

# Strategic changes to skills and education

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# Headlines

Significant change across the educational landscape, which will directly affect employers and the delivery of skills training in FE colleges, Universities and ITP's

- Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Skills England and DfE changes
- New FE Commissioner, which will change the direction of FE Colleges
- New Ofsted Framework with inspections starting in November 2025
- White Paper - Post 16 Skills Strategy

# Changing landscape

- Skills England now located within the DWP
- Focused on...
  - Apprenticeships
  - Adult Skills, Training and Careers

*“We are adding skills to the job description of the Department for Work and Pensions as we accelerate our drive to Get Britain Working...Our renewed focus comes as we deliver the biggest overhaul of job centres in a generation and a £240 million investment to boost employment.”*

***Pat McFadden, Work and Pensions Secretary.***

- Higher Education and Further Education, skills and training for those under 19 remains with DfE.

# Post-16 Education and Skills – White Paper

- **Growth and Skills Levy:**

- Reform of Apprenticeship Levy
- Employers to be able to use the levy on short, flexible training courses, starting from April 2026
- Designed to help employers respond quickly to evolving skills needs and invest in workforce development

- **HTQ Expansion:**

- Modular delivery and flexible entry via Lifelong Learning Entitlement
- DfE and OfS working on process to grant FE providers awarding powers for “occupationally focused” Level 4 & 5.

# Post-16 Education and Skills – White Paper

## **V Levels:**

- Content will be linked to occupational standards that are set by Skills England
- Expect new V Levels will be similar in size to an A levels
- **Youth Guarantee** - Universal guarantee of a place at college or ITP.
- **Guaranteed job for young people:**
  - For those on Universal Credit who remain unemployed for over 18 months, the government will offer a guaranteed job
- **Attendance tracking and early intervention**

# Post-16 Education and Skills – White Paper

- 16-19 English and maths preparation for GCSE level 1 qualifications
  - For those with prior attainment  $\leq$  Grade 2
- Mental Health support teams expanded to 60% of all colleges – April 2026
- Review of 16-19 allocation formula, revision implemented 2027-28
  - £1.2 billion additional annual investment by 2028-29
- National Professional Development Framework for Staff:
  - Standardised training and CPD and Industry Placements for Staff

# Changing student population

- 65% of UK children aged between 8 and 11 have a smartphone
- Children aged 5-15 now spend an average of 4.5 hours per day online
- The average attention span of a Gen Alpha (born from 2010) is 5 seconds
- 35% of Gen Alpha students state they have mental health issues
- 85% of Gen Alpha expect education providers to give, borrow or loan IT devices

# Key Differences



	Gen Z:	Gen Alpha:
<b>Born</b>	1997 – 2010	2010 – 2024
<b>Education Level</b>	Younger Gen Z are in Secondary education	Secondary education, older Gen A transitioning to FE now
<b>Technology usage</b>	Digital Natives	Digital Dependents
<b>Parental influence</b>	Later Boomers/Earlier Gen Xers	Later Gen Xers/Millennials
<b>External Events</b>	Recession & tech advancements	COVID
<b>Personality Type</b>	Information seekers	Experience seekers



# Ofsted's New Report Card for Further Education & Skills

Leadership\*

Inclusion\*

Safeguarding\*

\*all  
providers

Contribution in Meeting  
Skills Needs\*\*

\*\*only in colleges and  
specialist-designated  
institutions

- Exceptional
- Strong Standard
- Expected Standard
- Needs Attention
- Urgent Improvement

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- Strong Standard
- Expected Standard
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- Met
- Not Met

- Exceptional
- Strong Standard
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- Urgent Improvement

Education  
Programmes for  
Young People \*\*\*

Provision for  
Learners with High  
Needs \*\*\*

Apprenticeships \*\*\*

Adult Learning  
Programmes \*\*\*

\*\*\* Funded  
programme specific  
and where applicable

Curriculum

Developing  
Teaching &  
Training

Achievement

Participation &  
Development

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