



2017-0005914PORH

Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Huw Merriman MP
By email: huw.merriman.mp@parliament.uk

Your ref: HM/FM/59912

22 February 2017

Thank you for your letter of 18 January to the Minister of State for School Standards, enclosing correspondence from Mr John Greenwood, Chair of the Schools Forum, East Sussex County Council, Aurora Academies, Gunter Lane, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN39 4ED, about the impact of the Apprenticeship Levy on local authority-maintained schools. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

The Apprenticeship Levy is being introduced to fund a step change in apprenticeship numbers and quality, putting funding on a sustainable footing that will support apprentices to progress their long-term careers.

I appreciate the concerns Mr Greenwood has raised regarding the impact of the levy on local authority-maintained schools. However, levying all employer pay bills over £3 million across all sectors, is the simplest, fairest and most objective way of doing this. I have made it clear that there can be no exemptions to this rule. All employers in England, including schools, can use the funds raised by the levy for apprenticeship training and assessment, getting valuable skills for their organisations.

We want to encourage all schools to be active players in the apprenticeship system. The apprenticeship brand is already a huge incentive and we expect the Apprenticeship Levy to build on that. In 2014 there were 12 applications for every apprenticeship position within the UK. My officials are working closely with schools groups to ensure the right opportunities are in place for them to take full advantage of apprenticeship funding to train their staff.

This includes developing new apprenticeships for Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Schools Business Directors, as well as in wider administrative, IT and technical roles. If you think there are further roles within schools that would benefit from apprenticeship opportunities, you may wish to contact the department's apprenticeships team at: apprenticeships.levy@bis.gsi.gov.uk, to discuss this further.

Apprenticeships in schools will create positive role models for young people to aspire to, and we have set a clear expectation that local authorities should work with their schools to make sure they are getting the most out of the new apprenticeship funding system.

I would welcome your support in ensuring that all schools are ready for the funding changes and the opportunities available to invest in apprenticeships both now and in the future.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R Halfon', is positioned above the printed name.

Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills