

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 10th February 2020

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Economic Development

SUBJECT: Policy Update – Employment Learning and Skills

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform the Board of recent national policy announcements relevant to the Employment, Learning and Skills Policy Performance Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

2.1 That the report is noted.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 A number of policy, legislation, consultation and guidance documents, are issued by government departments and agencies that have varying degrees of relevance to issues on the employment, learning and skills agenda and related topics.

3.2 The information provided is not intended to be in-depth but provides a brief summary of key announcements along with observations of local relevance, where appropriate. The Board can then consider whether to initiate more detailed scrutiny and/or report to a future meeting.

3.3 The report should be considered alongside the ‘key developments’ and ‘emerging issues’ that are set out in the Quarterly Performance Report.

3.4 This report covers the period from 1st November to 31st January 2020.

Nursing Students to Receive £5,000 Payment.

Nursing students will benefit from guaranteed, additional support of at least £5,000 a year to help with living costs.

The funding will be given to all new and continuing degree-level nursing, midwifery and many allied health students from September 2020.

The funding comes as part of the government’s pledge to increase nurse numbers by 50,000 over the next 5 years.

Students will receive at least £5,000 a year, with up to £3,000 further funding available for eligible students, including for:

- specialist disciplines that struggle to recruit, including mental health

- an additional childcare allowance, on top of the £1,000 already on offer
- areas of the country which have seen a decrease in people accepted on some nursing, midwifery and allied health courses over the past year

This means that some students could be eligible for up to £8,000 per year, with everyone getting at least £5,000. The funding will be available from next year.

‘T’ Levels

Further education colleges and other post-16 providers are being urged to sign up to teach the next wave of the government’s new T Levels.

More than 100 further education providers are already gearing up to deliver the new qualifications – developed hand in hand with leading employers – so young people gain the skills and knowledge that industry need to build the workforce of the future. Students will be able to study the first three T Levels, in Design, Surveying and Planning, Digital Production, Design and Development, and Education, from this September, with a further seven including three in health and science taught from 2021.

The government is inviting high performing providers to apply to teach the third wave of eight T Levels including Legal, Accounting, and Manufacturing, Processing and Control from 2022, in addition to the 10 T Levels that will already be on offer from 2020 and 2021.

The Chancellor has announced an additional £400 million boost for 16 to 19 education in 2020-21, including £25 million to support the first T Level providers to deliver high-quality courses.

T Levels are high-quality technical alternatives to A Levels, combining classroom theory, practical learning and an industry placement to give students the skills they need to land great jobs and flourish, as well as levelling up the country’s skills and improving Britain’s productivity.

Town of the Year Competition

Towns across England will be able to compete in a new Town of the Year competition, The new competition aims to celebrate towns’ achievements, including in areas such as **entrepreneurship, technology, community, enterprise, and integration.**

It will also support communities to come together to create a bright future and unleash their full potential through innovation, creativity, and community spirit.

A new ‘Towns Hub’ will also be established within the department to work directly with local people as they develop town investment proposals and help communities share best practice to transform their towns.

Funding for Innovative business ideas for new products

Businesses can apply for £25 million of Smart funding to develop game-changing products and services in any area of technology, science and engineering.

Up to £25 million is available through Innovate UK’s Smart programme to invest in innovative business projects across any technology area.

Smart is an open grant funding programme that supports the best UK business ideas whatever area they come from.

Projects must show that they will exploit game-changing ideas to develop new products, processes and services that will have significant economic impact.

The fund is particularly looking for ideas that have significant potential for global markets. Projects should also make sure they take account of customer and user needs.

Applications can come from any area of technology, science and engineering and can include the arts, design, media and creative industries.

They can be in line with the grand challenges of the government's Industrial Strategy, but we also welcome game-changing ideas from outside these areas.

- The competition opened on 9 January 2020, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 22 April 2020
- businesses of any size may apply, and all applications must include a micro, small or medium-sized company
- projects can range in size from £25,000 to £2 million and last between 6 and 36 months

Update on Liverpool City Region Activities

As reported at the last PPB, The Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Hub has been rebranded as 'Be-More, Be an Apprentice' brand. The focus remains the same and the 'Apprenticeship Support by Be-More' will continue to promote and celebrate all things apprenticeships in Liverpool City Region.

National Apprenticeship Week 2020 3rd February - 7th February 2020:

Apprenticeship Week 2020 will build on the 2019 "**Fire It Up**" campaign. The week-long national event started on the 3 February 2020 and was used to generate excitement about the many types of apprenticeships and the value they bring to commerce and industry.

Employer Brokerage by Be-More

The LCR Employer Brokerage Service has now facilitated levy transfer for 104 apprentices working with levy paying employers such as the NHS, Liverpool John Moore's University and QVC, transferring over £400k to support new apprenticeship programmes across the LCR.

The service continues to develop and build relationships with new levy payers looking to transfer their levy funds.

Strategic Investment Fund – Skills Capital update

More than £16 million investment in skills education at colleges, local authorities and learning providers across the Liverpool City Region has been approved. The funding builds on £30 million already invested in buildings, facilities and equipment for skills training in the city region.

This latest round of funding sees £12.6m allocated to 28 projects across the city region.

This Skills Capital Funding comes from the Local Growth Fund. Local Growth Funding is awarded to the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and invested through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Strategic Investment Fund.

Skills Capital Funding is available to provide new sites and premises, learning and skills equipment, improvements to existing facilities, maintenance and investments in low carbon technologies.

Successful bids include:

- £2 million to Riverside College for building projects that will help provide a highly skilled future workforce for the Health and Social Care sector, as well as other successful bids totalling nearly £1 million. The Health and Social Care project will extend existing facilities and replace outmoded accommodation with a brand new three-storey building.
- £700k for Halton Borough Council's Adult Learning Service (£260k for new digital equipment and £445k to improve the facilities at Kingsway Learning Centre in Widnes).

Visitor Economy Week 2020 Launch – 3 February 2020

Visitor Economy Week aims to raise the profile of the sector and enhance its perception as a progressive career choice. The week aims to ensure skills development sits at the forefront of improving the competitiveness and quality of the sector. Its purpose is to educate and inspire individuals to make choices which leads them into the world of Visitor Economy. The week provides a fantastic opportunity for employers, colleges within the region to showcase the diversity of skills and scope of employment within the Visitor Economy sector.

This event is for people working within the Visitor Economy sector.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The varied range of issues covered in this report potentially present a number of challenges and opportunities across a number of the Council's current priorities. Where appropriate a more detailed analysis of the information and relevance to the council will take place.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 5.1 There are no immediate risks directly relating to the information in the report.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 6.1 None

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

7.1 None under the meaning of the Act.