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Dear Amelia,

For attention of Lifelong Learning: Role of Apprenticeships Scrutiny Panel

Thank you for your invitation to act as an External Advisor for your *Lifelong Learning: Role of Apprenticeships Scrutiny Panel*. This is an interesting project, I would like to make a contribution and take this opportunity to make some observations about apprenticeship. These personal notes reflect my expertise on lifelong and work-related learning. I hope they may be of use to your panel.

My former PhD student, Ian Laurie (2013), explored the apprenticeship system in England. The research combined a historical narrative with contemporary in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with well-placed individuals working within England's current apprenticeship system. These ranged from government departments and agencies to FE colleges and small and micro-employers. The research focused on the activities of government, businesses and organizations operating within the apprenticeship 'system' in England. One of the surprising findings from the research was the ways in which apprenticeship provision in England has been opened up to market forces in such a way as to commodify apprenticeship itself; turning apprenticeship into a system of different sources of revenue for organizations rather than focused on the overall learning experience of the apprentice, as a person. Apprenticeship funding was sliced and diced into different elements of 'apprenticeship monies' which were not integrated. For example, those receiving funding for apprentice placements were not necessarily involved in final outcomes and therefore less accountable for rates of drop out. Laurie's research revealed a range of new agencies and actors seeking different slices of funding and speaking in terms of securing 'apprentice monies' rather than focused on needs of employers and apprentices. The apprenticeship funding system in England became complex and atomistic, it risked losing sight of the overall purpose of apprenticeship; that is, the apprentice themselves.

Laurie highlighted that the history of apprenticeship is one of a triquetra of relationships between government, employer, and educational provider. This model of apprenticeship

has served a test of time. I would argue the model needs to be extended to focus on the needs of the apprentice across a career span. The individual whose capabilities and skills we are seeking to develop over a lifetime should be at the centre of apprenticeship policy.

There can be real tensions between the needs of a government labour force, the needs of employees, the needs of local employers and needs of training providers. These do not always exist in constructive alignment. The policy framework needs to balance these different stakeholder perspectives. For example, the State of Jersey may be more aware of the need to develop a workforce with future Green Skills than a local employer who is focused on the here and now of managing their enterprise. An employee will want to have capabilities that are enduring, transferable and enable mobility between jobs. Whereas an employer may be concerned less with transferability but the specific immediate business needs of their organization. There is a need to balance these differing objectives in the design and implementation of a apprenticeship system.

The place of Green Skills in apprenticeship and post-apprenticeship vocational training provides an example of how these stakeholder needs might develop. There is a need to understand workforce development in terms of the needs for existing trades to be *upskilled*, that is adapt their existing skill sets to new technology. Some of these trades are likely to need to develop *new skills* and others will need to be re-trained or *re-skilled*. An illustrative example would be the need of an automotive mechanic to be upskilled to adapt from combustion engines to hybrid cars to acquiring new skills or being re-skilled to service pure electric cars. Apprenticeship skill training needs continuous review and agility to respond to these technological changes. Future skill requirements, such as the use of Artificial Intelligence, cannot always be anticipated. As identified by the panel, this creates a requirement for pathways for post-apprenticeship lifelong vocational education and training; a framework of modular qualifications that would enable workforce development to keep pace with emerging technologies. Providing, for example, provision of short courses, to upskill, reskill and acquire new unforeseen skills across the life-course.

Any policy framework for apprenticeship needs to be cognizant of the relationships between policy as espoused by government, how this is enacted by employers and training providers and critically, how the policy is experienced by apprentices and learners themselves. Laurie's work highlights how easily it is for the apprentice to become invisible within the apprenticeship system. The experience of apprentices as learners should be central to the planning, implementation and monitoring of apprenticeship and all vocational education and training. This was the aspiration of the 2012 Richards Review of Apprenticeship, at its heart an apprenticeship is a form of education where the apprentice should be the main beneficiary.

In the development of apprenticeship and post-apprenticeship vocational education and training it is useful to consider apprenticeship as a model of learning that has been used across occupational boundaries, by crafts people, lawyers, and medics. In academia the language of Master and PhD degrees also resonate with apprenticeship a learning. As a model of learning Fuller and Unwin make a distinction between restrictive and expansive apprenticeship. I would recommend that apprenticeship policy has expansive apprenticeship as a core aim. One that has the apprentice's learning at the centre and provides the learner with a wide range of experience that develops more enduring and transferable capabilities and skills for the future. More information about expansive apprenticeship can be found in UK Parliament [Committee of Public Accounts Written Evidence from Alison Fuller and Lorna Unwin University of Southampton](#).

Planning and responding to future needs of employees, employers and government is central to an apprenticeship system. A comprehensive needs analysis that informs an industrial strategy, identifies labour market supply and vocational education capability is required. One that reflects the breadth and depth of the key occupational sectors in Jersey. This would also include some gap analysis to identify occupational shortages. Such needs analysis is fundamental to a systems approach to education and training. One that identifies the occupational shortages and technical levels required to meet skill gaps. A system of progression pathways to higher technical vocational levels (not essentially credit bearing) modules would enable a more agile response to labour market changes.

To summarise some concerns about the apprenticeship system in England. The partnership of state, employer and training provider is a strength of apprenticeship as a model of work-based learning. However, the complex funding arrangements, a slicing and dicing of funding sources, risks fragmenting accountability for apprenticeship outcomes and ownership of a high-quality apprenticeship as a learning and skill development. The variable quality of apprenticeship is well documented by Fuller and Unwin. Their concepts of restrictive and expansive apprenticeship provides both a framework to establish aims for an apprenticeship system and possible method to audit of existing apprenticeships. Any fine tuning of the apprenticeship system needs to consider the learning processes and needs of the apprentices themselves. The apprenticeship system needs to accommodate future opportunities for apprentices to up-skill and develop new skills that will improve their employability and life-chances in a rapidly changing world.

To summarize my observations, I would suggest the State of Jersey considers:

Conducting iterative and systematic occupational needs analysis that reflects the priorities of state, employers and employees. This should consider occupational requirements across vocational levels and sectors.

In response to the above analysis. Reviews the capabilities of training providers in terms of resources and skills of educators. For example, a college or private training provider requires highly skill staff both in their subject and educational methods together with access to latest technological resources.

Simplifying the apprenticeship system, including funding mechanisms; so that funding is understood by all stakeholders.

Utilize the concept of Expansive Apprenticeship as an aim and method of auditing provision.

Balancing the power of stakeholder influence on the of apprenticeship system. This should be a genuine partnership between state, employer, training providers and include employees and apprentices themselves.

Provide pathways for progression from apprenticeship to higher vocational qualification as well as, within qualification level, skill development across the career span.

Make the apprentice the primary beneficiary of expansive learning that future proofs their employment capability.

I hope this letter proves helpful to the panel. If I or Southampton Education School can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours Sincerely

Prof Martin Dyke

References:

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