

## **Introduction of the 12-month Minimum Duration for Apprenticeships**

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The minimum duration of 12 months for Apprenticeships for those aged 16-18 will commence in August 2012. The 12 month minimum duration will apply to all new starts from 1 August 2012 onwards. From 1st August this requirement will become effective and will be described in the 2012/13 funding rules that the Skills Funding Agency expects to publish by the end of March 2012.

In announcing this, it is also our expectation that all training organisations and employers start to implement this with immediate effect. Whilst the introduction of the new funding rule does not formally apply to those already in learning prior to August, we strongly encourage all training organisations and employers to offer all existing apprentices aged 16-18 a 12- month minimum programme wherever it is possible to do so.

The National Apprenticeship Service is currently reviewing the position with regard to a minimum duration time for those apprentices aged 19 and over. We will continue to work with and consult the sector and stakeholders in undertaking this review. Once the review is completed, we will ensure that adequate notice is given should any changes to current funding rules be called for by government ministers.

In addition to these measures, the National Apprenticeship Service will consider ways of establishing a more robust link between the duration of an Apprenticeship set by the framework developers and the programmes delivered by training organisations and employers.

The Skills Funding Agency is working with the sector to create a new simplified funding system and will include this in the work that is being undertaken. We want to determine the right approach to realising this expectation and ensuring that planned programme duration more closely reflects those described in Apprenticeship frameworks. It is important that we work with the sector to ensure that prior learning is better reflected in Apprenticeship funding policies and that public funding is only used to support the delivery of new skills and competencies.

The National Apprenticeship Service will also work closely with Issuing Authorities to ensure that the recommended duration specified in their Apprenticeship framework allows sufficient time for the apprentice to learn, develop and practice new skills, achieving the highest level of competence possible. We expect in a small number of cases this will lead to changes in the duration of the framework.

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