Apprenticeship Levy funds in Scotland should only be spent on apprenticeship programmes

Tuesday 30 August, 2016

Following a major consultation exercise with its membership, the Scottish Training Federation (STF) has concluded that Apprenticeship Levy Funds should only be spent on apprenticeship (or apprenticeship-related) programmes in Scotland and with immediate effect an urgent review of the phased reduction in Modern Apprenticeship (MA) contribution rates should be implemented.

This overarching position forms the key response by STF to the Scottish Government consultation on the best use of the Apprenticeship Levy in Scotland which closed on 26 August. Its aim was to seek views from businesses, industry and stakeholders on options for the use of its share of UK Apprenticeship Levy funding being transferred to the Scottish Government.

Commenting on this position Stuart McKenna, chief executive of STF said: “STF is highly regarded as the voice of training providers in Scotland and collectively it is our view that the use of Apprenticeship Levy funds for any broader workforce development, training or employment support is not appropriate. The funds should be spent on apprenticeship programmes only. In addition, we need an urgent review of the phased reduction in modern apprenticeship contribution rates with an immediate stop on further planned reductions.”

In addition to the above STF is calling for a number of changes to be made to current programme arrangements, including:

- *an expansion of ‘priority sectors’*
- *consideration to more management, sales, food and drink, and retail focussed frameworks*
- *new MA frameworks to plug existing gaps, including for example team leading, recruitment and funeral services*
- *a change to funding age bands*
- *a number of MAs set aside for those with disabilities.*

“We held three workshops, a special meeting of our Board of Directors and one to one meetings with a range of member organisations to ensure our response to Scottish Government was as reflective as possible with those of our membership,” added Stuart. “I would like to thank our members for participating in this consultation process. Other key findings worth highlighting are that grants should be made available to employers to address gender imbalances and that modern apprenticeship providers should be supported to develop their workforce skills and processes with better links to specialist employment providers through incentivised innovation funding. Our full response which contains all our key findings is available to view on our website, www.stf.org.uk.”

STF represents training providers operating in the field of work based training across Scotland. It has over 130 members and is widely regarded as the ‘voice’ of training providers. The organisation is consulted by all major skills stakeholders, including Scottish Government, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Qualifications Authority and City & Guilds. Collectively STF members delivered more than 20,000 Modern Apprenticeships in 2015-16 – almost 72% of all Modern Apprenticeships delivered in Scotland.

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