



Minutes AAN National Meeting: 25th March 2021
Location Virtual – Microsoft Teams
Time 10.30 – 12:30

1. Welcome and Introductions – Jason Holt CBE

The Network Chair Jason opened the meeting and welcomed all. This is the first national meeting since the AAN Conference which was a huge success. Jason thanked Emma Beauchamp for her fantastic job in co-hosting the conference and thanked the Minister, Karen Woodward and all key speakers during the conference.

Welcome to Lt. Cmdr. Norma Muyombo standing in for Lt. Col. Ingrid Hall at this meeting and also Craig Smith, our newest member from Babcock International.

Matt O’Conner, Tom Culley and Luke Cryan were thanked for representing the network at the ESFA Spring Festival on Apprenticeships which was well received.

Jason also thanked Aimee Rodgers from the ESFA who has helped to support the Network for the past 3 years and has now moved on to another role.

The AAN Newsletter will shortly be shared with the network. If members have any good news stories or updates they’d like to share, please send to the ESFA.

Action: Any content members would like included in future AAN newsletters to be shared with Emily.

emily.chapman-wade@education.gov.uk

2. Programme Update – Karen Woodward

Programme performance

An update was provided on the Apprenticeship programme. The data has been updated and published on 21st March and can be found at;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>

The importance of employers advertising their vacancies on the Find an Apprenticeship Service was highlighted and the Minister is keen on all employers with apprenticeship vacancies to do so.

Action: Network members to use the FAA site to post vacancies and to share this ask with other AAN members

Summary of the 2021 Budget

An extension of the apprenticeship incentive from 1 April to 30 September 2021 and an increase in the payment to £3,000 regardless of the age of the apprentice. This is in addition to the existing £1,000 payment the government provides for all new 16-18 year-old apprentices and those aged under 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan, where that applies.

The Government will introduce a £7 million fund from July 2021 to help employers in England set up and expand portable apprenticeships. This will enable people who need to work across multiple projects with different employers to benefit from the high quality long-term training that an apprenticeship provides. Employers themselves will also benefit from access to a diverse apprenticeship talent pipeline. Employers will be invited to bring forward proposals, and in particular the Creative Industries Council will be asked to do so in recognition of the potential benefits of this new approach for the creative sector.

An additional £126 million will be made to create 40,000 more Traineeships, funding high-quality work placements and training for 16-24 year-olds in the 2021/22 academic year.

The new Help to Grow scheme will offer up to 130,000 companies across the UK a digital and management boost, due to begin June 2021.

The Government will offer a new UK-wide management programme to upskill 30,000 SMEs in the UK over three years. Developed in partnership with industry, the programme will combine a national curriculum delivered through business schools with practical case studies and mentoring from experienced business professionals. Over 12 weeks, and 90% subsidised by government, this programme will equip SMEs with the tools to grow their businesses and thrive.

For more information and to register your interest for the programmes please go to - <https://helptogrow.campaign.gov.uk/>

ESFA Team support for the Network

A brief update provided on the structure of the Employer Advocacy and Ambassador Networks Team. Steve Jenkins has joined the team and this will enable further strengthening between the Ambassador network and Celebratory Comms such as the Awards and National Apprenticeship Week.

A request was made for the Apprenticeship dataset to be shared;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>

The importance of the relationship between DWP and DfE was also highlighted in light of the Kickstart programme and progression to apprenticeships. Encouraging progression between apprenticeships and other technical education/skills offers is a programme priority and these routes are continuously being strengthened.

3. Update on AAN Strategy – Neil Weller MBE, Deepak Sharma

Following the day Network Workshop in late 2020, Neil and Deepak summarised the purpose and developments from the workshop.

As a reminder, the Network assessed and reviewed its core activities in light of the emerging Apprenticeship programme priorities that have been published in the Skills for Jobs White paper.

All feedback and suggested/refined activities from the workshop have been summarised and shared with the network. A series of 11 common indicators/headings have been surmised from the suggested activities. The AAN regions have been developing regional business plans, with activities being reported against the common indicators *which are relevant to each region*.

The link between each common indicator and the relevant new Apprenticeship programme priority and AAN Strategy quadrant has been made. This ensures that the ESFA, and the Network, can demonstrate a clear link between all ambassadorial activities and programme priorities so that this can be highlighted internally and externally, demonstrating the strategic value and profile of the network.

Ambassadors discussed which indicators are easy or challenging to record activities against.

Recording volunteer hours consistently was mentioned and the London AAN volunteered to share their methodology with the other regions.

Action: Neil to arrange the London network to share their methodology in capturing AAN volunteer hours with the other regions.

The indicator for 'Increasing SME membership' was queried, should the measure be membership or engagement with SMEs. It was agreed that regions can report/focus their activities on SME engagement rather than the narrower focus on SME membership increase

The next steps were summarised as;

- **Action: AAN regions to send their business plans to ESFA by end of March**
- **Action: AAN Multi-regional members to discuss at their meeting how their activities can be collated/reported against the common indicators**
- ESFA to submit the internal business case requesting AAN regional Grant funding with a response likely by late May

4. Quality Strategy – Employer Strand: Anthony Knowles

Anthony summarised the employer strand of the Quality Strategy and outlined how members of the network can support on this agenda. Apprentices spend 80% of their time with employers and it is therefore vital that we all focus on delivering a quality experience for the apprentice.

A quality roadmap has been produced which outlines different stages of the apprenticeship journey. This roadmap will be digitised and held on the Apprenticeship Service in due course. The expected outcomes for each leg of the quality roadmap are also stated and the roadmap has been shared with a host of employers and stakeholders who have approved the document. The roadmap is included on the slides shared with the network.

Action: AAN members to share the roadmap link with their members

Action: AAN members to share best practice and resources for the different stages of the Quality roadmap to;
anthony.knowles@education.gov.uk

The latest link to achievement rates which was mentioned can be found at;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/qualification-achievement-rates-and-minimum-standards>

5. Formalising Network Insight: ESFA/All

As one of the quadrants of the AAN strategy, the importance of Insight has been increased especially since the onset of Covid19 with the network contributing to numerous consultations and insight requests.

This has been recognised by various ESFA policy colleagues and in recognition of the trusted voice of the network, it has been proposed to hold regular formal insight meetings on a bi-monthly basis. The proposal is to;

- Arrange meetings/calls every 2 months with the AAN
- Calls to be joined by colleagues in different policy areas to gather insight from the network
- Calls will be open to everyone, however they may sometimes have a focus on SME/Large Employer or sector.
- There will be core Group for insight (regional Chairs and Multi-regional members), but invites will be shared to a representative group by Chairs, depending on the topic.

There was support from the majority of members in being part of the Core Group/invitee list for insight and consultation meetings as and when called upon.

Action: ESFA to set up a schedule of insight and consultation meetings with the core AAN membership

6. NAW 2021 Summary: Steve Jenkins

Some highlights and successes for NAW were shared including some support and messaging from the Prime Minister and engagement from the Twitter pages including those of the Royal Family, BBC Bitesize and the Bank of England.

There were numerous media articles, activities from the Ambassadors and press coverage for the week. Some announcements were also made during the week for example the pilot in some key Traineeship sector, including Transport and Construction.

The network was thanked for their support and engagement with NAW and some of the highlights included;

Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network & Young Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network annual conference attended by the Minister and over 300+ attendees

London Ambassador Network organised 20 conversation cafes during NAW

South West AAN supported the SW Virtual Apprenticeship Expo

East of England AAN: Class of 2020 campaign

Y&H YAAN – ‘I Love Apprenticeships because...’

Action: ESFA to arrange UCAS to speak at a future AAN meeting

7. AAN Conference Summary: Steven Heaton/Emily Chapman-Wade

The AAN Conference working group, George Ritchie MBE, Elizabeth Flegg, Emma Beauchamp and Matthew Newman were thanked for helping to arrange the conference.

The National Conference was delivered virtually for the first time and was well received by the Network. The vast majority of respondents in the evaluation deemed the conference to be excellent or good (97%).

The input from Karen Woodward, the Minister and YAAN Lockdown stories rated highest in terms of items that attendees enjoyed the most.

Feedback provided to help improve response rates for the evaluation include a shorter (1 page) evaluation/questionnaire.

AOB

Karen Woodward is retiring shortly and this is the last AAN National meeting that Karen will attend. All of the AAN membership thanked Karen for the regular updates provided to the network and the way she has supported the network for a number of years.

It was also announced that Frank Clayton MBE will be stepping down as Yorkshire and Humber regional Chair and has started the succession planning process. The Chair and all members of the network thanked Frank for his many years of passionate service supporting the network and leading the Yorkshire and Humber region.

This is also the last AAN meeting to be attended by Ann Potterton (BT) and Ann was thanked for the expertise and value she has brought into the network.

Mark Coulson was also introduced as the new link within IfATE for the AAN, replacing Jill Nicholls.