

Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers League table launches

The Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers rankings will celebrate some of the country's most outstanding apprenticeship employers and will assist potential apprentices, parents and careers advisers to identify the best apprenticeship opportunities with the highest performing apprentice employers in England.

New in 2020, the annual Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers rankings will showcase the very best of England's large apprenticeship employers, alongside the Top 50 SME apprenticeship employers. These employers will be recognised for providing some of the most successful apprenticeship programmes over the previous 12 months.

These new rankings have been developed in partnership with High Fliers Research, who will independently assess and compile the new national leader board of top apprenticeship employers.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Delivering high-quality apprenticeships is a vital part of our commitment to level up skills and opportunity across the country.

This new league table is a chance to showcase how apprenticeships have transformed businesses and changed lives. There are hundreds of employers of all sizes, up and down the country, providing people of all ages and backgrounds the chance to learn new skills and have successful careers.

This list will help everyone, from young people to career-changers, to make informed decisions about their future and unleash their full potential. I encourage all eligible employers to apply.

Apprenticeship employers in every industry and employment sector – from accountancy, fashion and law, to teaching, nursing and engineering – are invited to enter for the rankings. Entries for 2020 are open from today, Thursday 12 March, with the results to be announced at a special launch event for apprenticeship employers in the summer of 2020.

There are two apprenticeship employer categories for the 2020 rankings:

- Large employers – for organisations with 250 employees or more, that employ a minimum of 25 apprentices
- SME employers – for organisations with fewer than 250 employees that employ a minimum of 5 apprentices

Keith Smith, Director, Apprenticeships Group, ESFA said:

We know there are outstanding employers, of all sizes, delivering apprenticeships in all sectors. For us, the Top 100 large employer and Top 50 SME employer rankings will give recognition and thanks to those who show great commitment to apprenticeships. The process they will follow will enable them to highlight their dedication to creating apprenticeship opportunities.

I look forward to hearing the announcement of the Top 100 large and Top 50 SME apprenticeship employers in the summer.

Employers will submit entries by 5pm on Thursday 9 April and a follow-up telephone interview with each entrant will take place. Employer data will be independently verified and employers with the highest scores will be ranked. The final rankings will be announced this summer.

More information about the process can be found by visiting the [Top Apprenticeship Employers website](#).

[Transport Secretary acts to make pavements safer for pedestrians](#)

- pavements set to become safer for parents and disabled people thanks to proposals to crack down on pavement parking
- consultation will look at options including how a national pavement parking ban could work, taking into account necessary exceptions, and extended enforcement powers for local authorities
- latest in a series of improvements by the Transport Secretary to accelerate pace of change for a more accessible transport network

New proposals to tackle pavement parking and make streets safer for parents and disabled people were set out today by Transport Secretary Grant Shapps (12 March 2020).

The government is set to consult on proposals in the summer designed to improve the lives of people with mobility or sight impairments, as well as parents with prams who may be forced into the road to get around parked cars.

The 12-week consultation will include options such as allowing local authorities with civil parking enforcement powers to crack down on unnecessary obstruction of the pavement. Currently, outside London, only police have this power.

It will also consider how a nationwide ban on pavement parking enforced by local authorities might work, allowing for any necessary exceptions or designated spots for pavement parking where needed, and how a tailored

approach may be required in rural and suburban areas which face very different challenges.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Vehicles parked on the pavement can cause very real difficulties for many pedestrians.

That's why I am taking action to make pavements safer and I will be launching a consultation to find a long-term solution for this complex issue.

We welcome the Transport Select Committee's recent report and share their drive to tackle pavement parking and improve people's daily lives.

In 2019 the Department for Transport concluded a review which looked at the problems caused by pavement parking, the effectiveness of legislation, and the case for reform.

It found that pavement parking was problematic for 95% of respondents who are visually impaired and 98% of wheelchair users.

The Transport Select Committee also recently conducted an inquiry into the issue, with the commitment to consult on proposals forming a key part of the government's response to its findings.

Blanche Shackleton, head of policy, campaigns and public affairs at Guide Dogs said:

Pavement parking prevents people with sight loss from getting out and about safely, resulting in feelings of loneliness and isolation.

We look forward to working with the Government to make this proposed law a reality.

Stephen Edwards, Director of Policy and Communications at Living Streets said:

Pavement parking forces people with wheelchairs, buggies and those living with sight loss into the road and into oncoming traffic and the most vulnerable pedestrians continue to be put at risk of injury and isolation every day that this dangerous act continues.

Clear pavements need clear laws, but currently regional differences cause confusion. We need a nationwide default ban, with the option

to allow pavement parking in certain circumstances, as is currently available in London. This would be much simpler to enact and easier for everyone to understand.

The department is also looking at possible options to streamline and digitise the process used to create restrictions such as temporary road closures for roadworks, special events or permanent changes to speed limits and parking restrictions, known as 'traffic regulation orders'.

Emma Free, 39, from Suffolk, a guide dog owner and longstanding campaigner on pavement parking said:

This announcement is a big weight off my shoulders. Cars parked on the pavement frequently force me into oncoming traffic and it makes me feel so disorientated and anxious.

Sometimes it just becomes too much and it makes me feel like I don't want to go out at all, which defeats the purpose of having a wonderful guide dog. This announcement is fantastic news.

A TRO Discovery Project, carried out in partnership with GeoPlace, Ordnance Survey and the British Parking Association, completed last year which explored the process of making TROs, and how TRO data is made available and used across the country. A legislative review of the is now underway to find ways to improve it and make it easier for local authorities to implement restrictions.

Last month, the government launched an advertising campaign to improve the journeys of disabled passengers on public transport. 'it's everyone's journey' will raise awareness about the needs of disabled people when using public transport, particularly people with non-visible impairments, and will also prompt members of the public to think and consider how their behaviour might impact others.

For more information visit gov.uk/everyonesjourney, or follow [@IEJGov](https://twitter.com/IEJGov) on Twitter.

[Speech for Airport Operators Association annual dinner](#)

Good evening. Thank you for that welcome.

It's a pleasure to join you. And a real privilege – as an aviation enthusiast – to speak at your annual dinner....

So thanks to Karen and her team for inviting me.

And thank you all for making it this evening to celebrate everything that's great about our aviation sector.

An amazing turnout... actually filling one of the largest formal dining venues in Europe.

You'll be supplied with delicious food.

The wine waiters will be constantly checking up to see if your glasses are filled.

So don't hold back.

But do be aware of the staff in the lavatories...

They're secretly working for MI5 and are there to make sure you don't nick any loo rolls.

We stand amid a testing time for aviation, but one that, together, I am certain we shall weather.

And, if we continue to work together, fuelled by friendly competition, tempered by necessary co-operation... I am certain we can overcome the current turbulence for British and global aviation.

First, let me say a few words about the situation today.

I want to thank the staff of FlyBe, the CAA, our new Aviation Minister Kelly Tolhurst and everyone involved in the operation managing a difficult few days.

As you know, the government, along with industry partners, were engaged in attempts to find a commercially viable solution.

However, the onset of the coronavirus proved one issue too many.

As we saw with Thomas Cook, no one company, no matter its pedigree or history, has a right to survive or place an undue burden on the taxpayer.

It's the competitive nature of the industry that benefits passengers and opens up air travel to all..

Yet for employees and suppliers, the distress and uncertainty at a time like this can be wrenching.

Which is why the government is providing support to help people find new jobs.

We are working on a regional connectivity review to ensure no community has to wait too long before the connections they need are re-established.

These individual episodes, however, are in danger of being overshadowed by a

much larger crisis.

COVID-19 is having a dramatic impact across the sector.

I am determined that the government, without prejudice to particular firms, does its bit to ensure that a random act of nature doesn't undermine well managed businesses.

On Friday last I wrote to the slots coordination body ACL, to request they rapidly examine the 80:20 slots issue which is proving so vexatious.

It makes no sense, environmentally or financially, for airlines to be forced to fly ghost planes.

This morning I followed this up by calling on the EU Commission to give this matter urgent attention – I look forward to a positive response.

Like industry colleagues, my officials at the department have been working tirelessly in recent weeks and months to help support the sector.

As we meet here tonight, I want to let you know that I understand the enormity of what you are facing, and this Government will stand by your side.

I know the prosperity of your sector and our country, are, after all, intertwined.

Beyond the immediate term, there are other challenges. Whether it's the Court of Appeal's decision on airport expansion, or our departure from the EU and its institutions, we will work together to find solutions.

We will overcome these immediate challenges and we will then go on to overcome perhaps the great challenge of all.

That is the challenge of decarbonising our planet.

The UK has voted to reach Net Zero by 2050 and, as you know, aviation will have to do its part.

This is no mean feat while maintaining, and indeed improving, living standards.

And this mission is particularly challenging in the context of aviation.

Now let me say at the outset which side I am on. I do not believe, like some, that Net Zero requires us to retreat from progress.

To succumb to some Mal-thusian doctrine.

To lower our sights...

To live a little less...

No. I believe that the answer lies where it has always lain...

In our ingenuity,..

In the creative genius of our engineers and in the dynamism of our economy.

I am confident in our ability to meet the challenge ahead..

I am also mindful of the scale of that challenge.

But you are responding.

You're responding with a level of excellence unparalleled among our global competitors...

From the pioneering work of UK firm Velosys in greener aviation fuels, to the development of electric flight at Cranfield with Airbus.

Or the 300 mph electric plane unveiled in Gloucestershire by Rolls Royce.

Together with billions of pounds of government support for research and development, and your sustainable aviation 2050 Road Map, which I was pleased to help launch last month, this country can once again be on the crest of a new wave of aviation technology.

Working together, government and industry, we can overcome seemingly impregnable barriers.

And in the next few weeks I will be saying more about my proposals to join up government and industry work to give British aviation a head start.

Aviation is by its very nature is dynamic. Your outlook is global, ambitious and entrepreneurial.

And I know that even as we meet this evening, facing challenges on a truly global scale, we will prevail, come out stronger, with you and this sector leading the world once again.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for all you are doing,

And have a fun evening – thank you.

PM statement on attack in Iraq: 11 March 2020

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The attack against the Taji military base in Iraq is deplorable.

Our servicemen and women work tirelessly every day to uphold security and stability in the region – their presence makes us all safer.

The Foreign Secretary has spoken to the US Secretary of State and we will continue to liaise with our international partners to fully understand the details of this abhorrent attack.

Readout of tech roundtable: 11 March 2020

This evening, major technology companies – including Amazon, Google and Facebook – met with officials at Downing Street to discuss how they can help make sure the public get the most accurate and up-to-date information on coronavirus.

The tech companies were invited to discuss and consider their role in modelling and tracking data of the disease, and the impact any government interventions were having upon keeping the public safe.

Officials set out the vital role they can play in helping deliver the government's action plan, supporting the NHS, and helping develop tools we can use across the country as part of our national effort.

They stressed how important tech firms were in ensuring communities, including vulnerable people, had access to the most reliable information. This would help individuals and families make informed decisions about how to respond to the virus and keep themselves healthy.

In the meeting, the potential extent, scope and impact of disinformation linked to coronavirus was also discussed, and how we can all play a role in tackling this.

Attendees included:

- UK CEOs including representatives from Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Apple and Facebook
- NHS Chief Executive Simon Stevens
- No 10 officials