

News story: Justine Greening hosts first ever DfE Skills Summit

At the first Skills Summit held at the DfE in Whitehall today (30 November), Justine Greening will tell Britain's top businesses that enlisting their support in training the next generation of highly skilled British workers is the key to creating a country fit for the future, ready to seize the opportunities of Brexit.

The Skills Summit, supported by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), will bring together leading employers representing over 3.5 million UK employees, to help spearhead a major skills reform programme.

In a speech to an audience that is expected to include companies like Amazon, Google, Capgemini, Rolls Royce, Fujitsu, KPMG, Barclays, Tarmac, EDF and Deloitte, the Education Secretary will urge businesses to work in a new partnership with government to deliver a skills revolution, and sign up to a statement of action with government.

Outlining the government's ambitions on skills to employers, the Education Secretary, Justine Greening is expected to say:

This government is investing in developing our homegrown talent so British business has the skills it needs and so that young people can get the opportunities they want.

We are determined to work in partnership with business to provide them opportunities to match the talent across the country. That is why this government is investing billions in technical education and why today I am calling on employers to bring their innovation, creativity and commitment to technical education reform. Only employers can provide the work placements and apprenticeships that make these reforms a success.

Eliminating the UK's skills gap will have a transformative impact on people's lives and the wider economy. With around 20% of our productivity gap with Germany and France due to lower skill levels, tackling this deficit will ensure Britain is ready to take advantage of the opportunities provided by Brexit.

The Education Secretary will also launch new Institutes of Technology (IoTs) with applicants able to bid for £170million of funding. IoTs will be collaborations by employers, HE and FE colleges, and specialise in science, technology, engineering and maths, providing students with prestigious qualifications that are highly sought after by local employers. By bridging local skills gaps, IoTs will drive growth and widen opportunity.

In a further announcement, £10m will be invested in new Career Learning

pilots across the UK. This funding will be used to support local growth and productivity by testing how best to get adults to return to learning.

Further reforms to be announced at the summit will include:

- A consultation on the design of T levels seeking views on how to work with businesses to deliver work placements as part of the govt reforms to deliver T Levels
- The roll out of the first seven Skills Advisory Panels in regions across England to help identify the skills needs and employer demands at a local level
- The full list of panel members to help create the content for the new T levels, which will begin rolling out in 2020

Speaking at the summit today CBI Director General Carolyn Fairbairn said:

There has never been a more important time to move beyond saying skills matter and deliver real change. Government and business must work together to ensure people have access to great careers and the needs of our economy are met.

Immediate priorities include adapting the apprenticeship system and making the new T-levels a success. Today is an important milestone in enabling firms to shape training and the Department for Education to hear their views directly – the start of a renewed partnership.

Today's announcement builds on the Budget (22 November) which set out significant investment in skills, including an extra £20m for colleges to build the workforce to deliver new T level qualifications. The government has already signalled its determination to invest in technical education by committing £500million to T levels once all routes are up and running.

The first 7 Skills Advisory Panel areas are Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Leeds, Greater Lincolnshire, Thames Valley Berkshire, Cornwall & Isles of Scilly.