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Education & Skills  
Funding Agency

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# 1. Updates to the apprenticeship service

## Inform

### Transferring apprenticeship levy funds to another employer

From April 2018, we plan to allow levy-paying employers to transfer funds to other employers, through the apprenticeship service. Levy-paying employers will initially be able to transfer up to 10% of the annual value of funds entering their apprenticeship service account.

They will be able to transfer funds to any employer and will have to agree the apprenticeships that are being funded by a transfer with the employer receiving the funds. Employers receiving transferred funds will only be able to use them to pay for training and assessment for apprenticeship standards.

For more information, visit the [apprenticeship funding: how it works page on GOV.UK](#) and look under the heading 'Share funds with another employer'. We will be providing further details about the transfer

process in the near future.

## Latest improvements to the apprenticeship service

The ESFA is continually making improvements to the apprenticeship service to help employers make the most of their apprenticeship levy. Are you using the levy to its full potential for training your workforce?

Recent updates on the service include:

- employers being able to view an apprentice's unique learner number (ULN), which will help when trying to resolve any queries
- a new task list feature on the account home page so that activities an employer needs to complete will be visible including prompts to sign agreements, review and approve apprentice changes and cohorts
- employers being able to see the stop date for any apprentices they have stopped
- an improved process for amending apprentice records
- employers being able to see end-point assessment organisations for an apprenticeship standard when they're looking on 'find apprenticeship training', making it easier to contact them about the service they offer and the costs involved
- colour-coded screens so that employer-providers can now easily see which part of the service they're in – purple for employer view and orange for training provider view

If you have any queries about the apprenticeship service, please call the National Contact Centre helpline on 08000 150 600 or email [helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk](mailto:helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk).

## 2. Small and medium employers say apprentices benefit their business

### Inform

The latest national apprenticeships promotional campaign is now live across radio, digital and social media advertising. SME employer Fairfield Control Systems features in the campaign – celebrating the [benefits apprenticeships bring to their business](#).

Oliver Mangham, Applications Director, Fairfield Control Systems (SME):

“ As a growing engineering business, one of our biggest threats is recruitment. To overcome this we invest in apprentices. We can make this investment with confidence because in our experience, apprentices become loyal members of our team, bringing new ideas and boost morale.

There is support available to recruit apprentices or re-skill existing employees, with government paying 90% of an SME's apprenticeship training and assessment costs, and for employers with less than 50 staff, 100% of the training and assessment costs are paid. Employers recruiting an apprentice aged 16 to 18 or a 19 to 24 year old that has previously been in care can receive a grant of £1,000.

If you're interested in recruiting an apprentice or up-skilling your staff go to [GOV.UK](#).

## 3. Apprentice minimum wage increase from April 2018

## Reminder

The national minimum wage for apprentices will rise in April 2018, from £3.50 to £3.70 an hour. This is a 5.7% increase, above UK inflation. This rate applies to apprentices under 19 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year. Apprentices must be paid at least the national minimum wage rate if they're an apprentice aged 19 or over and have completed their first year.

## 4. National Apprenticeship Week 2018

### Action

A [National Apprenticeship Week 2018 special issue of Business Update](#) was issued mid-January – full of hints, tips and links to help employers get involved in the 'Apprenticeships Work' themed week.

### Class of 2018 – graduation ceremonies NAW March 2018

We are working with our ambassador networks across our 9 regions to organise apprentice graduation ceremonies during National Apprenticeship Week 2018, to celebrate apprentice success and achievement. Apprentices that have completed their apprenticeship in the last year and who are interested in attending can find out more and register online by visiting: <https://registration.livgroup.co.uk/graduation2018/>.

Region	Venue	Date	Time
London	80 The Strand	9th March	Afternoon
London	BT Tower Auditorium	9th March	Afternoon
South East	Amex Stadium Brighton	9th March	Afternoon to Evening
East England	Imperial War Museum, Duxford	9th March	Evening
South West	Grand Pier, Weston Super Mare	9th March	Afternoon to Evening
West Midlands	Birmingham University, Great Hall	5th March	Afternoon
East Midlands	Derby Roundhouse	9th March	Afternoon
Yorkshire & Humber	Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds	9th March	Afternoon

## 5. National Apprenticeship Awards 2017 winners

### Inform

We [announced the winners](#) from the 14th annual National Apprenticeship Awards on 18 January 2018 at a ceremony held in London, with winners from employers including Althams Travel Services; Severn Trent

Water; Beauty Oasis Spa; Lander Automotive and the Yorkshire Building Society picked up awards on the night. See the full list of winners on [GOV.UK](#).

Also announced was the [Centrica Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers 2017 list](#), featuring the most exceptional apprenticeship employers from all of the National Apprenticeship Awards employer categories. The list includes Lloyds Banking Group, EDF Energy and IBM, and shows the breadth of employers offering fantastic apprenticeship opportunities.

## 6. Framework withdrawals announcement

### Inform

Over the course of 2017, we sought feedback on proposals to withdraw a 4th and 5th batch of apprenticeship pathways and frameworks, which confirmed that there are a [number of frameworks](#) for which there are corresponding standards that have been approved for delivery and are being used by employers.

However, we will not withdraw any further frameworks until 2020 in order to maintain choice for employers and greater stability for providers. For further information, refer to the [removal of apprenticeship frameworks](#) page on GOV.UK or contact the [service desk](#).

Towards the end of 2017, the Institute for Apprenticeships outlined a [programme of improvements to its processes](#) they will introduce in 2018. See their document [Faster & Better: a preview of the changes to come](#) for further information.

## 7. GCSE: new grading scale fact sheet

### Inform

GCSEs in England are changing, starting with English and maths in 2017. The new GCSEs will have a new 9 to 1 grading scale to replace A\* to G, with 9 the highest grade.

The new GCSEs will ensure that students leave school better prepared for work or further study. They cover more challenging content and are designed to match standards in the strongest performing education systems elsewhere in the world. Changing from letters to numbers means you can see easily whether an applicant has taken an old (unreformed) or a new (reformed) GCSE.

You can find information about the new GCSE grades for employers, parents, and further and higher education providers on [GOV.UK](#).

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