

MINUTES
APPG on Apprenticeships
Apprenticeships and Net Zero
08 November 2022
Room O, Portcullis House, Palace of Westminster

Chair: Emma Hardy MP, Co-Chair for the APPG On Apprenticeships

Parliamentarians in Attendance or Represented:

- Jonathan Gullis MP
- Office of Richard Holden MP
- Lord Baker of Dorking
- Toby Perkins MP
- Lord Aberdare
- Baroness Garden of Frognal

Speakers:

- Toby Perkins MP, Shadow Minister for Apprentices and Lifelong Learning
- Beatrice Barleon, Head of Policy & Public Affairs at EngineeringUK
- Dr Jackie Chapman, Managing Director of Capital City College Training

Baroness Garden of Frognal initially stood in as Chair, introducing the topic of the meeting of Net Zero and the wider context of Cop-26.

Baroness Garden then introduced the first speaker, **Jackie Chapman**, Managing Director of Capital City College Training. Jackie introduced CCCG and laid out her role, and stated that at any one time they had around 30,000 apprentices within their network. She stated that every single apprenticeship role should be focussed on net zero, stating that CCCG had recently been successful in bidding for a green academy, and looking at utilising that along with apprenticeships to have the biggest impact. When people talk about green apprenticeships, they often default to construction and retrofit, but we need to move beyond this. Reviews too slow to have an impact, we need to make green change happen quicker across all apprenticeships. CCCG are investing with other colleges into digital skills in the green world, eg newer code which uses less energy. Looking at 3 things from gov – flexibility of funding to allow greater support from colleges for green skills, greater support from levy to 16-18 year-olds, and a new green unit for every apprenticeship.

Baroness Garden thanked Jackie and handed over to Beatrice Barleon, Head of Policy & Public Affairs at EngineeringUK. Beatrice said it was important to emphasise the importance of engineering skills in the net zero agenda, which we will need for all the technologies of the future that will enable net zero. EngineeringUK's report on this looked at skills demand, and found that there is a general growth in recent years, supported by the Green Jobs taskforce. This contrasts with a growing skills shortage, though EngineeringUK are hopeful that work such as the BESS will put pressure on this to change. The greatest level of skills shortages are across Level 3, apprenticeships play an important part of working to change this and EngineeringUK have made it a key area of exploration. Engineering UK want to understand ongoing skills and workforce shortages better, they will be doing further research on this in the coming months. While they don't have specific asks right now aside from a greater focus on Level 3 apprenticeships, they would recommend that the Government work with industry more on this to gain holistic expertise.

Baroness Garden thanked Beatrice and handed over to Toby Perkins, Shadow Minister for Apprentices and Lifelong Learning.

Toby said it was an incredibly important issue, especially so given the ongoing relevance of net zero and the current Careers Week. Apprenticeships will be crucial in the skills agenda of the future. Labour believe in the economic and climate necessity of apprenticeships, and the UK should seek to become leaders in this area. Toby noted Keir Starmer's support of this agenda at the recent Labour Party conference, and added that Labour want to see more young people moving into the green workforce, while schools should also look to embed green opportunities at every part of the school curriculum and careers opportunities. He noted Labour's recent announcement that it would look to reform the levy, to turn it into a Growth and Schools Levy. While half the levy would still be directed at apprenticeships, organisations which wanted to use all of their levy on apprenticeships would be able to do so, while half could also be used for retraining. The apprenticeships regime needs to work for independent providers, employers and for workers, and combat the underrepresentation of BAME people and women. This can start through greater representation in schools. Labour would like to see a greater focus on ensuring variety of opportunity in colleges and sixth form.

Baroness Garden thanked Toby and agreed with his points on levy access, noting her experience in the coalition government.

Emma Hardy arrived and took over the session as Chair, asking speakers if they had any further comments. Toby added that Labour agreed with Lord Baker's amendment to the Skills Bill calling for further funding for Level 2-3 apprenticeships, and noted that the Government are making efforts on further education on net zero and climate change, but that it needs further embedding in the curriculum.

Jackie Chapman added that we need to go further on embedding education on climate change in the curriculum, and repeated her calls for adding a green element to every apprenticeship. She noted that a number of young people had proactively approached CCCG asking for a role in a green organisation or working on a green technology, but there are very few jobs specifically targeted at combating climate change for now.

Beatrice agreed with the points made, adding that EngineeringUK would like to see 'Inspiration Events' to provide further careers support to prospective apprentices. She noted similar events run by EngineeringUK such as their 'Big Bang Fair', adding that careers guidance should be embedded in the curriculum.

Emma thanked speakers for their remarks and opened the session up to remarks from the audience.

Lord Aberdare noted the alignment between the green and digital agendas, and called for further investment in horticultural apprenticeships. Lord Baker echoed his comments, and called for greater accessibility to the levy for SME's.

An SME owner noted the difficulties they faced regarding the levy, and called for more modular course to accommodate for the jobs of the future and the green agenda.

Gabriel from Richard Holden's office added that Richard was sorry to be stepping down as Co-Chair of the APPG and passed on his best wishes to Emma and the APPG for the future.

Several questions were then asked by audience members, including on retrofitting apprenticeships targeted at installing low carbon heating technologies such as heat pumps. Toby answered that Labour would be happy to see targeted support for apprenticeships' wages via the levy up to the age of 18, but no further. Lord Aberdare agreed, and noted the number of SME's unable to offer full support via the levy to their apprenticeships, while expressing support for flexi-apprenticeships. Jackie agreed on supporting wages up to the age of 18. On upskilling using the levy, she called for specific measures for over-24's. Beatrice agreed that EngineeringUK were minded to support

limited wage support for apprentices up to the age of 18, adding that T-levels could be valuable in the journey to the green economy.

Emma thanked speakers and attendees and brought the session to a close.