



## CAPITAL

February 2021

Welcome to CAPITAL, AELP London's membership newsletter, designed to keep our members up to date with the latest developments across London's employability and skills sector.

### An introduction from Nichola Hay

A warm welcome to our first edition of Capital in 2021.

First of all, a big thank you to all of our members and guest speakers for their contribution at our recent Strategic Forum. It's safe to say that the last 12-months have been enormously challenging for organisations across London, with the whole sector having to work extremely hard to respond and adapt to the changing circumstances enforced upon us by Covid-19. In the midst of a third lockdown it would be understandable to see energy levels dropping, but the Forum showed that the drive and commitment in the sector remains very high, centred around a desire to make sure our learners get the best possible service and the best possible chance to succeed.



This week is National Apprenticeship Week and I believe that (for obvious reasons!) it's the more important than ever that we unite as a sector to make sure that the vitally important role of apprenticeships is promoted and celebrated. We appreciate that many of you will already have your plans in place to do this, but if you're looking for a bit of guidance then there is a great toolkit available here: [Apprenticeships - National Apprenticeship Week](#). AELP will look out for member tweets using the hashtag #NAW2021 and re-tweet and share wherever they can.

I'd also like to extend a warm welcome to Rebecca Durber, who many of you will have met 'virtually' during the Strategic Forum. You will no doubt get to know Rebecca much better in the coming months as she works across the Capital engaging with members and stakeholders to help us to move the skills agenda forward.

Warm regards,

**Nichola Hay**  
*AELP London Chair*

## The AELP London Strategic Forum

As usual, we kick-off this edition of Capital with our 'high-level canter' through the latest Strategic Forum, which was held on Wednesday 3rd February. We do, of course, recommend that our members attend the Forum to get the most out of it.

### Forogh Rahmani: Senior Manager - Strategy, Policy & Relationships: Skills & Employment at GLA

Our thanks go to Forogh for providing us with a comprehensive update of the work of the team at the GLA, including:

- The FE White paper – exploring the key issues for London and a summary of the key policies:
  - Local skills improvement plans
  - Strategic Development Funding
  - Employer-led standards
  - Technical and higher technical skills
  - Lifelong Loan Entitlement
  - Apprenticeships
  - Accountability and governance
  - Support for teaching
  - Skills Value Chain
- The London Adult Education Roadmap and the actions the GLA are taking to move the skills agenda forward, with collaboration being at the heart of their approach... including opportunities to lobby collectively with AELP London members
- An update on the London AEB 'Good for All' competition to support the [London Recovery Programme](#); market warming events that will take place on 25th and 26th Feb



Forogh also talked through a number of issues raised by our members including ESF targets; National Skills Fund Level 3; the reinstatement of the AEB Provider Forum and the issue of the integration of National Programmes with London initiatives. On this final point, the challenge of effective integration remains key and while the GLA has plans in place to deliver a more seamless service, they would particularly welcome the input of AELP London members on areas for focus and improvement.

Forogh has kindly made her [Strategic Forum presentation slides](#) available for our members to review.

## Peter O'Brien – Regional Commissioning Manager: London Councils

We were delighted to welcome Peter O'Brien (a veritable stalwart of AELP London Strategic Forums) who started by congratulating AELP London Chair, Nicki Hay for her MBE award in the New Year's Honours List. We would like to echo that sentiment... congratulations Nicki on this well deserved recognition.



Getting down to business... Peter gave us an update on the recent activity at [London Councils](#) including their involvement and integration with the ongoing recovery work including how, through their employment and skills board, they are looking closely at how programmes align to 16-19 provision.

Peter expressed the view of London Councils that while there are clearly many things working well there are also some things that are "not quite right". The 'Skills for Jobs' and 'Skills for Life' agendas seem to be working in contradictory directions and it is therefore falling on the frontline to make it work better. Peter outlined the view that the Skills for Jobs strategy needed to be better aligned with Careers Guidance and that input (and further integration) from across London's employability/skills sector would be key to ensuring that all opportunities were exploited effectively.

Peter also talked about the work that London Councils has been doing, in conjunction with local boroughs and the GLA to create a guide to [What makes a good Kickstart placement](#). This is a really valuable resource and is intended to act as a simple guide for:

- Employers, on how they can help participants get the most out of their Kickstart placements
- Participants, on what they can expect from a good Kickstart placement

If any of our members would like to provide feedback to London Councils then please contact us and we will ensure that Peter and his team are updated.

## Jenny Guildford – Senior Policy Manager: Central London Forward

We were delighted to welcome Jenny to the Forum for the first time (of many we hope) to talk about the work of [Central London Forward](#) (CLF) an organisation with a core purpose of providing a collective voice for their member boroughs and their citizens. To do this CLF works for its membership to deliver:

- Economic and social research
- Strategic policy advice
- Policy design and development



Their core collective policy concerns currently centre around:

- Helping Central London residents move back into work
- Improving the skill set of Central London Residents
- Improving the supply of new homes in Central London

Jenny explained how CLF's work focuses on themes including employment devolution, skills and lobbying local government around place making, planning, infrastructure, and transport. CLF has extensive networks and has an employment and skills board with college representation, although

Jenny noted that there is currently no Independent Training Provider (ITP) representation on their board. If any members are interested in joining the board then please contact AELP London's [Rebecca Durber](#), who will liaise with Jenny.

CLF is supporting the recovery work taking place across the Capital, working with the GLA, and looking to ensure that their members have a voice and are part of the overall approach/solution. CLF has many members linked to the tourist sector, a sector particularly hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, so supporting the development of a roadmap for the future is obviously key. CLF will be setting out its plan at the end of the month (check their website for updates... AELP London members are encouraged to attend the launch event) which will be centred around six key visions underpinned by supporting actions.

And finally... Jenny gave an overview of the policy areas they are currently lobbying, including:

- Working closely with local councils and the GLA on a 'no wrong door approach'
- Enabling job creation with the green economy
- Delivering detailed analysis at ward/borough level to look at inequalities and to identify where the jobs will be
- Facilitating collaboration and joint working across London Governments – continuing to deliver skills strategy plan, work around skills commissioning with GLA to push towards an outcomes commissioning model and launching HSC agreement that could be used as model for sector based approaches to skills

## Sarah Hernandez: DWP

Sarah gave a comprehensive overview of DWP's current work, including:

- Jobcentres Plus remains open (64 in London and Essex) with minimum staffing levels. Clients are not expected to attend face to face appointments, but the option is there for those unable to access via telephone/digital routes – a vital lifeline for those few who need it.
- DWP is seeing claim volumes remain stable, with no significant peaks over the last two months. The current expectation is that this trend will continue, but DWP is monitoring to see what happens with the current furlough scheme and in sectors that cannot operate currently. Data on the timely payment of entitlements is positive (with higher levels of timeliness now than prior to COVID-19). DWP's focus is now on the future labour market and getting people back into/ready for work, including a significant recruitment drive (13,500 work coaches by March).
- Kickstart launched in September and DWP has been pleased to see healthy support from employers and a good level of vacancies generated for referrals. DWP is working closely with employers to ensure that there are robust structures in place in the five London districts.
- Place-based approach: While DWP is putting national programmes in place to support people into work, it also recognizes the importance of understanding local needs, and the needs of the local labour market, and is working hard to integrate and join-up provision.
- The Flexible Support Fund remains in place, with budget held at district level to enable procurement of training to meet needs of place-based approach where national contracts won't meet these needs and to help break down barriers (i.e. suit for interview, petrol costs). If any members require more detail on the Fund then [please contact Sarah directly](#).



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

AELP is currently working with DWP to put together an approach/programme that ensures that Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches understand the role that ITPs can play in supporting the agenda. Rebecca Durber will lead on this piece of work on behalf of AELP London.

## Reiks Driver: Ofsted

Reiks began his update by commenting that both himself and his colleagues are in awe of the work that the sector is doing to keep things going and support its learners, despite the enormous challenge it is facing. We would like to thank Reiks for taking the time to share this feedback with us and in turn thank Ofsted for the supportive approach that they have shown to delivering inspections.



Reiks continued to provide a detailed update on the activity that took place last Autumn, centering around interim visits (to Grade 3 providers) and the work Ofsted is doing now in light of the current lockdown. Reiks explained that the view is that FE sector has been incredibly adaptable in the way that it has facilitated the move to remote learning (noted that it had been easier for some than others) particularly where learners are missing the group interaction they are used to.

A general point is that Ofsted has found teachers/trainers/assessors are taking some time to get used to the instant feedback and Q&A that the digital approach creates. Efforts are being made to bridge the digital poverty gap and develop safeguarding protocols and this has resulted in an increase in staff confidence since December, enabling Ofsted staff to communicate more effectively with one another and to engage with providers more effectively. The challenges of work-based assessment and practical activity varies inevitably by sector. The report on Ofsted's interim visits was published on 15th December and is available via the [Ofsted website](#).

Progress monitoring reviews are now taking priority and Reiks pointed out that the emphasis (from an Ofsted perspective) is to remind people of the new EIF and what Ofsted will be focusing on. The key question to be asked, ready for transitioning back to full inspections based on EIF is **Why this, Why now?** What are learners' experiences, how is curriculum being taught? Learner perspective, then leadership and governance.

On-site work is now paused until at least 8th March (will be reviewed prior to this date) unless absolutely necessary. Ofsted's current plan is that providers categorized as 'Requires Improvement' or 'Re-Inspection' (Grade 3/4) will be scheduled for visits first, then a sample of Grade 2, and Grade 1... although it is important to state that this approach has not been confirmed.

## Rob Nitsch – COO: IfATE

We were very pleased to be able to welcome Rob to the Strategic Forum, given the importance of the work IfATE does and how it can impact on the work of our members.

Rob kicked off by providing an overview of the work of IfATE in apprenticeships, T-Levels and pathfinder technical qualifications (L4&5). IfATE is currently working closely with Ofqual on regulation and the safety of people is its main concern, but they are also focused on longer term success and are keen to build back better wherever possible and take the opportunity to move the agenda forward.



Rob also updated us on:

- Impact on certification: where flexibilities have/haven't been implemented; IfATE is keen to hear on any further flexibilities, whilst maintaining quality; are also being proactive in this space themselves

- COVID-19 Building Back Better: aligning apprenticeships to other programmes (Traineeships, Kickstart etc.) and use of more technology i.e. Artificial Intelligence and other systemic improvements, green agenda (environmental panel set up to look at this in more detail)
- Funding band review update: eligible cost review is now finished, and the outcome is awaited with the testing and process pilot ongoing - decisions due around May.
- Quality: [EQA Annual Report](#) published in December 2020 (we encourage all our members to review this document).

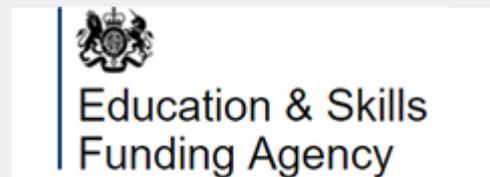
Both Simon Ashworth (AELP) and our members provided Rob with feedback and insight into a range of aspects including:

- Flexibilities
- Apprenticeships
- Traineeships
- FE white paper
- Funding bands review
- IAG eligible/ineligible costs
- Functional skills

We are delighted to have an effective dialogue in place with with Rob (and IfATE), something we will continue to develop as we move forward. We also welcome Rob's concluding comments where he thanked our members for their endeavours in keeping the system working so effectively.

## David Gayther: ESFA

We thank David for providing us with an overview of ESFA's current priorities. Unfortunately, David was affected by sound issues (a problem of the virtual meeting age that we are living in), meaning his presentation was a little briefer than planned! David has, however, taken the time to provide us with an [overview of his presentation](#) for our members to review.



## Rebecca Durber – Regional Engagement Manager: AELP

We've mentioned Rebecca's names a few times already, so we thought it might be useful to tell you a little more about AELP's new Regional Engagement Manager.

Rebecca joined AELP at the end of January 2021 and will play a leading role in monitoring, maintaining and developing relationships with stakeholders (particularly in devolved city regions) and identifying opportunities for members. Rebecca's remit will be national, but she will have a specific focus on London, providing support to Nicki, Jane and the rest of the AELP London management structure.



Rebecca brings a wealth of business development and stakeholder engagement experience to AELP having worked previously at the University of Manchester and Ofsted (and acting as an elected councillor at Manchester City Council for seven years). Rebecca's most recent role was at Cancer Research UK, working as a Local Public Affairs Officer, leading on the charity's engagement with councils and combined authorities; included liaising with a wide range of stakeholders, offering policy advice, supporting service commissioning and lobbying decision-makers.

Rebecca is passionate about social mobility and increasing access into education, training and employment; particularly for groups who have traditionally found it harder to get the support they need.

We have no doubt that you'll get to know Rebecca better through our Forums and events, but if you'd like to discuss anything with her in the meantime... or even just say hello... then you can drop her an email at [rdurber@aelp.org.uk](mailto:rdurber@aelp.org.uk)

## Upcoming events

**There are a range of virtual events and webinars that we believe our members may be interested in.**

Please find all key details below.

### FEBRUARY 2021

- 12 Webinar [OTJ and Funding Updates](#) £49 Online »
- 16 Webinar [Nominee training for those managers who are new in the role on inspection](#) £49 Online »
- 17 Webinar [Mental Health and developing Resilience](#) £49 Online »
- 19 Webinar [AELP Policy Update Webinar – Sponsorship opportunity available](#) £0 Member Exclusive Online »
- 22 Webinar [Secure a new non-devolved Adult Education Budget contract](#) £49 Online
- 24 Webinar [Good practice in Governance arrangements in workplace learning using the EIF](#) £49 Online »
- 26 Webinar [16-18 Traineeship Market Entry Opportunity](#) £49 Online »

### MARCH 2021

- 2 Webinar [Nominee training for those managers who are experienced in the role on inspection](#) £49 Online »
- 3 Webinar [Safeguarding learners from criminal & sexual exploitation linked to gang affiliation and violence](#) £69 Online »
- 17 Webinar [Succeeding at your short Ofsted monitoring visit for new providers under the Education Inspection Framework \(EIF\)](#) £69 Online »
- 18 **[AELP Spring Conference for Practitioners 2021](#)**
- 25 Webinar [Maximising Opportunities for SEND Learners](#) £69 Online »
- 26 Webinar [AELP Policy Update Webinar – Sponsorship opportunity available](#) £0 Member Exclusive Online »
- 27 Webinar [Using Governmental Procurement Portals](#) £69 Online »
- 31 Webinar [Careers information, advice and guidance](#) £0 Online »

### APRIL 2021

- 1 Webinar [Getting ready to deliver Traineeships effectively](#) £69 Online »
- 2 Webinar [Safeguarding in a Digital World](#) £69 Online »
- 20 Webinar [How to make sure you are running great apprenticeship provision](#) £69 Online »
- 23 Webinar [AELP Policy Update Webinar – Sponsorship opportunity available](#) £0 Member Exclusive Online »

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<https://www.aelp.org.uk/resource-and-information-centre/aelp-connect-app/>



**SPRING**  
CONFERENCE  
*For Practitioners*

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**LEARNING CURVE**  
GROUP

Thursday, 18 March, Online

# AELP **SPRING** CONFERENCE 2021

**BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW**

The AELP Spring Conference for Practitioners 2021 is ideally timed after the Chancellor's Budget and the recent Skills for Jobs white paper to allow for providers to be informed and ready for the challenges ahead.

Taking place online, this workshop-centred conference will focus on **4 key themes:**



This conference will also cover areas such as equality, diversity, and inclusion. Content will recognise that AELP members are more than just about apprenticeship delivery.

### **WE WANT YOUR IDEAS TOO!**

AELP has identified particular topics under the four themes which we believe are vitally important for members to see covered in a masterclass or workshop. But we also want to hear about your ideas and so if you have suggestions on what you would like to see in our Spring Conference, please do contact our [Events Team](#).

**New for 2021!** Using the Aventri Virtual Platform, delegates will be able to interact with the session facilitators in numerous ways to make sure you get the most out of your day.

We will be offering both single and group tickets allowing delegates to access the full virtual conference access with post-event resources and recordings.

### **AELP MEMBERS**

**Single ticket:** £120.00 + VAT

**Group booking (4 delegates):** £200.00 + VAT

### **NON-MEMBERS**

**Single ticket:** £220.00 + VAT

**Group booking (4 delegates):** £300.00 + VAT

**BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW**

## Useful information, guides, resources and more

With so much happening across the sector, we thought it would be useful to provide a quick a summary of a few things that you might find useful. And remember the [Resource and Information section](#) of the AELP website is regularly updated with useful resources.

### [Covid-19 \(Coronavirus\) Guidance and Patron Support](#)



AELP has pulled together set of resources to help support providers, their employers and their learners in the response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

### [Lockdown Lift-Off: Bouncing back after COVID-19: Training Qualifications UK - Patron Think Piece](#)

After months of virtual pubs, family quizzes and video conference calls, the national lockdown is slowly lifting... In this Patron Think Piece, Andrew Walker considers how the sector can bounce back after Covid-19.

### [AELP News](#)

AELP's latest press releases provide a great summary of the latest news and responses to what's happening in the Skills sector. They often link to useful AELP papers and other sources of guidance.

### [Ask Ashworth](#)



Simon Ashworth is the Chief Policy Officer at the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP). Through the Ask Ashworth blog, Simon provides key policy information and answers to FAQs

### **AELP Webinars**

AELP hosts regular webinars that address the key issues and challenges of the day. Please use the link above to check in on the latest webinars.

### **Index of Briefing Papers and Submissions**

View a range of policy documents relating to key topical issues and consultations.

## **The AELP London Strategic Forum**

Our next Strategic Forum will take online on Wednesday, 26th May 2021.

Please be aware that only full members of AELP London are able to attend our Strategic Forum meetings.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Wednesday, 26th May 2021	2.00pm – 4.30pm	<u>Online</u>

Please continue to let us know your thoughts on the Strategic Forum, and advising of us of agenda items that you'd like covering by emailing [aelplondon@aelp.org.uk](mailto:aelplondon@aelp.org.uk)

## **Continuing the conversation**

We're committed to engaging with our members, working with you to understand how we can best support you and designing services 'with you, not for you'.

You can also talk with us via Twitter @AELPLondon, or the more 'old fashioned' way by email at [aelplondon@aelp.org.uk](mailto:aelplondon@aelp.org.uk) or over the phone at 0117 440 9525 / 0117 986 5389

Best wishes,

**Jane Hickie**  
**AELP Chief Executive**  
[janehickie@aelp.org.uk](mailto:janehickie@aelp.org.uk)



We want to make sure that CAPITAL evolves to meet the needs of our members. If you have any feedback, or are interested in writing a comment piece, then we would love to hear from you. Please email us at [aelp-london@aelp.co.uk](mailto:aelp-london@aelp.co.uk).



AELP London

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