

Raising the leaving age to 18

Government has decided that people up to the age of 18 must be involved in some kind of training.

This has potentially severe repercussions for the owners of small businesses recruiting staff from this age range.

Key parts of the text from the government paper explaining the bill are attached separately. Looking at them, the elements of greatest concern for small businesses would seem to be:-

1. It places a duty on an employer employing a young person for more than 20 hours a week to either provide accredited training or to check evidence provided by the young person that they are in receipt of appropriate training. We think the problems likely to arise for small businesses will be:-
 - a. As it is difficult for a small business to provide accredited training, they are most likely to be forced to turn to local colleges. Do you agree? Do you know of other providers of accredited training who can accept trainees in ones or occasionally twos?
 - b. In many parts of the SW, small businesses have grave concerns about the standard both of the teaching and of the discipline at the local FE College. What are standards like at your local FE College? Is the standard of skills developed acceptable? Do they support your efforts to get young people to understand 'work discipline'?
 - c. In practice what action will be required to 'check'? As the main duty to participate is placed on the young person, is it reasonable to require the employer to 'check' that a young person is in receipt of training? If so, to what degree? Examples of what would and what would not be acceptable would be very helpful
2. We welcome the fact that employers will not be required to pay people for the time spent on training. However, this opens up other possibilities:-
 - a. Young people may choose to take jobs that require less than 20 hours work a week.

Government needs to recognise that this will happen as there are young people who are so disenchanted with 'learning' that they will work very hard to avoid it.

What are members' views on this?

b. Unscrupulous employers may ignore the requirement. One of members' concerns over regulation is that it is an extra burden on the 'good guys' and the cowboys ignore it like they ignore everything else. Certainly many young people are likely to expect to be paid for the whole period and not just when they work. So employers ignoring the training aspect may have a recruitment advantage.

What are members' views on this? How would they like to see it enforced?

- c. Are there other implications we need to bring to the attention of Government?
3. The Government considers that: - *The learning young people are doing must enable them to progress and recognise their achievements.* (note – questions 1 and 2 are on the first document)
 - a. Assuming much of the training on day release will take place in colleges, does this description of the learning fit your current experience of them? Names of colleges doing well and details of what they do that you like would be much appreciated.

- b. What changes will be required to improve matters?
4. The Government considers that: - *We believe young people should work towards recognised qualifications, although we will not make curriculum requirements of independent providers or home education.*
- a. Are recognised qualifications of value to you as a business?
 - b. Do you think they will help motivate the young person to complete the course?
 - c. Do you agree that training arranged by an employer has to be 'accredited' and lead to a recognised qualification, when this requirement is not also imposed on independent providers or on home educators?
 - d. Do you think employers should be free to choose the most appropriate training for the young person?
5. The Government considers that: - *All learning should include functional skills in English and maths, at least up to level 2. These will be requirements in publicly funded courses.*
- a. Small businesses will be dependant on publicly funded provision. Is it discriminatory to require functional skills in English and maths only as part of publicly funded provision?
 - b. Should it be a requirement of any training?
 - c. Should the requirement be restricted to level 2 (GCSEs)?
 - d. Should the same requirements be made of schools and FE colleges providing full time education?
6. One of the duties of providers will be to ensure attendance, helping overcome any barriers.
- a. How confident are members that public sector providers are capable of this?
 - b. Details of the experiences that lie behind your comment would be appreciated.

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