

**Association of Learning Providers
Press release – 5 October 2009**

Divert government funding to Entry to Employment programme to help NEETs, say training providers

Many of the rapidly growing number of young unemployed people could see their prospects improve if they had access to the government's successful Entry to Employment (E2E) programme, say training providers.

The Association of Learning Providers (ALP) is calling on the DCSF to switch all underspent money in its budget for 16-18 year old Apprenticeships to E2E, which has experienced a big increase in demand throughout this year. The underspend is happening because fewer employers are offering apprenticeships to young people in the recession.

The £180m E2E scheme, which is delivered by many providers from the Third Sector, gives young people not in education, employment or training (the NEET group) the chance to gain basic and vocational skills which can help land them a job or make them ready to start an apprenticeship when the economic recovery begins in earnest.

Earlier this year, schools secretary Ed Balls recognised the programme's value when he said that it should take a share of the extra £251m allocated in the Chancellor's Budget to improve the prospects of this year's school-leavers. Some of the funding was also earmarked to meet the anticipated additional demand for sixth-form places this September.

The latest set of monthly unemployment figures show that one in five 16-24 year olds are now out of work and with a substantial demand for E2E, providers are increasingly concerned that, as with Train to Gain, the necessary funds will not be forthcoming. ALP is now saying that any money clawed back from the Apprenticeship programme should be redirected entirely towards E2E.

ALP chief executive Graham Hoyle OBE said: "Many of the young people in need of support don't want to be sent back to the classroom where they became disaffected in the first place. Instead the Entry to Employment programme offers them a proven and more attractive option to turn their lives around.

"Training providers have been very pleased with the active support that the government has shown towards E2E and Apprenticeships this year. However with the recession causing a lag in employer demand for the latter, it makes sense to transfer valuable funding to where it is needed most. And right now that means helping the NEET group by offering young people more places on E2E."

ENDS

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Notes to editors

1. The Apprenticeships budget for 16-18 year olds in 2009-10 is £675 million. The Entry to Employment budget is £180 million, seeking to help over 70,000 young people. For young people who are not yet ready to enter an Apprenticeship programme and choose not to stay on in full time

education, the E2E programme often represents the most suitable provision to ensure their continuing development and so avoid becoming a part of the NEET group. ALP members delivering E2E include some colleges of Further Education and private sector providers, but are for the most part Third Sector providers. They deliver E2E in some of the most deprived areas/estates of the country to young people often with few or no qualifications and wholly disaffected by the idea of returning to the classroom or lecture room. To many young people, the E2E programme therefore often represents the only route to meaningful prospects and avoiding a life on benefits or getting into trouble with all the costs to society which that can entail. This group of people includes those with often multiple disadvantages, in need of intensive, bespoke support. Official information about E2E can be found at: <http://www.connexions-direct.com/index.cfm?pid=79&catalogueContentID=158>
<http://e2e.lsc.gov.uk/background/>

The latest set of monthly unemployment figures showed that one in five 16-24 year olds are now out of work (source: ONS). The latest official quarterly data on NEETs was published in June: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d000751/NEETQuarterlyBriefQ12009.pdf> .

2. The Association of Learning Providers (ALP) is the leading trade association for vocational learning and employment providers in Britain. The majority of its 455 members are independent private, not-for-profit and voluntary sector training organisations. Membership is open to any provider committed to quality vocational learning and it includes over 60 FE colleges involved in work based learning. ALP members train a significant majority of the apprentices in England and are the major deliverers of New Deal and Train to Gain contracts on behalf of government. More information is available at: www.learningproviders.org.uk .