

FINAL PRESS NOTICE RICHARD REVIEW

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Richard Review into future of apprenticeships published

An independent review of apprenticeships published today (Tuesday) calls on the Government to improve their quality and make them more focused on the needs of employers. The Government warmly welcomes the report.

Doug Richard, entrepreneur, educator and founder of School for Startups, was asked by the Education Secretary Michael Gove and the Business Secretary Vince Cable to consider the future of apprenticeships in England, and to recommend how they can meet the needs of the changing economy.

Mr Richard was also asked to advise on how to ensure that every apprenticeship delivers high-quality training, qualifications and skills that learners need, maximising every pound spent on them by the Government.

Over the summer months, Mr Richard sought out a wide-range of views from employers of all sizes, academics, experts, apprentices, colleges and training providers.

His review recognises the good provision that exists today, with many committed employers delivering valuable opportunities for their apprentices. However, Mr Richard emphasises the need for greater ambition if all apprenticeships are to meet the standards of the best.

Mr Richard's review sets out a comprehensive vision for the future of apprenticeships. Key themes and recommendations include:

- **Redefining apprenticeships**
Apprenticeships should be targeted only at those who are new to a job or role that requires sustained and substantial training.
- **Focusing with greater rigour on the outcome of an apprenticeship** - what the apprentice can do when they complete their training – and freeing up the process by which they get there. Trusted, independent assessment is key.
- **Recognised industry standards should form the basis of every apprenticeship.**
Employers and other organisations with relevant industry expertise should be invited to design and develop new apprenticeship qualifications for their sectors.
- **All apprentices should reach a good level in English and maths before they can complete their apprenticeship.**

- **Government funding must create the right incentives for apprenticeship training.** The purchasing power for investing in apprenticeship training should lie with the employer.
- **Far greater diversity and innovation in training should be encouraged** – with employers and government taking a more active role in safeguarding quality.

Commenting on the launch of his review, Doug Richard said:

“No matter who I speak with, everyone agrees that apprenticeships are a good thing – but only when they are ‘true’ apprenticeships. With the myriad of learning experiences which are currently labelled as apprenticeships, we risk losing sight of the core features of what makes apprenticeships work so my conclusion is that we need to look again at what it means to be an apprentice and what it means to offer an apprenticeship as an employer.

“Apprenticeships need to be high quality training with serious kudos and tangible value both to the apprentice and the employer. I want to hear about an 18 year old who looked at their options and turned down a place at Oxbridge to take up an apprenticeship if that is the right path for them. And I want to hear that their parents were thrilled.

“We need to make sure that apprenticeships are the success story they deserve to be.”

The Government welcomes the wide-ranging review and recommendations it sets out.

Business Secretary Vince Cable said:

“I welcome Doug Richard's review which echoes the government's current thinking on putting employers in the driving seat of our apprenticeship programme. This will be vital to ensure the skills of our workforce fit with employer needs.

“His recommendations will help us to build on the current successes of our apprenticeships programme and tailor a programme which is sustainable, high-quality and meets the changing needs of our economy in the decades to come”

Education Secretary Michael Gove said:

“We must raise the bar on apprenticeships if we are to have a programme fit for the future. It is vital that the qualifications and assessment involved in every apprenticeship are rigorous, trusted, and give employers confidence in the ability of their apprentices.

"I am pleased that Doug Richard's review is uncompromising in its focus on quality and standards. If we are serious about raising the status, value and impact of apprenticeships we must be uncompromising too. I look forward to considering his proposals carefully."

Minister for Skills Matthew Hancock said:

"I warmly welcome this impressive report. Apprenticeships have seen much success in recent years, with over a million started since 2010. I am clear that we must focus on driving up the quality of apprenticeships, and on the skills employers need."

"This report by Doug Richard has a clear focus on improving quality and meeting employer need. The recommendations set out clear principles for bringing all Apprenticeships up to the standard of the very best. We welcome the challenge for us, for employers, and for apprentices and potential apprentices of the future."

Alison Wolf, Professor of Public Sector Management at Kings College London and vocational education expert said:

"I'm very encouraged by the recommendations put forward by Doug Richard in his review of apprenticeships. I believe his proposed changes are of the scale and nature required to turn apprenticeships into a serious option for our most talented school leavers. As Doug suggests, we must strengthen the quality and credibility of apprenticeships, through rigorous and well respected qualifications. I'm also pleased to see that he is suggesting complete reform of the way Government funds apprenticeships. This is a crucial step if apprenticeships are to deliver the skills employers need, and give enterprises the incentive to deliver high quality training"

Lord Sainsbury of Turville said:

"There is much to commend in Doug Richard's report. Its clear focus on outcomes – what a person can actually do at the end of his or her apprenticeship training – is particularly important. For high-tech sectors like science, advanced manufacturing and computing, we need many more apprenticeships which demonstrably meet the skills needs of modern industry. The new private-sector system of kite-marking high-quality apprenticeships – the Registered Science Technician and Engineering Technician schemes – is the simplest way of pointing young people in the direction of the very best training."

"I look forward to working with government to see how existing kite-marking schemes for apprenticeships can be taken forward to realise Doug's vision of quality-assured training which meets the needs of industry."

Nigel Whitehead, Group Managing Director, BAE Systems plc, said:

“The recommendations are clear and the new, alternative construct described is intuitive, founded on proven principles and stands the important test of sense. It is a departure from the status quo but one that will deliver a much better outcome.”

Charlie Mayfield, Chairman of the John Lewis Partnership and the UK Commission for Employment and Skills also welcomed the review saying:

“Apprenticeships are, first and foremost, a job - and as such should be led by employers. I’m delighted that Doug Richard has so clearly recognised this in his review. I also welcome the package of recommendations, and the clear understanding that employers must be at the heart of ensuring high-quality and outcome-focused apprenticeships, sharing the responsibility – and reward – for doing so. Here at the John Lewis Partnership we look forward to working with others to do just that.”

Valerie Todd, Director of Talent and Resources at Crossrail, said:

“Here at Crossrail we employ some 120 apprentices, and I am continually impressed – and humbled – by their intelligence, enthusiasm and willingness to learn. I am very proud of the long and strong apprenticeships we provide and the quality of training which results in a workforce with world-class skills. I am pleased Doug Richard’s review supports this approach, which will strengthen and promote apprenticeships as a credible career pathway.”

Graham Spittle CBE, Chairman of the Technician Council said:

“Doug Richard’s report challenges all of us to think differently when it comes to apprenticeships. Only with high-quality, professionally-accredited apprenticeships will the UK be able to train the hundreds of thousands of skilled technicians we need to secure our economic competitiveness in the coming decades. Private-sector-led initiatives, like those being developed by the science, engineering and IT professional bodies, will be vital to realise Doug Richard’s vision for higher-quality, higher-status apprenticeships.”

“The Technician Council looks forward to working with Doug, government and industry leaders to take forward a shared vision for apprenticeships.”

Sean Taggart, owner of Albatross Travel and SME skills champion said:

“I am pleased that Doug Richard has recognised the importance of apprenticeships to the individual, the employer and the country as a whole. His recommendations for simplifying and strengthening apprenticeships are particularly welcome, including routing funding through employers and introducing new apprenticeship qualifications to replace apprenticeship frameworks.”

The Government will now consider Mr Richard’s recommendations and will issue a full response in the New Year.

Notes to Editors

1. The full Richard Review of Apprenticeships is available on the BIS/DfE websites: [\[insert links\]](#)
2. Doug Richard is a successful entrepreneur, educator and founder of School for Startups which has taught over 15,000 budding entrepreneurs and small business owners from across the globe. Doug featured in the first two TV series of Dragon's Den and brings over 20 years' experience in the development and leadership of technology and software ventures. He was the co-founder of the Cambridge Angels and Chairman of the Conservative Party Small Business Task Force. Between 1996 and 2000 Doug was President and CEO of Micrografx, a US publicly quoted software company. Prior to that he also founded and subsequently sold two other companies: Visual Software and ITAL Computers.
3. The full recommendations are:
 - a. **Apprenticeships should be redefined.** They should be clearly targeted at those who are new to a job or role that requires sustained and substantial training. Training and accreditation of existing workers that are already fully competent in their jobs should be delivered separately; as should provision aimed primarily at supporting entry into employment. The Government should introduce a new separate work-based programme to support entry into employment. This should replace some Level 2 apprenticeships.
 - b. **The focus of apprenticeships should be on the outcome.** There should be recognised industry standards at the heart of every apprenticeship. They should clearly set out what apprentices should know, and be able to do, *at the end* of their apprenticeship, at a high level which is meaningful and relevant for employers. These standards should form the basis of new apprenticeship qualifications, which replace apprenticeship frameworks, the current qualifications which comprise them and the current national occupational standards which underpin them. There should be just one apprenticeship qualification for each occupation associated with an apprenticeship. They should link to standards for professional registration in sectors where these exist and are well-recognised.
 - c. **The Government should set up a contest for the best qualification.** Individual employers, employer partnerships or other organisations with the relevant expertise should be invited to design and develop apprenticeship qualifications for their sectors. The selection of the 'best' qualification for an occupation should be based on Government-set criteria for identifying what good looks like. The criteria should ensure the qualification is ambitious and stretching, delivers transferrable skills and has significant buy-in amongst employers, including small ones.

- d. **The testing and validation process should be independent and genuinely respected by industry.** The test should be holistic, at the end, and assess whether the individual is fully competent and employable, within their job and their sector. Employers should be directly involved in assessment. They must make sure that the assessment consistently tests apprentices to the standard specified in the qualification. Assessors should be entirely independent and have no incentive or disincentive related to the outcome of the assessment. The Government, a government body or regulator should approve and oversee the assessment process, or the organisations in charge of that process, in a light touch way.
- e. **All apprentices should have achieved Level 2 in English and maths before they can complete their apprenticeship.** Maths and English taught within apprenticeships should be sufficiently functional in approach to be suitable for an apprenticeship context.
- f. **The Government should encourage diversity and innovation in delivering apprenticeships.** There will be many paths and approaches that an apprentice can take to reach 'the standard' and we should strip out any unnecessary prescription and regulation of the process for getting there.
- g. **The Government has a role in promoting good quality delivery.** To maximise value for learners and minimise risk of poor practice, Government should make some off-site learning and a minimum duration for apprenticeships mandatory. Government should ensure that an effective, light-touch approval process exists to confirm training organisations are providing good quality training, relevant for the sector.
- h. **Government funding must create the right incentives for apprenticeship training.** The purchasing power for investing in apprenticeship training should lie with the employer. Government should contribute to the cost, but this should be routed via the employer, in order to ensure relevance and drive up quality. The price should be free to respond to and reflect employer demand. Government should only contribute to the cost of training that supports the apprentice in reaching the industry-agreed standard. The payment should be linked, in part, to the apprentice passing the test. A preferred approach would be to fund apprenticeships using the National Insurance or tax system – for example through a tax credit, similar to the R&D tax credit. The funding system should be kept simple and accessible, including for small firms.
- i. **Learners and employers need access to good quality information.** Relevant government data should be made open and accessible in simple language and formats, so that companies can connect it together to generate products that present data in

meaningful, innovative and accessible ways. The Government, through its own communication channels and careers advice services, should ensure that information about apprenticeships and their benefits is effectively and widely disseminated.

- j. **Government must actively boost awareness of the new apprenticeship model.** Boosting learner and employer demand is an active responsibility of Government. Government should take an education based approach to this – enabling a wider range of employers to learn how to take on apprentices and why it's worthwhile. New ways to bring employers and prospective learners together should be promoted, including through an 'apprenticeship milk round'. More effort should be made to ensure that schools and teachers, parents and all those who inform and guide young people have a better understanding of what a high quality apprenticeship can offer.
4. The terms of reference of the review are available on the BIS website: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/further-education-skills/apprenticeships/richard-review>