train or retrain; and
- Higher Technical Qualifications delivered alongside a job.

The potential gains of this more flexible approach are substantial. For example, research agency Public First has suggested that if employers spent **30%** of the estimated Levy funding available for non-apprenticeship training on HTQs, it could lead to 58,000 more of these courses being taken across the Parliament, with a lifetime economic gain for individuals of £7.8 billion.³¹



PRINCIPLE 02

For everyone

Workers, no matter their age, the stage of their career or where they live in the country, should have access to apprenticeships and other high-quality work-based training funded by the Growth and Skills Levy. This would help underpin a “Right to Reskill”, which encourages employers to increase investment in their workforce and helps employees respond to changes in the workplace brought about by new technology.

90%

of adults polled, support the policy "A Right to Reskill" showing its widespread appeal across all sections of society.³²

To enable this, employers should be able to spend their Levy contributions in full on eligible training. Where the government chooses to target certain groups or deliver certain policy goals for skills spending – such as increasing participation

amongst young people in particular – this should be funded from outside the Levy, instead of it being top sliced or funds being redirected away from employers.

This would preserve the maximum budget available to be deployed on training, in the context of private and public levels of investment in this having already fallen too low. In line with this approach, policy for the Growth and Skills Levy and for apprenticeships should also remain consistent across England. Existing devolution of skills policy to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has already created a wide divergence of approaches across the nations of the UK. This creates barriers to UK-wide employers being able to use apprenticeships and training across their businesses, with an overly bureaucratic system blamed for falls in apprenticeship numbers.³³

Though Mayoral Combined Authorities and local areas have an important role to play in setting skills strategies, Levy functions and apprenticeships policy should remain at a national level, in order to make it simple for national employers to use the system and avoid creating a “postcode lottery” of what training is available to support reskilling across the country.

Explainer: A Right to Reskill

The Right to Reskill is a policy that allows workers to gain new skills throughout their careers and addresses the need for lifelong learning in a rapidly changing world.

The rate of technological transformation means people will have to learn new skills many times throughout their careers. The right to reskill ensures that all employees can access training and development opportunities to keep up with the pace of change.

It would aim to help workers remain employable and productive by providing them with the skills needed to adapt to new job requirements and technologies.

When employers invest in the development of their workforce it supports wider economic growth and improves job satisfaction for employees.

Case study

Publishers Penguin Random House are working with Multiverse to deliver training to develop their top executives with the skills they need to run a leading company



"I wanted to tackle the fact that for many employees, including those at the top of the organisation, they didn't grow into their careers as digital natives. The use of data and digital has developed so much since they started out that it's spurred a desire to learn more about what it means. We wanted to help executives into a place where they know what behaviours and attitudes to sponsor"

Pete Williams,
Director of Data and Online,
Penguin Random House UK



Penguin
Random
House

"The opportunity to learn with the Data Academy has been invaluable to our team, improving our skillset in a practical way and helping us to excel in our roles. Data is so vital to a modern business and the course has shown us how improving our data skills can ensure we make better, faster decisions. The Multiverse Community is a great way to network with other apprentices and access additional training sessions on a variety of subjects. The Multiverse coaches are also excellent, providing extra 1:1 support as needed so that no one is left behind."

Hannah Welsh, UK Online Sales Manager, Penguin Random House

PRINCIPLE 03

Easy to access

To deliver higher volumes of training, the new Growth and Skills Levy must be easier to access than the current system.

The original Apprenticeship Levy was optimised to improve the quality of apprenticeships being delivered and provide stability as wider reforms to apprenticeships were introduced.

However, some of the funding rules governing how employers can access their Levy contributions no longer look appropriate in 2024. This is one reason an estimated £1 billion of funding contributed by employers to the Levy each year is not spent on apprenticeships.³⁴

Without removing these barriers, there is a significant risk that the new Levy will not spark an increase in employer investment in training.

Rather than constraining demand, the new Levy should explicitly aim to maximise the amount employers invest in apprenticeships and other forms of high-quality training.



This should be underpinned by a transparent link between the Levy and the DfE's apprenticeship budget, with employers empowered to spend their Levy contributions in full and the expected increase in Levy receipts over the coming years being made fully available for them to invest.

Non-apprenticeship training funded by the Levy should not replicate the current regulatory requirements for apprenticeships, which the new government has described as overly rigid.

Expanding these to a much wider range of training options would deter engagement from employers and training providers, slow implementation and undermine the intention to create a more flexible system.

Instead, regulation should be appropriate for the type of training on offer. For example, short or modular courses should not be required to lead to an end-point-assessment or to include the study of Maths and English.

Reforms to apprenticeships will also be needed to make them more flexible. Whilst many recent reforms to apprenticeships have been welcome, the rigidity of the current system has seen overall apprenticeship numbers fall since 2017, particularly for young people.

Without change, there is a real risk that this trend continues and apprenticeship starts fall further, as employers disengage from them or move towards other forms of training funded via the Levy.

³⁴IPPR: Over £3 billion in unspent apprenticeship levy lost to Treasury 'black hole' new data reveal

These reforms should preserve the current quality of apprenticeships whilst allowing them to be delivered more flexibly. In practice, this means reforming apprenticeships so they can be:

Delivered at the pace at which individuals learn and which employers need to train – by ending the arbitrary requirement that apprenticeships must last for a minimum of 12 months, taking advantage of technology that can provide more individualised learning;

Kept up to date and focused on the topics businesses most value – by streamlining the process for creating and updating apprenticeship standards and making this more dynamic, including by using labour market data and feedback from training providers;

Delivered through modularised programmes – by allowing apprenticeships to be broken up and delivered in smaller chunks of training over time, enabling employers to use apprenticeships in a way that better matches their specific skills needs;

Flexible enough to reflect individual employer needs – by creating a smaller number of broad apprenticeship standards within each occupational route, with the option for employers to select modules of content within or in addition to this;

Reflect individual circumstances – including removing the requirement to pass and evidence Level 2 Maths and English to complete an apprenticeship, which is an unnecessary barrier for many apprentices and not a requirement of other technical qualifications, such as T Levels.

80%

of people would be more likely to sign up for training which could be completed in stages.³⁵

78%

said being able to choose when and how to undertake training would make them more likely to sign up for training.³⁶

Multiverse surveyed 1405 employers on how they would judge the quality of a training programme

"Quantifiable return on investment",
"measurable impact",
"an employee's performance in their role against the organisation's own KPIs"

were consistently cited as important factors, alongside end-point-assessments.

"All too often we hear that some colleagues perceive a full apprenticeship as too much of a commitment whilst balancing busy lives outside the workplace."

"The scale of our operations mean we also have many colleagues with mixed experiences of formal education."

"Enabling a more modular approach to eligible training would allow a huge proportion of our colleagues to gain new skills in an accessible and practical way. Ultimately, this would help improve living standards by driving gains in productivity, reward and economic growth."

Emma Taylor, Chief People Officer, Tesco Group



Case study

A modular approach to apprenticeships


Multiverse currently offers an apprenticeship in AI for Business Value, based on the Business Analyst Level 4 Standard, in which apprentices learn how to leverage AI responsibly to drive business outcomes.³⁷

Under current rules, this apprenticeship lasts for 13 months. With a more flexible system, it would be possible for employees to complete the apprenticeship at a faster pace, where appropriate, or to access individual modules of it.

For example, an employee whose workplace is changing due to the use of new AI software may just initially only need to study 6 modules in order to gain the skills they need to adapt.

AI for Business Value Module overview

Module 1 Introduction to AI in business	Module 7 Identifying opportunities for AI
Module 2 Data for AI-driven business value	Module 8 Implementing AI projects
Module 3 AI ethics and responsible AI	Module 9 Scaling and growing AI in your organisation
Module 4 Introduction to business analysis	Module 10 Managing change through AI initiatives
Module 5 Evaluating the state of your organisation	Module 11 AI ROI and business impact
Module 6 Understanding business needs	Module 12 EPA preparation

 The Modules the employee may need to initially study to gain the skills they need

³⁷Multiverse: AI for Business Value

PRINCIPLE 04

Excellence-driven

One success of apprenticeship reforms of the past decade has been the focus on improving quality through the introduction of apprenticeship standards. The Growth and Skills Levy should therefore be excellence-driven, delivering only high-quality in-work training, which supports growth for employers, employees and the economy.

This can be achieved by maintaining strict standards for training providers, focusing on job-specific skills, and ensuring consistency through oversight. By doing so, the Levy will support the development of a skilled workforce that meets the demands of the rapidly changing economy, driving productivity growth and improving job prospects for workers across the country.

This approach ensures training contributes to the skills needed for specific job roles and enhances overall productivity, maintaining value for money for both employers and the public. This means prioritising training programmes which closely align with occupational standards and job requirements. By doing so, employers can ensure their employees gain relevant skills that translate into improved job performance and career advancement opportunities.

The quality of training is crucial in this context. Only approved providers who meet rigorous standards should deliver non-apprenticeship training funded by the Levy, just as they are with apprenticeships. They should be required to join a register of training providers and be inspected by Ofsted.

This would ensure the quality of training whilst also maintaining consistency in oversight, allowing the provider market to quickly make available a range of training options and ensuring that public investment is protected and that the training provided truly adds value to the workforce.

Levy funds should not be used to pay for general workplace training, for example, health and safety or to cover other costs associated with employees completing training, for example, off-the-job training time. Non-apprenticeship training options under the Levy should adhere to strict criteria which focus on enabling employees to boost skills which will help them grow in the workplace.



69%

of people said they would be more likely to take a course if it was delivered by a provider which was approved and regulated by the government.³⁸

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