

**Date**

06.11.2024

**For the attention of**

Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern  
Minister of State (Minister for Skills)  
Department of Education  
Sent by email

**CC:**

Minister Karin Smyth  
Minister of State  
Department of Health and Social Care

Navina Evans  
Chief Workforce Officer  
NHS England

Dear Minister,

**Healthcare apprenticeships**

I write to you on behalf of employers in the NHS to raise their concern with the intention to alter funding mechanisms for higher level apprenticeships.

NHS Employers is part of the NHS Confederation, the membership body that brings together, supports and speaks for the whole healthcare system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The NHS leaders we represent employ 1.4 million staff, care for more than 1 million patients a day and control £150 billion of public expenditure. We look forward to working with you and your team to support the much-needed reform of the apprenticeship levy to a new Growth and Skills Levy.

As you will know from your time leading NHS organisations, the NHS is one of the biggest providers of apprenticeships at all levels and see the very real benefits access to apprenticeships and good work have on individuals through providing a career path to secure and meaningful work, for the NHS through helping us train the next

generation of staff and for local communities who see benefits to their economies. This makes them key to the Growth, Opportunity and Health Missions of the government.

In recent years, clinical degree apprenticeships have been increasingly important and have become a critical part of the NHS' plan to attract and develop staff to become Registered Nurses and Allied Health Professionals.

Higher level apprenticeships are also an essential component of developing Advanced and Specialist Practice for non-medical clinicians and these roles will be an important component of the delivery of the 'three shifts' that the government has set out as the key aims of its policy for the NHS – analogue to digital, National to Neighbourhood Health Service and a focus on treatment to a focus on prevention.

Our members are however concerned that the changes now being considered for higher level apprenticeships (particularly at Level 7, and any change to Level 6) will weaken the ability to provide access to essential clinically based apprenticeships. We would welcome further discussions with you to ensure that any short-term changes to the apprenticeship system and levy continue to support the benefits of clinically based apprenticeships for staff development, to attract the workforce of the future, to ensure patients get the best possible care and to support local economies across the country.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue, and we would welcome the opportunity to meet with your office to discuss this in more detail. You team can arrange this through [publicaffairs@nhsconfed.org](mailto:publicaffairs@nhsconfed.org).

Yours sincerely,



**Danny Mortimer**  
**Chief Executive**  
**NHS Employers**