



All-Party Parliamentary
Group
For Youth Employment



The Impact Of Vocational Qualifications On Young People's Employability and Labour Market Outcomes

Date: 23rd November 2021

This inquiry will run between October 2021 - January 2022.

Deadline for submissions – 5:00pm on 3rd December 2021.

Please note submissions may be rejected if they do not meet the guidance set out below.

Chair: James Daly MP

Contact: Josh Adcock (josh@youthemployment.org.uk)

Agenda

09:30	Welcome & Housekeeping
09:35	Introduction from Chair, James Daly MP - Latest youth labour market statistics
09:40	Noni Csogor, Research and Policy Manager at the Sixth Form Colleges Association & #ProtectStudentChoice campaign
09:45	Martin McLean, Senior Policy Advisor at National Deaf Children's Society
09:55	Youth Friendly Employer - Anastasia Womack, Talent Development & Early Careers Lead at Equans
10:00	Youth Employment UK Youth Ambassador - Ella
10:05	Panel session: opening remarks and reflections - Stephen Evans, Chief Executive of the Learning and Work Institute - Catherine Sezen, Senior Policy Manager at the Association of Colleges - Tom Richmond, Founder and Director of EDSK - Tom Bewick, Chief Executive, Federation of Awarding Bodies

Minutes

	Introduction	
Opening remarks	This is our second session looking at the impact of Vocational Qualifications on Young People’s Employability and labour market outcomes.	James Daly MP
16-24 y/o Labour Market Statistics from the ONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The latest unemployment rate for 16–24-year-olds is 11.7% compared to the all age unemployment rate of 4.3%. There are currently 630,000 young people NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). 	James Daly MP
Update on what has happened since the last meeting.	<p>Noni Csogor, Research and Policy Manager at Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA). SFCA represents Sixth Form specialists in England and is leading the #ProtectStudentChoice Campaign to keep BTEC qualifications. The Secretary of state made two updates last week when he opened the Post -16 Education Bill debate in the House of Commons. These are important for vocational education.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> There will be a one-year delay to planned defunding of BTECS and other applied general qualifications which overlap with T Levels and A Levels. The timeline has moved forward by a year. The plan was to get rid of technical qualifications which overlap from 2023, now 2024. And for academic qualifications it has moved from 2024 to 2025. For T Levels, students will still have to study English and Maths GCSE if they do not have them at 16 but will not fail the T Level if they fail to secure a passing grade in those subjects. Most providers do require T level students to already have GCSE English and maths, but that is not a requirement of the course. If a student enters the T Level without English and/or Maths they will have to study it but know they will fail their whole course if they do not manage to secure a C in English and MATHS. <p>The delay is the major change here, it is welcome but not enough to enable T Levels to bed in which was the stated aim of the delay.</p>	Noni Csogor

	<p>The real change is not the delay but the change in the rhetoric around BTEC qualifications. Six months ago, I heard a lot about how BTEC qualifications are low quality and not preparing students well for employment and FE. But now we are seeing quite a big shift in emphasis where the Secretary of State is saying a lot of BTECS are high quality and that many will survive the review. That is great to hear. The big question now is about how the review will work in practice. There was a document published by the department a while ago setting out how the process will work but it was quite vague and there are still a lot of questions to answer including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the definition of what is an academic qualification and what is a vocational qualification? BTECS and other vocational qualifications often fall in the gap between academic/theoretical learning and application vocationally in a workplace setting. That is an important distinction because technical qualifications will be defunded first. We still have not heard what definition the government will be using. 2. What is the process for defunding these qualifications? We know that the exam boards which offer each qualification will have to make the case for keeping them. That will be the case for every qualification in the scope of the review, not just qualifications where there is a clear overlap between T-Level qualifications and A-Levels. DFE and arm's length bodies will have to decide whether to continue funding them. Couple of issues with that. BTECS have just gone through that process in the last 5 years with comprehensive reform of BTECS. This work will duplicate work that has already been done to a high standard by DFE. Do the relevant bodies have the capacity to do that in a short space of time when dealing with Covid-19 recovery and other issues they were not dealing with last time. 3. Who decides? Sounds from what we know so far that the ESFA funding body will decide which qualifications to keep, and which ones are necessary. But it is not clear whether there will be input from practitioners such as teachers and lecturers or students. It is an open question given the variety of qualifications about which we are talking. DfE's 	
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	<p>the ESFA have the expertise to decide between Psychology BTEC and A-Level, clearly there is some overlap, but which is necessary, is it necessary to keep both or is only one necessary to meet requirements of employers and students. Sounds like a question which would be best answered by teachers who are familiar with the content of both of those qualifications. Lots of cases like that. A lot of questions are still to be answered #ProtectStudentChoice is calling for a transparent and impartial process which can meet the following test including robust evidence that BTECS do not serve the needs of students and employers.</p> <p>Would be grateful for Youth Employment APPG's support on this, won major victory with the one-year delay to defunding but distracts from the prominent issues which is which qualifications do students get to continue to study.</p>	
	<p>Was speaking with a college in Bury yesterday and the question of how BTECS are differentiated based on quality. Could you please elaborate on what the test would look like for defunding BTECS?</p>	<p>James Daly MP</p>
	<p>When you ask a representative group of major employers in each sector, do they say they want to keep it or do they say the A-Levels and relevant T-levels are enough. Right now, we do not know what they would say to that. That really is not built into the process and is part of the problem. Are not opposed to the possibility that in some cases BTECS are perfectly good but employers say they are not needed in the current landscape.</p> <p>There are employers who have been involved in the development of BTECS and A-Levels, but we do not currently have evidence of what employers think about the relative merit of these qualifications in the current landscape which is only just becoming reality.</p> <p>On the student point it would not just be data on student satisfaction as part of the process but also updated evidence on student outcomes in FE and work which we do not have. There is no published research on students that have done the new BTECS which looks at things such as graduation rates and earnings. This is because the new BTECS are so new.</p>	<p>Noni Csogor</p>

	Not an easy question to get an answer. We need to include all those things but localising it to the area where the actual provider is and whether or not these qualifications are having an impact in the local area.	James Daley MP
	It is almost impossible to ask an employer now whether a BTEC or a T-Level is the one they want most because nobody has graduated from a T-Level yet. Would need a longer period to rigorously evaluate these qualifications so employers and others can have a sense of which qualifications meet their needs. Getting a few people together would not be a sufficient basis to evaluate these qualifications.	Ed Sallis
	Difficult to be specific about what is coming next. We are still trying to work out what the changes are going to mean.	Noni Csogor
	Every person would want the widest range of qualifications which meet the widest range of young people and their bespoke needs but need to match them to outcomes. Currently a lack of evidence to match qualifications to outcomes. The APPG has a role to influence that discussion.	James Daly MP
	Nuanced discussion on evidence needed which will not come from the press but from parliamentary committees such as this one. Everyone agrees with the need to be evidence based. The difficulty in this area is given how little time there has been since BTEC and T-Level reform there is not robust evidence of either. We do not have outcomes data for reformed BTECS but have reasons to believe they are stronger. Have no evidence on outcomes of T-Level students because they have not graduated yet.	Noni Csogor
	Are we looking at mapping the range of T-Levels that are likely to emerge and ensuring that there are no gaps and where there are gaps, they are filled by existing qualifications like BTECS? Seems crazy to try to remove qualifications before we know whether the new qualifications are producing the output we want and are covering the whole waterfront.	Alastair Aberdare
	The plan is to have over 20 T-Levels. There is one in HR which has been dropped due to limited numbers of students at 16 who know they would like to go into HR. Think the total number of	Noni Csogor

	<p>qualifications is twenty-two but has changed so it may be different. We would expect DfE and EFSA to be mapping qualifications as part of their review of funding. It is not clear what criteria will be used to decide whether qualifications overlap. So far, the approach has been to assume qualifications with the same name overlap. However, the government would need to consider what is in the curriculum content and how much they overlap, this has not been looked at yet as part of the process but would be needed to ensure confidence in decisions made.</p>	
	<p>Senior Policy Adviser at the National Deaf Children's Society. Co-chair of the Disability sub-group with the Youth Employment group. Sits on the DfE SEND advisory group for the development of T-Levels and has been highlighting the barriers disabled young people face engaging with T-Levels.</p> <p>Since the publication of the Sainsbury report in 2016 he has taken a close interest in vocational education reform. Most deaf young people take vocational routes at the age of 16. Deaf young people are a diverse group. With the right support in place from early years, deaf young people can achieve the same GCSE grades as their peers with normal hearing. Deaf young people do also take A-levels which is the route he took himself.</p> <p>Delayed language development in deaf children can affect executive function and memory. This can make the attainment of academic qualifications such as Maths and English GCSEs more of a challenge.</p> <p>We cannot make sweeping generalisations about what educational programmes would be most appropriate for disabled or SEND young people as they are a diverse group. For deaf young people we would like to see more achievement of level 3 qualifications than are currently achieved. Current 2020 government data indicates that only 45% of deaf 19-year-olds had achieved 2 A-Level passes or equivalent Level 3 Technical qualifications. If we look across all SEND that is just 27% pass rate compared to 65% rates with people that are not identified as having SEND.</p>	<p>Martin McLean</p>

	<p>For deaf young people it is about giving people time and the right support for education to enable progression. Research demonstrates links between positive employment outcomes and good quality vocational training for deaf and disabled young people. Therefore, welcome any steps to improve the quality of Technical Vocational training.</p> <p>On T-Levels, the increase in teaching hours is welcomed strongly, there should be a parity of esteem across academic and vocational programmes. Otherwise disabled young people can be disproportionately disadvantaged. The substantial work experience placement element of T-Levels is also welcome. Young disabled people often struggle to secure work experience placements compared to their nondisabled peers. These placements can help disabled young people gain confidence and an understanding of what going to work involves, provided the work experience is properly accessible.</p> <p>Despite some of these positives there are concerns that the roll out of T-Levels may make it harder for disabled young people to complete level 3 qualifications. There is an emphasis on increasing academic rigour when it comes to technical knowledge. The government has admitted that planned reforms could make it harder for young people with needs and disabilities to complete level 3 qualifications The Equality Impact Assessment which highlighted this did not highlight any mitigations which would be put in place considering this which is disappointing.</p> <p>NCDS also welcomes the removal of Maths and English exit requirements at Level 2 qualifications as part of the T-Level. That would have been a barrier to progress to many young people and would have held T-Level students to a higher requirement than A-Level students who do not have the same completion requirements for their programme of study.</p> <p>NCDS are not here to champion BTECS or general applied qualifications at Level 3, we have not seen any specific data that indicates more positive outcomes for disabled young people for students undertaking BTECS rather than other qualifications. We</p>	
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	<p>would like to see much better longitudinal data on disabled and deaf young people's routes to employment.</p> <p>Nonetheless the advantage of BTECS is that they are often broad across an area of study, whereas the T-Levels require specialisation further in the programme. 16 or 17 is a pretty young age to decide on their vocation, how many young people make a clear decision on their career aspirations at the age of 17. For disabled young people this is even more important given that there is a complete lack of specialised careers advice to support young disabled people making career decisions which consider their specific needs. Often the advice provided is plain wrong.</p> <p>Previous research in FE found that disabled young people were ambitious with their career goals but were on the wrong course to achieve those goals. Many had been steered on particular courses by educational professionals. Therefore, we lack confidence that the current system for advice regarding careers would enable disabled young people to make properly informed choices about their futures.</p> <p>With these barriers faced by young disabled people we welcome the delay to remove funding from many BTECS until we have better data on T-Levels and young people's outcomes. This emphasis on Level 3 qualifications which most young people with SEND do not do, however needs a greater emphasis on the role of level 2 qualifications to provide routes to employment for many young disabled people.</p> <p>We would like to see an improvement in the equality of learning experience across level 2 programmes including incorporating substantial work experience placements and sufficient enrichment and employability activities, such as those we expect to see with planned T-Level transition programmes. The government is currently reviewing level 2 qualifications and below which is welcomed, but we may need more than a clear out of redundant qualifications. When we look at the things that would work to enable disabled young people to successfully transition into employment we are looking at:</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● self-determination training ● employee preparation programmes ● involvement of families ● supported work experience <p>When we talk to FE college managers about access deaf students have to non-qualification activities which would address their personal development needs, these are found to be limited due to lack of funding. Only 49% of disabled young people will have level 2 as their highest level of qualifications. Employment rates for disabled young people below level 2 are much worse. These poor employment rates will not be addressed until the government invests in complete, holistic study programmes.</p> <p>We call upon DFE to ensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● that we do not see a fall in the number of disabled young people completing level 3 qualifications because of T-Level implementation ● that level 2 programmes are designed to properly prepare young people for employment with sufficient investment to ensure the programmes are of quality ● any reform of SEND provision following completion of the SEND review by DFE improves the careers advice young disabled people receive to support preparation and access to better employment 	
	<p>The last three things are the main questions that we need to be taking forward to try and inform the parliamentary debate and need urgent action.</p>	<p>James Daly MP</p>
	<p>There needs to be more attention on this, the bill going through parliament DfE’s provide the opportunity to raise questions around the quality of programmes that disabled young people have access to gain employment. There is concern around level 2 qualifications being overlooked, which would support the drafting of a question at PMQs.</p>	<p>James McLean</p>
	<p>Welcomes questions to be included in the chamber either orally or written.</p>	<p>Jane Hunt MP</p>

	<p>Youth Employment UK Ambassador.</p> <p>She did a level 3 childcare development course because she did not want to do GCSE's but knew she loved children and wanted to do a vocational course. She knew she would perform better through not being assessed through examinations which are not the only way to measure intelligence. Level 3 courses are beneficial through experiencing what childcare was like across different age groups and settings. She felt she was not yet ready to go into paid work or an apprenticeship. Having one day a week experiencing working really helped. A lot of people come out of university or A-Levels being unsure about what they want to do and work experience placements help with this. She also enjoyed the opportunity to apply theories she learned from her course to real-life work settings. It is great that T Levels will keep valuable placements. She benefitted from undertaking majority coursework assessments which she could complete from home outside of exam conditions which she benefited from. Had to retake Maths which was not good as it caused extra stress. She felt like she did not have enough time to study maths alongside her childcare qualification and she did not receive a full diploma due to not achieving more than a D in GCSE maths. You should not have to retake GCSEs and receive a lesser qualification for not passing Maths or English. Some courses do not allow students who do not have a pass grade in Maths and English to enrol in certain courses. During her course she could receive support with her course.</p> <p>Whilst Ella did receive career advice, she felt that it was not enough, and she often had to seek it out as it was not readily available and often treated as an add on. She received help with her CV but not advice on how her qualification would affect her employability and how her qualification would mean she would not be included in childcare ratios as a member of staff. She was never told about how she would need to search for jobs that would provide reasonable adjustments to support her Asperger's.</p> <p>She developed confidence during her course, independence, and knowledge of the childcare sector. She feels vocational courses are</p>	<p>Ella Sanderson</p>
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	beneficial but is worried that people will be left behind due to the planned changes to Maths and English GCSE requirements.	
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	<p>Chief Executive of the Learning and Work institute.</p> <p>This is their 100th year as an organisation, and they have overseen many reforms. They welcome some of the reforms with additional teaching hours which narrows the gap between the UK and other countries but has not closed the gap. Worried that we have lost track of the problem we are trying to resolve and what T-Levels are there for and how T-Levels ought to fit as part of a coherent system.</p> <p>Originally, the point of the extended work placement as part of T-Levels was believed to be important to employers and sacrosanct, which could not be conducted virtually and had to be conducted with an employer. In the past couple of weeks, we have changed our minds on that temporarily for the pandemic but suspect it could become permanent thereafter.</p> <p>Secondly, changes to English and Maths pass requirements to enable T-Level completion has caused concern. English and Maths is a real problem in this country which affects 9 million adults with low literacy and numeracy. In an OECD study we are the only country along with the U.S where young people have just as poor literacy and numeracy as older people. Want to level up A-Levels to ensure parity with GCSE Maths and English requirements, rather than removing the requirements from T-Levels. We should be aiming for more young people to have functional GCSE Maths and English by the age of 18. We have made some progress in the past few years on that. Need some policy in place, cannot just have young people continuously retaking GCSEs over again. Concerned that changing requirements may increase take up but lose sight of the reason the requirements were introduced in the first place.</p> <p>Coherence of the offer</p> <p>Any government minister could fill speaking time with the list of educational initiatives introduced to vocational education and employment and skills more generally. The effort is welcomed, there are some good outcomes coming out, but it is often more a list of initiatives than a coherent offer. This is what we hear when</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> www.appgyouthemployment.org Chair – James Daly MP Secretariat – Youth Employment UK CIC josh@youthemployment.org.uk </p>	<p>Stephen Evans</p>
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	<p>we talk to employers, young people, and educational providers alike. Would have argued in favour of an opportunity guarantee so that every young person is offered a work experience place or apprenticeship. T-Levels and vocational qualifications need to fit into that. We need to get young people into the right option for them rather than the right option in the system they turn up in, careers advice has a role to play in that. What you get offered should not be dependent on what bit of the system you turn up in. There are too many people who are not turning up in any bit of the system, how are we going to find them and are T-levels the right solution for addressing this issue.</p> <p>A lot of people have been trying to address these issues for at least 50 years, but too often we do not learn the lessons of history. New groups of officials and ministers assume that previous ministers did not design the policy well enough, and they could design a better policy. Expect to see another set of reforms along in five years' time which is both a good and bad thing. Learning the lessons of history is important and we often do not do that well enough. Successive governments and efforts have been made to reform vocational education.</p> <p>Narrowness of education Concerned about the narrowness of the curriculum, should not be just studying T-Levels, what about the broader range in curriculum. Worried that young people are being separated out into strands rather than trying to broaden the curriculum and learning opportunities.</p> <p>Success measures Previously when working in government during vocational reform, one of the key things they and others tried to do was to establish whether old qualifications needed to be scrapped in order to make new qualifications a success. Otherwise, people will do the qualifications they have heard of rather than the new qualifications and people and employers understand the old qualifications. So, I can understand where DfE is coming from but I am concerned about the decision making. We know how to measure the success of these things including:</p>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do we get 60% or more of people achieving a level 3 qualification by 19? <p>This is what is happening now, and the rate has stalled and is currently lower than other countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do the qualifications offer lead to better job and pay prospects? <p>We know how to measure this and have been doing it for decades. The problem is we need people to finish the qualification and have at least 5 years in the labour market before we know whether the qualifications have achieved these outcomes. The issue is we want to make decisions now about what qualifications we need to get rid of and what we want to keep. Concerned that this leads to focussing on the challenges more than the opportunities. Worried about who the T-Levels are for and how it will raise the proportion of people achieving level 3 qualifications. There is a trade-off between simplicity and knowing whether something has worked or not and the overall coherence of the system. Other issues which arise are symptomatic of these three core issues.</p>	
	<p>Senior Policy Manager at the Association of Colleges.</p> <p>It is good to see the amount of discussion and debate focussed on technical and vocational qualifications, not something which is always seen but is really important. The government's intention is the reform of vocational and technical qualifications to ensure young people are better prepared to meet the needs of the labour market. Already heard that students will benefit from increased teaching hours more in line with the hours in other countries and the opportunity to experience the workplace and activities associated with the sector of their choice. Feedback from current T-Level students suggest students enjoy the acquisition of practical skills alongside learning new knowledge. Staff have enjoyed the new qualifications and the opportunity to design programmes to meet the needs of students and their local labour market.</p> <p>Colleges have welcomed the delay in funding vocational qualifications subject to more time for impact evaluation. The removal of English and Maths exit requirements still raise</p>	<p>Catherine Sezen</p>

	<p>questions due to the centrality of Maths and English to everything. There are also questions around whether current Maths and English qualifications provide young people with the important knowledge and skills needed for life and employment. Students who do not achieve English and Maths but enrol on a T-Level programme will still need to study English and Maths alongside the course which enlarges the programme and can potentially cause greater stress.</p> <p>Qualification reform process We know there will be other qualifications alongside T-Levels, apprenticeships, and A-Levels post-16. There will be large qualifications alongside A-Levels which are expected to be in areas such as Performing Arts and Sports which currently do not have a T-Level alternative. There will also be small qualifications which can be studied alongside A-Levels to make up a programme to address individual student needs alongside additional qualifications in the technical space outside of T-Levels and apprenticeships in subjects where there are currently no T-Levels. We are currently undertaking qualification mapping and gap analysis in line with these expected changes.</p> <p>The amount of change is huge for practitioners in the sector. Concerned about the process and criteria for this change which would need further clarification. Would also need to ensure no unintended consequences.</p> <p>Example: students in hair and beauty and motor vehicles courses which cover level 1 and level 2. Would students' progress straight to T-Level, if so what about those important hand skills needed for progression.</p> <p>We also need to consider why so few 18–24-year-olds start an apprenticeship, currently only around 3% of these young people are enrolling on an apprenticeship. Need to explore reasons behind this pattern.</p> <p>Also need to be responsive to meet changing employer needs including qualifications introduced to support the sustainability</p>	
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	<p>agenda including people trained in heat pump and solar panel installation. Need to remember that 16–18-year-old students are undertaking the upper secondary phase of their education which is not just about qualifications but preparation for life, engagement with sports, art and engaging with community through volunteering and understanding and embracing difference. What is being done to ensure these are also central to the agenda.</p> <p>Students on other Level 3 programmes may not benefit from the additional hours allocated to T-Levels which could produce a mixed market where T-Level students will access greater hours of teaching time than other Level 3 programmes. T-Level transition study programme of 500-600 hours in comparison to the T-level over 1800 hours over 2 years, so 900 hours a year. The T-Level transition programme will need to receive more generous funding to enable student progression on the programme.</p> <p>T Levels</p> <p>There are funding challenges with T-LEVELS as they are much larger programmes of study than current programmes. Additional hours are funded at the same base rate. Would colleges be able to run all of the specialisms outlined in T-Levels to meet labour market demands. In technical areas with skills gaps it is difficult to recruit additional staff, especially as they can earn more on site due to the skills gap. This also needs to be addressed.</p> <p>Employer engagement is another challenge. For the Technical education to be successful there needs to be an overarching strategy for how employers of all sizes can be engaged with the system at a regional level by sector. In the Spending Review we heard that by 2025 there will be 100,000 students on T-Levels. The average college works with 700 employers, over half of which will be needed to offer placements in the right place at the right time alongside providing support for other work experience initiatives. Need a strategic relationship with employers to consider workforce needs and pipeline, not merely a transactional relationship.</p>	
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	<p>Careers education is central to all career’s stakeholders including adults, parents, careers, teachers, and employers. For younger students’ advice and guidance needs to start early, be comprehensive, impartial, and hands-on to get a sense of what opportunities there are and what the student enjoys outside of the academic curriculum. Still work to be done.</p> <p>Could really level up Level 2 and below qualifications currently awaiting the outcome of the consultation. This is where the most impact on improving outcomes can be made. Most students who start Level 2 or below have encountered challenges including SEN with around 25% of 17–18-year-olds and 17% of 19+ learners in colleges having a SEND need, disrupted education, EAL background studying English as an additional language.</p> <p>It seems odd that the current plans for the transition programme is much smaller than the T-Level programme. need to ensure that the system works for the employers and young people. The students and those who facilitate their success should also be in the passenger seat as it is them, not employers which will determine the success of the current landscape.</p>	
	<p>Director of the EDSK</p> <p>Important themes have arisen in our work on the proposed reforms. Four principles guided the reports they produced including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rigour: all the programmes across the academic space should be rigorous and well designed - Coherent: the qualifications and pathways which they sit within should be easy to navigate and understanding for students, parents, employers, and other stakeholders - Value: should be no preference within the system, should be for pupils and parents to navigate in a way which is equally respected - Aspiration: should create an aspirational mindset and understanding of where and how young people can go next to advance their education 	<p>Tom Richmond</p>

	<p>How do T-Levels stack up against the criteria?</p> <p>Rigour</p> <p>For a qualification that is designed by employers and incorporates a work experience placement it can be considered rigorous. However, the vocational system which it sits alongside has already been through 7/8 years of reforms. If these qualifications are not considered good enough questions should be raised about the impact of these reforms. It is currently unclear what problem is trying to be solved by the introduction of T-levels.</p> <p>Coherence</p> <p>Huge problem in the current system. We think the government massively overstated the number of qualifications and complexity of the system, giving huge 4 or 5 figure numbers of qualifications. Looking at the briefing note provided there are only a few hundred qualifications that are funded and included in performance tables of schools and colleges. Looking at current listed applied qualification options, it is complicated for students across the country given the different labels for qualifications including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awards - Certificates - Applied Certificates - Technical Certificates - National Certificates - Extended Certificates - Diplomas - Introductory Diplomas - National Diplomas - Foundation Diplomas - Extended Diplomas <p>We think there is quite a compelling case there that there is an issue here which needs to be resolved, even if individual qualifications have been approved. Sympathise with young people about the challenges in figuring out which options are right for them given the lack of obvious signals to young people about what might be better or different with each qualification. There have been reviews going back to 1969 making the same point which</p>	
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	<p>keeps cropping up. There is a big problem which T-Levels may help solve if done well.</p> <p>Value</p> <p>An issue with how a qualification is valued; we only need to look at the English Baccalaureate which measures enrolment on academic qualifications which sends out powerful signals about what qualifications are valued. Government should not be sending signals about what is good or bad and should be focussed on establishing rigorous educational programmes.</p> <p>Aspirations</p> <p>Our biggest concern now is that T-Levels are not linked to any other part of our 11-18 education system, there is no link between T-Levels and existing Level 2 qualifications, Higher Level Academic and Technical qualifications, and apprenticeships. T-Levels have effectively been set up as competitors to apprenticeships when they should be two sides of the same coin, like other countries. The government has driven a wedge between the two rather than bringing them closer together. Universities have been indifferent to T-Levels because they have not been involved in the process; some universities have already outright rejected T-Levels. When T-Levels were first announced in the 2016 Sainsbury review they were explicitly technical qualifications designed to lead to employment. A few weeks ago, DfE suggested T-Levels could lead to university so BTECS could be downgraded and defunded. Trying to make qualifications do too many things is the worst outcome for everyone. A-Levels are designed to do one thing and do it well, they are not designed to get you into a skilled technical job. The government now deciding T-Levels can enable people to progress to university, skilled employment and apprenticeships at the same time is unwise. We would strongly urge the government to reconsider and should focus instead on T-Levels doing one thing and doing it well.</p> <p>Lack of clarity about whether T-Levels will open or close doors for young people which is a fundamental concern from our perspective. Even if T-Levels offer benefits and are well designed,</p>	
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	<p>we would question whether the scale of disruption to the qualifications system would be worth it from a young person's perspective.</p>	
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	<p>Chief Executive of the Federation of Awarding Bodies. Former Special Adviser on Skills, Post-16 Skills and Adult Skills.</p> <p>We have tried to do the same thing repeatedly and expect different results. We have been here before. History goes right back to the foundation from education 1870, Samuel Commission, Royal Commission on Technical Education in the 1890's will see a similar analysis of the challenges facing technical education.</p> <p>Philosophically, we must accept since the Sainsbury panel in 2015 their analysis of the challenges in technical education is that the government is not involved enough. First time since 1870 that the government has taken a decision to own qualifications intellectually and, T-Levels are government owned whereas A-Levels are owned by exam boards. This is important as in a mixed market economy of qualifications, government is the purchaser and providers are the consumers. The issue with T-Levels is that the government is acting as the owner of the qualification with a stake in ensuring these qualifications are successful but is also trying to act on half of the consumers of the system. The Skills Bill has complicated things further by giving the institute for apprenticeships and technical education both the responsibility of reporting to the Secretary of State For the success of T-Level procurement, roll-out and the convening of employer panels that work with awarding organisations to valet T-Levels. Has also given the same organisation the task of holding an accreditation register which decides which of our members technical qualifications will exist for funded purpose in the existing landscape based on yet unpublished criteria. This represents a fundamental conflict of interest. In any other walk of life this would be a straightforward case of material conflict of interest due to responsibility to develop one set of services with public funding and decide whether to cut off funding for other publicly funded qualifications. This is a key challenge to be addressed in our Technical Education. Criteria of success for qualifications should be choice, which is key to the protect student choice campaign. Government needs to decide whether choice is put at the centre of the post-compulsory education and skills system or whether the government will take ownership of this phase of education and</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> www.appgyouthemployment.org Chair – James Daly MP Secretariat – Youth Employment UK CIC josh@youthemployment.org.uk </p>	<p>Tom Bewick</p>
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	<p>require itself to ensure the success of these qualifications. Nadhim Zahawi's narrative has shifted since he came to office. In a recent select committee he referred to important criteria of these qualifications in the landscape as evidence and outcomes. However, when addressing the association of Sixth Forms and Colleges last week it was back to the narrative seen previously by Lord Sainsbury in 2016 and July last year of removing qualifications regardless of whether they are successful if they duplicate T-Levels. If the government owns the technical education system, effectively nationalising it, it gives itself responsibility for funding and to ensure one set of qualifications is a success, it will find itself in a bind where it will need to take successful qualifications out of the market to make its own qualifications successfully.</p> <p>The fundamental problem is, compared to other OECD countries we do not have enough students undertaking technical education, we do not have enough 16–24-year-olds who are progressing into skilled employment compared to other countries. In Switzerland $\frac{2}{3}$ of 16-24 years olds go straight into a workplace apprenticeship. Alongside A-Levels designing two forms of apprenticeship, firstly a programme format with 20% placement and 80% study and the apprenticeship model with 20% study and 80% on the job learning. Unclear about what the policy objective is for T-Level reforms. T-Levels could lead to greater numbers of enrolment in full time HE from 50-70%, through pursuing T-Levels as an alternative to A-Levels. The government needs to come to a view of what it is trying to achieve in the upper secondary tack of education.</p>	
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	<p>Key measure of success of T-Level reforms will be on the impact on labour market outcomes on a range of young people from diverse backgrounds. Want to bring AI and digital jobs closer to Bury and to do that need to ensure people have the right skillset to encourage employers to invest.</p>	<p>James Daly MP</p>
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	<p>If it is not clear to every stakeholder what a T-Level is supposed to do it is not going to be easy to achieve the desired labour market outcomes. Employers get 2-3 weeks of work experience from GCSE students and can understand what they are trying to do, likewise with apprenticeships. The employer understands what they are getting and what is needed of them with existing work experience systems. T-Levels can fall through the cracks with short term work placements with students who are not employees but are expected to undertake meaningful work to contribute to their development. It will be difficult to convince employers to invest time, effort, money, and resources into these young people. T-Levels may fall between the two stools of full-time education and apprenticeship and may struggle to convince employers. If employers are not convinced it would be hard to see T-Levels operate at scale, not necessarily bad programmes but need to be clear what they are trying to do and what employers are bringing into. Currently the scale of BTECS compared to the scale of T-Levels is enormous, not realistic to replace a substantial proportion of BTECS with T-levels.</p>	<p>Tom Richmond</p>
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There are different areas in the country where access to placements in particular sectors may be challenging to find. We need to link T-Levels to industrial levelling up strategies and growth sectors. Chances of students getting jobs and better pay at the end are key metrics which take 5-10 years to realise therefore stability and coherence of qualifications are important.

Stephen
Evans

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Would recommend talking to the students in action undertaking the qualifications. Really inspirational to see young people from really deprived backgrounds aspiring to enter HE. However, currently operating with small numbers which enable local negotiation employers on a 1-1 basis. Concerned with how that model will scale, will need to have those conversations over time to engage with employers. From what we have seen from the pilots, young people have contributed to their employers who have sought to establish a longer-term relationship with students and consider hiring them after completing their qualifications. Concern that lack of placements may limit horizons for young people in certain areas of the country.

Catherine Sezen

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Q&A	<p>There is lack of clarity about what support disabled young people will receive during their work placements. They will not qualify for access to work and so there are issues of transport and support available and this would disadvantage disabled young people on their placement.</p>	Rabia Lemahieu
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Research we have done indicates employers want to help but are not sure how they can best support young people with or without disabilities and what good looks like. We need a more joined up list of asks and offer support to employers to support young people when they do not have access to Access to Work. Young people's talents and ambitions should not be limited by their background and individual circumstance.

Stephen
Evans

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It is important for individual young people to work with their providers and have those conversations at provider level to meet the individual needs of young people.

Catherine Sezen

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	<p>Harry is a young person with a learning disability. A lot of young people with SEND cannot get these T-Levels, may not be able to get Level 2 or even Level 1 qualifications due to their learning disabilities but still have the talent and skills to do the job. Even though he DfE does not have entry level degrees he has a BTEC in Economics and has gained employment through a supportive internship which demonstrates he has the skills without T-Levels and entry level degrees. Government needs to look at how supportive internships and skills-based activities can be developed for young disabled people who are not in employment, progress has currently stalled which as a young disabled adult is disappointing to see.</p>	Harry Georgiou
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	<p>Have spoken to engineering employers unlikely to be able to offer the placements given the overlap between T-Level placements and apprenticeships. Providing work experience placements for under 18s entails a lot of risk for employers. It is therefore unlikely for employers to be incentivised to provide these T-Level placements. With apprenticeships you can see the end goal that the young person can be employed in the business afterwards, unlikely to be the case with T-Levels. T-Levels require 350 hours of work experience placement however unsure on a national basis how that would scale especially with the potential removal of BTECS, which may significantly limit the number of people who are able to enter the Engineering profession.</p>	Guy Paul
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Would need to debar young people from taking level 3 apprenticeships and mandate employers in legislation to provide those 45 days with financial support to do that. That would be the only way to deliver that requirement for the number of students in the system.

Tom
Bewick

Q&A	<p>Need to continue having those conversations with employers if this is to be an employer led initiative. It is about developing these relationships and pipelines; we can find ways of doing it but do not underestimate the challenge.</p>	Catherine Sezen
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	<p>Thank you to all the guest speakers who have contributed and used their expertise in this area, which we will be relying on to influence policy.</p>	<p>James Daly MP</p>
	<p>A number of external organisations have submitted already. Written submissions should be submitted to josh@youthemployment.org.uk before the deadline at 5pm on the 3rd December.</p> <p>The next meeting will be in January 2022. We are waiting to confirm the date where the key findings and recommendations of the report will be presented.</p> <p>This inquiry so far has been highly successful and APPG members have been invited to meet with the minister ... and colleagues to follow up on internal conversations. The evidence provided today will help inform the conversation with the minister in the next week or two. Today's session will be recorded and shared, along with the minutes on https://appgyouthemployment.org</p> <p>Thank you very much!</p>	<p>LJ Rawlings</p>

Upcoming Meeting Dates 2022

January 2022 TBC - Key findings and recommendations of the APPG report will be presented awaiting confirmation of a date.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Attendee List

<p>Alesha Patel Alex Morris Andrea Barry Angel Fletcher Anna Smee Atim Arden Catherine Sezen Claire Cookson Conor McKenzie Danielle Leggatt Deuvaunn Darroux</p>	<p>Harry Georgiou Ian Tinto James Creasey James Crewe James Daly MP Jane Hunt MP Joshua Farnham Judith Kerem Julie Hyde Karen Tatham Karl Anderson</p>	<p>Martin McLean Matt Bezzant Matt Lent Maymunah Hussain Michelle Mellor Noni Csogor Paul Turner Pierre-Jean Clause Rachel Toogood Rebecca Conway Roz Perry</p>
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Ed Sallis
Elizabeth Araklitis
Ella Sanderson
Emma Tilley
Euan Wilcox
Fiona Bardell
Guy Paul

Kat Emma
Khaled A
Khuram Mahmood
LJ Rawlings
Lord Aberdare
Louisa Kiddell
Lydia Allen

Salena Worrall
Sally George
Sharon Blyfield
Stephen Evans
Tom Bewick
Tom Richmond

Appendix 2 - Zoom Chat Log

Rachel Hopkins: Thanks everyone, sorry I must leave now for another meeting, Rachel

Noni Csogor: Double-checked: 23 T levels are the current number planned.

Ella Frances Sanderson: My Twitter: @EllaSandersom18 Website:
ellasanfy16.wixsite.com/aspie

Ella Frances Sanderson: I agree. To get people to pass Maths / English more time spent on it might help and also if there is a way that a lesser T level can be valued too then that is great

Harry Georgiou: To everyone: I am a young disabled adult, and I am wondering how you are going to help people with learning disabilities gain valuable skills to enter the world of work? as the figure of people with learning disabilities in employment has decreased from 6% a few years ago, to 5.1% currently.

Ella Frances Sanderson: I agree Harry. We do not want people to get a lesser qualification then not be able to get the job they deserve or not be able find a course right for them and we do need young people with disability etc know they will have to ask for reasonable adjustments

Ella Frances Sanderson: A lot of employers are fine with having placement students in

Harry Georgiou: Yes, we must understand that when talking about support, it needs to be the correct support to get the most out of their job. This is why things like supported internships are so important to highlight their skills to help them to gain employment. How do you think we can improve the figure from 5.1%?

Harry Georgiou: This is a campaign that I am running in partnership with the Liverpool City Region to highlight the talents and skills these young people have:
<https://www.6percentandrising.com/>

Guy Paul: Tom makes an interesting point in regard to the overlap between Apprenticeships and T Levels. The 315-hour work placement places a significant cost (and risk) burden on employers which I cannot see them taking readily, where is the incentive? Given the choice (and anecdotal evidence suggests this too) employers would rather continue to focus on

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offering apprenticeships. How are T Levels viable without the work placement? Especially as the regional variation is significant and seems to run counter to the levelling up agenda, with areas of the country likely to be left further behind.

Ella Frances Sanderson: The college need to check up on the placement. When my college did it helped but it took them a long time to find someone who would come and check up on me

Martin McLean: Harry - you are right to highlight the employment rates of people with learning disabilities which are much too low. There are not currently sufficient incentives for education providers to offer tailored study programmes that includes things like self-determination training, employability skills, enrichment etc to help disabled young people develop the wider skills they need to move into employment. Supported internships play a significant role too - the Government needs to widen access to these

Cath Sezen: Totally agree on the value of supported internships. A small, but really successful programme.

Harry Georgiou: yes, I completely agree

Harry Georgiou: Here is my email address if anybody would like to contact me further on the subject: harrycvsliverpool@gmail.com

Ella Frances Sanderson: Supported Internships cannot be accessed by everyone though. You can be too High functioning to access them

James Creasey: Will the recording of this session be published so I can enjoy the excellent discussion again?

Emma Tilley: Thanks all.

Alesha Patel: josh@youthemployment.org.uk if anyone wanted to submit

James Creasey: Thank you all.

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