



**20 March 2020**

## **STATEMENT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **Dealing with the fallout of Covid-19 Coronavirus**

*Following today's Emergency Meeting of the Federation's Board of Directors, the following statement has been unanimously agreed.*

- Coronavirus represents a huge challenge for the awarding and assessment industry. We rely on the enrolment, assessment and examination of learners and apprentices to keep our industry operating normally.
- The social distancing measures ordered by the government to suppress Covid-19 means that there is huge disruption to how awarding organisations and end-point assessment organisations can operate commercially.
- We would like to see government move with more urgency and pace to address the specific needs of the UK's post-16 skills system, in the same way it has made decisions and moved at pace in resolving the cancellation of general examinations this summer.
- We call upon the government to publish, without delay, the Guidance it has developed in England for organisations in the sector that are required to assess and validate learners undertaking VTQs and apprenticeships. The significant delays in the publication of this Guidance is causing unnecessary anxiety and concern. It is also leading to the premature redundancy of apprentices.
- We encourage Ofqual / CCEA Regulation / Qualifications Wales and SQA to review their regulatory requirements of AOs / EPAOs and make innovative and temporary adjustments to these regimes in order to free up the 'regulated community' to respond more effectively to the fallout of the coronavirus.



- Because of the additional workload being placed on AOs / EPAOs as a result of dealing with Covid-19, we request that the Secretary of State delay by one academic year, the following reform programmes in England:
  - (Wave 1) T-Levels in September 2020, to be delivered from September 2021 instead;
  - Post-16 review of qualifications at Level 3 and below, with implementation now commencing September 2022;
  - Postponement of the work on 'strengthening qualifications' including reasonable extensions being made to requirements under the proposed Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) programme.
- We call for a complete moratorium on any further policy or regulatory reforms being pursued by Ministers in all four nations of the UK that are not related to tackling the impact of the coronavirus. This will help bring much needed continuity and stability to the sector at this extremely unprecedented time.
- We hereby give notice that Awarding Bodies will not be able to meet the following upcoming submission deadlines: 27 March 'No and Low' enrolments (DfE); 30 April, 'Strengthening' Performance Table qualifications (Ofqual). FAB and our Members will endeavour to respond to all other pre-existing consultation deadlines.
- Finally, we welcome the government's extraordinary efforts to compensate employers to avoid mass layoffs over the next 3 months. We call upon the Department for Education, devolved administrations and their statutory agencies to work with us to develop a Comprehensive Financial Support Package, specifically for Awarding Organisations and End-Point Assessment Organisations, in line with the support being offered to other parts of the post-16 skills-system and business sectors.

Enquiries: email our chief executive, Tom Bewick ([tom.bewick@awarding.org.uk](mailto:tom.bewick@awarding.org.uk))

Ends.