

**Association of Learning Providers  
Press release – 12 May 2010**

The Association of Learning Providers has today issued the following statement in response to the formation of the new coalition government:-

With unemployment at its highest since 1994 and nearly a million 16 to 24-year-olds now out of work, the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) is hoping that the new coalition government will put in some serious thinking on how we can avoid a 'lost generation' of young people. Ministers might want to look, for example, at the proposal in the Liberal Democrat manifesto for a work placement scheme with up to 800,000 places to provide young people with the opportunity to gain skills, qualifications and work experience even if they can't find a job. We also want to see a reversal of the previous administration's policy of substantially cutting the Entry to Employment programme for 2010-11 which is so important for disadvantaged 16 and 17 year olds.

The growth in adult and long-term unemployment means that we must see a greater integration of employment and skills programmes. ALP wants to see more unemployed people get access to basic skills training to increase their chances of securing a sustainable job.

Specifically on skills, we know that the primary Conservative focus will be on apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship provision. With Train to Gain being run down, this should require no fresh demands on the Treasury as the money will be switched to help create 400,000 work pairing, apprenticeship, college and training places over two years. Prior to the election, the Conservatives' skills team backed ALP proposals for a broadening of the 'apprenticeship family' to cover all NVQ levels in addition to the previous concentration of provision on levels 2 and 3. Again, our members' employer customers and young people would like to see these proposals safeguarded in the emergency budget along with the Conservative manifesto commitment for 20,000 additional young apprenticeship places.

Both coalition partners are committed to rationalising the number of quangos in the sector and the Liberal Democrats believe that HE and FE could be funded by one agency. But the prospect of an emergency budget against the backdrop of an enormous budget deficit should not tempt ministers and officials towards a planner's paradise. A demand-led system for employment and skills is the most effective way of delivering more at less cost to the taxpayer.

New ministers are expected to speak at the ALP annual conference in London on 14-15 July – see conference programme at <https://registration.livegroup.co.uk/alp2010/>.

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**Notes to editors**

**1. About the Association of Learning Providers**

The Association of Learning Providers (ALP) is the leading trade association for vocational learning and employment providers in Britain. The majority of its 495 members are independent private, not-for-profit and voluntary sector training organisations. Membership is open to any provider committed to quality vocational learning and it includes over 50 FE colleges involved in work based learning. ALP members train a significant majority of the apprentices in England and are the major deliverers of New Deal and Train to Gain contracts on behalf of government. More information is available at: [www.learningproviders.org.uk](http://www.learningproviders.org.uk).