

# Expression of interest

# Title: Levy Paying Employer Behaviour

**Project reference:** 2018094

**Deadline for expressions of interest:** 12 noon Friday 15th February 2019

## Summary

As part of DfE’s ongoing evaluation of the Apprenticeship reforms, we are interested in expanding our evidence base. In particular, we want to focus on:

* how levy paying employers are spending their levy funds and why;
* how apprenticeship delivery is being adjusted to account for apprentices’ prior learning and what happens when the recognition of prior learning takes the apprentice under the minimum duration of the apprenticeship; and,
* the extent to which apprentices could benefit from further consideration of prior learning in the apprenticeship programmes.

Expressions of interest are sought to conduct qualitative research with employers, providers and apprentices to improve understanding of these issues.

## Background

The Department is currently seeking to improve our understanding of the behaviour of levy paying employers in spending their levy funds. We are particularly interested in employers who are using standards. As part of this work, there are 3 main questions of interest that require development of an evidence base:

1. Who employers spend their levy on (existing staff or new employees) and why?
2. How are employers and providers accounting for apprentices’ prior learning in their apprenticeship programmes[[1]](#footnote-1)and why, and to what extent does this meet the requirements set out in the funding rules?
3. To what extent could apprentices’ prior learning be better recognised in the apprenticeship programme, and how could this benefit different groups of apprentices?

## Research aims

**To address the main issues of interest, the project aims to explore with participants:**

* Who employers recruit into apprentice roles and why;
* What is the impact of introducing the apprenticeship levy on the training programmes that employers offer, including apprenticships? To what extent are employers replacing other previously used training programmes with apprenticeships - why and what is the impact of this?;
* If and how providers and employers are adapting training and the associated costs to take into account the prior learning of apprentices and the impact this has on their delivery models;
* What happens when the recognition of prior learning takes the apprentice under the minimum duration of the apprenticeship?; and,
* Whether the apprenticeship programme could better recognise individuals who have significant prior learning (and their employers).

## Methodology

We expect that these issues will be best explored through a qualitative methodology, involving data collection with:

* Levy paying employers using standards; including those who employ new staff as apprentices, and those who offer apprenticeships to existing employees;
* Providers of apprentice training (standards);
* Apprentices on standards, covering a mix of different age groups, as well as new recruits and existing employees.

Within the sample we would like to cover a mix of routes and levels (L2 - 7).

**We welcome creative suggestions from potential contractors, who are asked to consider and propose methodologies, and approaches to sampling and data collection they believe would be suitable for this project; delivering rich data within the timescales and budget.**

**Timing**

* Deadline for EOIs - 12 noon Friday 15th February 2019
* Invitation to Tender (ITT) issued - Friday 22nd February 2019
* Deadline for ITT submission - 12 noon Friday 15th March 2019
* Potential Clarification Interviews, if required (to be held in London) - Week Commencing Monday 25th March 2019
* Inception Meeting (to be held in London) - Week Commencing Monday 1st April 2019
* Presentation of Findings and Workshop - early July 2019
* Final Report - Friday 30th August 2019

## Assessment criteria

Expressions of interest will be assessed against the following criteria:

* Demonstrates a clear knowledge and understanding of the aims and objectives of the project, and of why and how these aims and objectives respond to the current policy context.
* Demonstrates relevant methodological knowledge and experience ideally gained through previous research into apprenticeships.
* Project management skills and ability to deliver to timescales.

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| Scoring: |
| 1.    No evidence/very poor |
| 2.    Poor evidence |
| 3.    Some evidence |
| 4.    Good evidence |
| 5.    Excellent evidence |

**Each one of these criteria has equal weighting at this stage.**

Expressions of interests submitted must be **no more than 1000 words** - anything longer will be disregarded.

| **Closing date for EOIs: 12 noon Friday 15th February 2019**  **Send your EOI form to:** [**earl.kehoe@education.gov.uk**](mailto:earl.kehoe@education.gov.uk) |
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## How to submit an expression of interest

You must submit an expression of interest (EOI) in order to be considered to be invited to tender. To do so, please complete the NEW EOI Form which can be found under attachments. A submission of an EOI does not guarantee an invitation to tender and the Department does not routinely advise organisations that they have not been successful in being invited to tender. Feedback is however available on request.

All contracts are let on the basis of the [Department’s Terms and Conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eoi-guide). You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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1. [The 2018-2019 Apprenticeship Funding Rules](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733050/1819_Provider_Rules_v1.0.pdf) states that Providers: “must account for prior learning when negotiating a price with the employer. You must reduce the content, duration and price where the individual has prior learning necessary to achieve the apprenticeship. Funds must not be used to pay for skills already attained by the apprentice. You must document how you have assessed the individual’s prior learning and include this in the evidence pack” (see p.35 - 36). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)