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**N E W S R E L E A S E**

**Greater flexibility for Apprenticeship funding transfers announced**

More small businesses across Buckinghamshire could benefit from fully-funded apprenticeship training as a result of government changes announced this week. From July, employers who pay the apprenticeship levy will be able to transfer up to 10% of their apprenticeship levy funds to more than one business, helping to boost the number of high-quality apprenticeships across the country.

Only around 2% of employers pay the levy, which affects firms with annual pay bills of over £3m, but that investment has funded more than 40% of the apprenticeships started in the last year. Currently, levy-paying employers can transfer up to 10% of their apprenticeship service funds to one other employer but from next month, employers will be able to make transfers of up to 10% to as many other firms as they choose.

This will enable more employers to work together in partnership and utilise funding in a way that will create apprenticeship opportunities with businesses who may not otherwise have been in a position to offer them.

Paddy Patterson, Apprenticeships Manager, [Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership](http://buckstvlep.co.uk/), said: “We welcome this announcement as another important step in enabling employers to take real control of how they use levy funds for maximum benefit either within their own business or another employer of their choosing. We are setting up employer-led sector action groups so we can better

**more…**

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understand the skills needs of our businesses. Increased flexibility in terms of sharing funding - and even sharing apprentices - are vital to local programme and sector growth.”

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton, said: “It’s fantastic to see so many businesses taking advantage of the opportunity that the apprentice levy provides. As well as kick starting their apprenticeship programmes, business is now recognising the benefits an apprentice brings to the work place with enthusiasm and new ideas.”

Buckinghamshire businesses requiring more information or help with apprenticeship levy transfers or any other apprenticeship query can get free, impartial support from Bucks Skills Hub. Please contact Paddy Patterson paddy.patterson@btvlep.co.uk and see [www.bbf.uk.com/business-support/apprenticeships](http://www.bbf.uk.com/business-support/apprenticeships) for more information.

**Ends**

**Note to editors**

Apprenticeship Levy transfer guidance: [www.gov.uk/guidance/transferring-apprenticeship-service-funds](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/transferring-apprenticeship-service-funds)

The [Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership](http://buckstvlep.co.uk/) (BTVLEP) is a business-led ‘partnership of equals’ between local government and the private sector, building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in the County.

[Buckinghamshire Business First](http://www.bbf.uk.com/) (BBF), is the Growth Hub for Buckinghamshire and is backed by Buckinghamshire based entrepreneurs, thousands of SMEs and Local Authorities.  BBF provides the link between public policy and the business community in Buckinghamshire and works with partners to create a dynamic business environment in the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain.

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