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## The Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)

The Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) is the licensed Sector Skills Council for the automotive retail sector. The sector, which employs in excess of 530,000 people, is formed of over 67,000 businesses, provided a Gross Value Added (GVA) total in excess of £23 billion in 2011 and is integral to the infrastructure of the nation to help keep over 31 million cars, as well as vans, trucks and motorcycles running effectively. As well as being the licensed Sector Skills Council, the IMI is the professional association for individuals working in the motor industry and the governing body for the Automotive Technician Accreditation (ATA) scheme.

### Overview

The IMI supports the vision and thinking behind Traineeships as a route to encourage young learners into the workplace rather than them falling, potentially, into the NEET category. Sector Skills Councils have a vast amount of experience and knowledge around preparation for work programmes, and we would be very keen to share our knowledge and experiences around these programmes. We hope to help make Traineeships a success, and a programme that leads the learner to Apprenticeships, other forms of education, or into paid work.

The IMI has seen a great deal of success around the Young Apprenticeship programme, and indeed, we are currently piloting an 'AutoStart' programme – a programme designed to give learners aged 14-16 real work experience with an employer in the sector, an accredited qualification and those essential literacy and numeracy skills. This echoes, in many ways, the thinking behind the Traineeship programme in that it gives real work experience and the skills and knowledge needed to support successful progression into the workplace.

The IMI would welcome the opportunity to further consult with employers in the sector on the model – and what would make the programme work. This can only be done, however, once the finer details have been agreed.

To make Traineeships a success, The IMI believes that there are first some key fundamentals that need addressing:

- The key to the success of this programme is the real work experience. The IMI believes that employers in the sector will only be willing to offer the opportunities of work experience if these are cost-neutral, but also there is some form of incentive for the employers to offer these work experiences.
- The IMI believes that Traineeships should be sector-specific. There should be an agreed framework for Traineeships in terms of content, but that this framework should be flexible enough to be bespoke to an individual learners' needs.
- There should be a clear distinction between Traineeships and Apprenticeships; the purpose of each and the content. Potential overlap of content or confusion over the brand could threaten to de-value both products. The purpose of each should also be clear to the employers; whilst the IMI believes the products should be different, there should also be a synergy that embraces and facilitates progression to Apprenticeship programmes.
- Completion of the Traineeship should lead to a certificated outcome for the learner. Successful work experience should be formally recognised in order that the learner include this on their CV moving forward, but also extending to the programme completion as a whole. The IMI believes that this outcome should be recognised by industry lead bodies, such as SSCs.
- We are concerned with the ambitious timescales to launch the Traineeship programme. To ensure full consultation with stakeholders, including employers, and the development of the

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programme framework, we believe that September 2013 does not allow for a full consultation and advertisement of the programme.

The IMI has also responded to each of the individual questions within the 'discussion paper' below:

Q1) Whilst this would need testing fully with the automotive retail sector, it feels as though the proposed elements are right and will lend themselves very well to supporting young people in preparation for an Apprenticeship programme or employment. The IMI feels, however, that there must be a clear definition of the content and purpose of a Traineeship and how this supports progression to an Apprenticeship, rather than competing or seen as a 'fast-track' Apprenticeship. Similarly, with the proposed literacy and numeracy elements the IMI believes there must be a progression to, rather than overlap with, Apprenticeship content. The work placement element is critical – but we would also question whether there should be an accredited qualification that supports the programme, which again could be listed on the learners' CV – perhaps an 'Introduction to the sector' qualification?

Q2) The guaranteed interview could be an essential element to the programme. What we would have reservations with, however, is the process and system for getting interviews arranged and organised, the willingness of employers, and whether this could be achieved etc. Interviews could, however, be simulated which would not rely on the good will of employers, and would be easier to organise/facilitate etc; this might not present the realistic pressures associated with an interview scenario, but this could be tested within the sectors, and with learning providers.

Q3) As seen through the delivery of the IMI's Young Apprenticeship programme and the IMI's current 'AutoStart' programme, we believe that the key word to be used here is 'real'. *Real* work experience; *real* insights; *real* preparation. We also believe that variety or flexibility, employer buy-in to the work experience and to value of the Traineeship programmes and their support of the learners will be key to the effectiveness of the work experience. Without employer buy-in and encouragement of the learner, this will have the exact opposite effect, in that they come out of the experience less likely to want to progress to an Apprenticeship or into the workplace.

Q4) As previously mentioned, the IMI believes there are existing programmes out there that touch on some of the core elements that are proposed in the Traineeships model. Historically, there have been elements that have been touched upon in the Young Apprenticeship programmes, and the IMI is currently piloting the 'AutoStart' programme - a programme which delivers a vocational qualification with at least 10 days work experience and with literacy and numeracy elements. The IMI would be happy to share this model, and our findings from the pilot with the Alliance and with BIS. For more information on the IMI's 'AutoStart' programme, please see the following link:

<http://www.theimi.org.uk/standards-and-qualifications/autostart>

Q5) The IMI believes that ensuring that Traineeships complement provision that is already available for young people is going to be the challenge. We have previously mentioned that we have concerns over the relationship of Traineeships and Apprenticeships (much of which may come down to the 'level' that Traineeships sit at) and this must be addressed. Sector buy-in, particularly around the work experience and programme design, is essential, but, whilst there should and could be flexibility to suit individual needs, we feel there needs to be an agreed framework on which all Traineeships are based. Should the Traineeships be sector-specific, or generic, would be another question that we feel needs addressing, and the IMI feel employers would favour the sector-specific approach. A big challenge is getting employers on board with this new idea, something which can be achieved through

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sector bodies. Employers will not buy-in to a product if they do not understand it – or if the landscape is bureaucratic and/or complex.

**Q6)** The proposed model feels right, but the IMI feels that this should be rigorously tested with stakeholders, including employers of a wide-range of sectors and deliverers – which might be difficult to do in a robust and inclusive way if the vision is to launch the programme in September 2013. The IMI would question whether there should be some form of formal accreditation as part of the ‘employability aspect’, and as a mandatory part of the programme as a whole to ensure that the learner cannot only list the work experience on their CV, but also gain an accredited qualification. In addition, we also believe that serious thought should be given to the English and Maths components and how this complements progression into an Apprenticeship as a stepping stone.

The balance seems to be struck between the framework and the flexibility – however, the question should be asked as to who will be the ‘regulator’ of these programmes to ensure that very fine balance is struck? Could this be addressed by having a Traineeship approval body? Should and could this be sector-based and facilitated by Sector Skills Councils, to ensure that the coherence with other programmes, but also progression to Apprenticeship programmes are maximised?

**Q7)** The IMI would agree with the age ranges presented in paragraph 21.

**Q8)** We believe that the notional duration of 6 months feels about the right. Obviously the flexibility should be built in as the programme should be bespoke, almost to the learner – but with this comes cost implications for deliverers and employers which we should not lose sight of; with ‘bespoke’ comes cost.

**Q9)** At this point, there is nothing that the IMI can suggest that is added to the core. We believe, however, that the crucial consultation with sectors over Traineeships might highlight areas that could/should be included. We would also ask whether there should be sector-specific areas addressed through these areas – and we believe that employers would echo this.

**Q10)** The routes of the Traineeships feel about right. We believe the funding routes for the education and training providers should be fit-for-purpose, but should not be bureaucratic and onerous, otherwise this will distract providers from the effective delivery of the programme. Care and consideration should also be given to ensure that there is sufficient funding to cover all aspects of the programme, because this might be difficult to capture on elements where there are more ‘soft’ outcomes.

Page | 3 We feel the complications will come in from employers, and employers being compensated for their support and delivery of the work experience elements. There has to be an incentive for employers to participate in the programme. Careful thought needs to be given as to whether employers will have the want or thirst to seek funding through the Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot – particularly SMEs. What could and should be investigated is whether sector bodies, such as Sector Skills Councils, could act as facilitators, or brokers, on behalf of sectors and employers. We should not lose sight that without employer buy-in we will not be able to address a key element – the work experience.

**Q11)** The IMI’s view would be that sector bodies, such as Sector Skills Councils, can provide a key element of support here. This related partly to the response to **Q10**, but Sector Skills Councils could act as the facilitator or broker of the Traineeships; they could galvanise support from employers in the sector and act as a conduit between providers and employers, but could also monitor and evaluate

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the quality and effectiveness of the programmes – and also monitor progression to other programmes such as Apprenticeships.

**Q12)** The IMI also believes that employers are integral to the success of the Traineeships, as the work experience truly is a key component to the success of the programme. We believe that employers in the sector would wish to see real return on investment on the learners for which they invest time, guidance etc in their work experience. For each learner that experiences work experience, there will have to be a supervisor in the workplace who will have to deviate from their normal activities to mentor the learner. This could be costly and unworkable for employers.

Employers may want recognition, but it would be potentially very limiting if employers were expected to interview the learner at the end of the programme, or if there had to be a job vacancy they had to interview for. We should learn from the lessons of Apprenticeships in terms of what would encourage employers to engage with Traineeships. They should be cost-neutral, they should see the benefits to the sector as well as the learners, they should be free from bureaucracy and the programmes should be simple to engage with. Whilst the quality of work experience is paramount to the learner, stringent quality assurance and monitoring systems imposed on employers will only detract from their willingness to engage with the programmes, so this balance must be carefully struck.

James Stockdale  
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