

By Email

6th September 2018

Anne Thomas, Sarah Bishop
Leadership and Management Trailblazer Group

Dear Anne and Sarah,

Appeal against proposed cuts to apprenticeship standard funding bands:

- **Team Leader / Supervisor (Level 3)**
- **Operations / Departmental Manager (Level 5)**
- **Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (Level 6)**

As a longstanding member of the Trailblazer group, we thank you for your ongoing dedication to developing and maintaining these apprenticeship standards. Your individual efforts and the commitment of your employers have been instrumental in making this work a huge success, both in terms of apprentice numbers and quality of provision. We have come a long way in raising the profile of apprenticeships and helping the Government to reach its targets.

We share your concerns, however, about the negative impact that the proposed funding cuts will have on employers and training providers who have invested heavily in delivering these standards. We are especially concerned about the impact on the thousands of future apprentices who will be undertaking these apprenticeships.

As a leading Awarding Organisation and supplier of Management and Leadership apprenticeships, working with thousands of employers and training providers, we are acutely aware of the benefits these programmes bring to individuals and organisations. Management apprenticeships are a vital part of the skills landscape and play an important role in improving social mobility and widening participation. They are also an essential tool in closing the productivity gap which is holding back our nation's economic recovery and future growth.

It is no exaggeration to say that the apprenticeship reforms have transformed the skills landscape in England, ensuring that apprenticeships are once again a discussion point in households throughout the country. While this transformation has brought a host of challenges, it has also presented a wealth of opportunities. Rather than arbitrarily criticise policy or resist any change, ILM has embraced the reforms, supporting businesses and individuals to help them adapt and grow to make the most of the new opportunities available to them. We have worked tirelessly to address and challenge outdated notions of what an apprenticeship is, and to overcome outdated stigmas that were attached to them.

It is disappointing, then, to see these successes and all of this progress threatened by cuts which are the result of what is widely accepted as a premature review of the funding bands. Criticisms have been levelled that the review process is arbitrary and lacking in transparency. Faced with the evidence and the overwhelmingly consistent feedback from those involved, it is difficult to argue with these assertions. It is also difficult to understand why the review was carried out with such haste. Providers are in the early stages of delivery and will take time to provide accurate costs. Costs will inevitably fluctuate as providers and employers get used to the new content and assessment methodology.

It is also disappointing that the review has brought further negative press upon apprenticeships, at a time where we should be working collaboratively to build faith in apprenticeships and present them as a viable route to employment for people of all backgrounds. Constant change and interference has been a major factor in dissuading employers from embracing the new apprenticeships and we fear this will be a major blow which will set us back considerably.

Above all we seek clarity and transparency about the process used to determine the new funding bands. As a charity, we have a moral responsibility to support our employer and provider clients; we cannot be content with the outcome of the review until we are satisfied that it was done fairly and in keeping with due process. That said, we do not dispute any outcome if we are presented with reasonable evidence to show that the process was carried out with fairness and consistency. It's vital that the funding bands allocated are mapped to the actual design and real cost of delivering end to end quality programmes that take full account of all the costs involved.

Yours sincerely,



Kirstie Donnelly MBE
Group Managing Director