

# Policy Update



**Dr Mandy Crawford-Lee**

**Chief Executive**  
**7 July 2023**

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# Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Policy & Horizon Scanning
3. UVAC Team Updates
4. Knowledge Networks
5. Live Issues

# Higher Level Skills Policy – Reflections

- Westminster Government and Future Skills Policy
- Technical Education and Vocational Pathways
- Higher and Degree Apprenticeships
- Future of the Levy
- Lifelong Loan Entitlement

## **Impact on Higher Education Institutions**

# Westminster Government

- **What Now..?**
  - Secretaries of State for Education in 2022 – Nahim Zahawi; Michelle Donelan; James Cleverly; Kit Malthouse; NOW #5 **Gillian Keegan, MP**
  - Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills, Further and Higher Education - NOW **Robert Halfon, MP**, self styled champion of technical education, ‘lover’ of degree apprenticeships
  - Remains important that we state and restate with ministers the success of degree apprenticeships and act as a reminder that they are a **brilliant** UK invention

# Future Skills Policy?

- **What about the Opposition...Labour's Council of Skills Advisors' Report?**
  - 'Degree Apprenticeships will play a crucial part in facilitating cutting-edge industries' (p. 78)
  - 'We will need to place emphasis on progression and the acquisition of higher-level skills' (p. 62)
  - 'High quality further and higher education is fundamental both to individual opportunity and to the economy of the future' (p. 56)
  - The development of Individual Learning Accounts; Learning and Skills *Passport*; and a *right to retrain*
  - A new organisation **Skills England** – replacing the new Unit for Future Skills?
- UVAC is concerned particularly that Labour's proposals to significantly expand degree apprenticeships appears to be contradicted by other proposals in their Council of Skills Advisors' Report, [Learning and Skills for Economic Recovery, Social Cohesion and a More Equal Britain](#) (October 2022)
- To ensure the future success of apprenticeships and higher technical education and when refining its growth and skills levy policy we would ask for a number of guarantees

# Technical Education and Pathways

- Proposed Mainstream Offer at 16 - 18
- Some opportunity for smaller Applied Generals to be combined with A Levels, but Applied Generals (e.g., BTEC and Cambridge Nationals) are threatened to become 'rare'...becoming **'Alternative Academic Qualifications'**
- A coalition of 30 organisations undertaking on-going lobbying on the value of the **Applied General** via The #ProtectStudentChoice campaign
  - Labour Party key line: *"The next Labour government will ensure all students are able to complete their courses and will review the diversity of options at Level 3 before making further changes"*
- **T Levels** –second cohort in *construction, digital, health and science and education and childcare* to receive results on **'A level and T Level results day'**

# Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Growth

- Universities ordered to set “ambitious targets” to boost the proportion of students studying degree apprenticeships
- DfE introduced “financial incentive” to entice more universities to offer degree apprenticeships
- **Strategic Priorities Grant (SPG)** fund of £8m in **AY22/23** ‘allocated’ by formula funding – focussed on growth in start volumes and rewarding providers for performance above AY21/22 activity
- **SPG AY23/24** will be ‘targeted’ – via a competitive process aligned to Minister Halfon’s Priorities: Level 6; SME growth; social justice; expanding an institution’s delivery
  - Based on the previous Degree Apprenticeship Development Fund
  - Inviting projects on themes around 18–24-year-olds; disadvantage; movement into less established programmes; support new entrant to the market via incentives
  - Proposes a list of fundable activities: new provision; upskilling non/academic staff in delivery; growing pipeline of new vacancies including supporting progression

# Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Policy

- Resurgence of the view of the 'middle-class land grab' and 'hogging' of *prized apprenticeships*
  - [The Times, 8 December 2022](#)
  - The Sutton Trust featured in [The Times, 7 December 2022](#)
- Sutton Trust Research – [The Recent Evolution of Apprenticeships – Apprenticeship pathways and participation since 2015](#)
  - *Higher and Degree Apprenticeships are not more common among disadvantaged individuals than a university degree. From this perspective, it is hard to see Higher and Degree Apprenticeships as a route to widen opportunities for individuals from poorer backgrounds. (p. 35)*
- **Our Response:** The report has some important messages regarding young people from more deprived backgrounds and the need for more to be done to support them to access Degree Apprenticeships...BUT the analysis and conclusions could, if acted upon undermine the contribution of higher and degree apprenticeship to social mobility



# Future of the Apprenticeship Levy

- The Government's budget for Apprenticeships is set to rise to £2.7bn by FY 2024/25
- Criticism of the Levy grows
  - Two *Times* articles on [calls for a reform the levy funding system](#) and claims that ['apprenticeship funding was 'wasted'](#)
  - EDSK report "[Changing Courses](#)" favours a more radical overhaul warned as 'retrograde' by FSB including an 'Apprenticeships and Skills Levy'
  - Labour proposes turning the 'failed' Apprenticeship Levy into an 'Apprenticeship and Learning Levy'
- See our *FE News* article 'A review of the apprenticeship levy and how the tax system incentivises employers to invest in training' [HERE](#) and our *FE Week* article 'Let's prioritise skills spending on level 4 to level 7' [HERE](#)
- UVAC and CMI full policy/position paper published in November:  
**Our recommendations:**
  1. **Clarity and Purpose**
  2. **Widen the scope of the system**
  3. **Introduce an apprenticeship opportunity fund**
- Degree Apprenticeship Growth Plan - removing barriers to engagement and establishing the place for and role of targets
  - UVAC Plan: <https://uvac.ac.uk/uvac-calls-for-degree-apprenticeship-growth-plan/>
  - UUK: launched [a ten-point plan](#) at its degree apprenticeship conference on 1 February

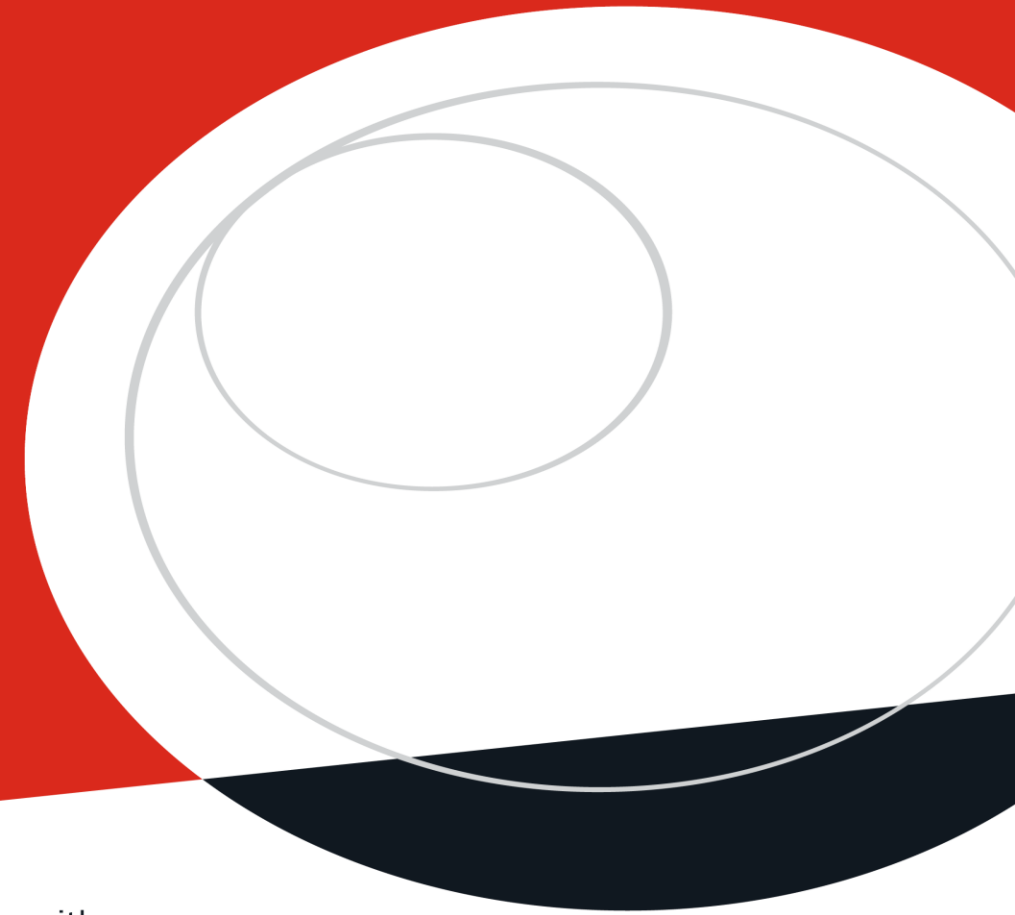


# Lifelong Loan Entitlement

- Former Minister Donelan's ambition for the Lifelong Loan Entitlement:  

'Post-recovery Britain can become a skills powerhouse, with a further and higher education system that is accessible to all, and that acts as an engine for social mobility – real social mobility which focuses on getting on as much as getting in'
- Our key messages:**
  1. We are supportive of the new system and LLE ambition
  2. Need a greater understanding of the level of demand for modular study and typical learner
  3. New system must ensure articulation with degrees with modules that can build into a qualification
  4. Employer contribution and relevance is absent
  5. RPL and system of FE/HE credit transfer needs a new narrative
- DfE/UUK new Provider Working Group

# Team Updates



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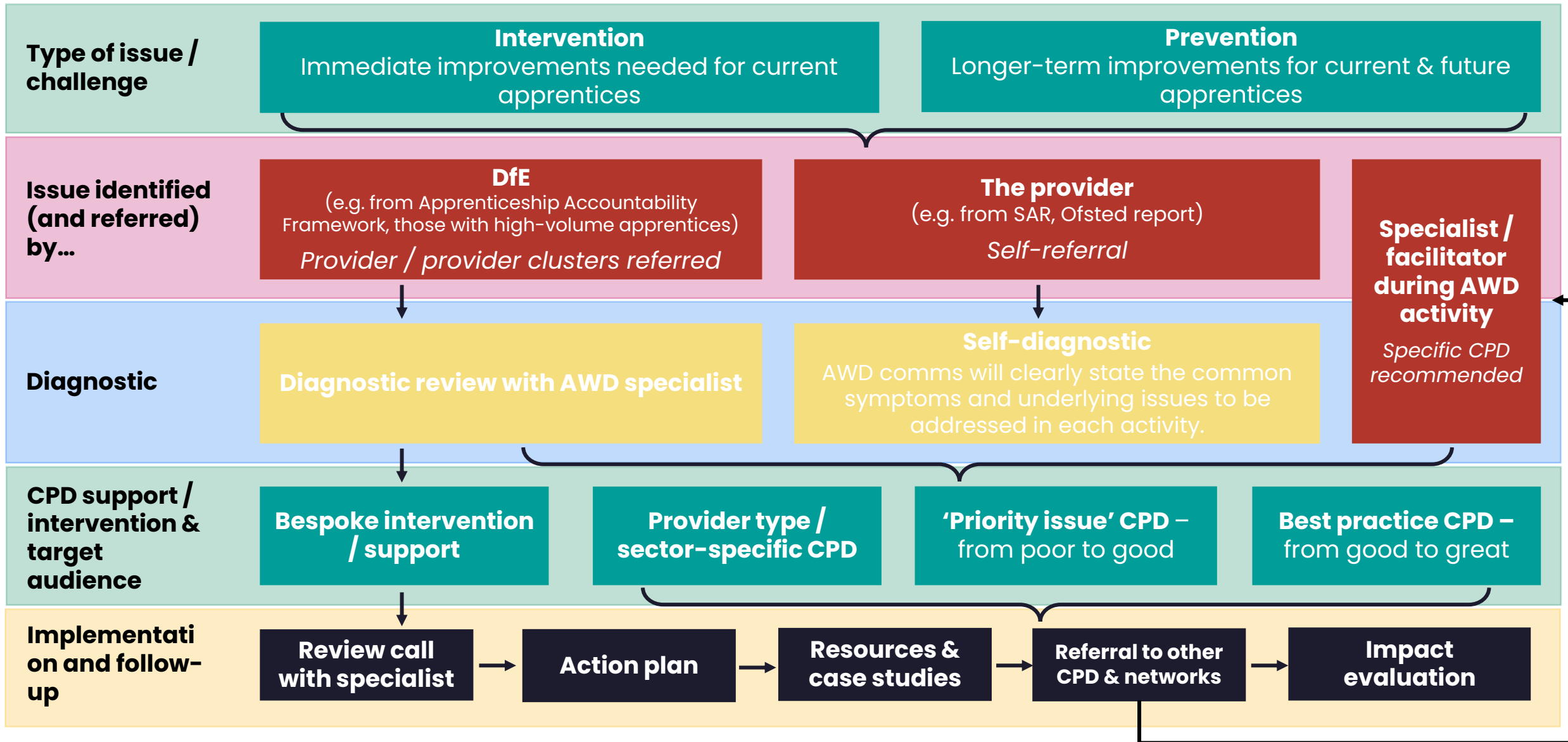
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# Apprenticeship Workforce Development Programme



# Knowledge Networks

## REVIEW 2022/23 & PLANS FOR 2023/24



# Practitioner Learning and Sharing

- Discipline based networks have met online and face-to-face for the following standards / thematic areas:
  1. Academic Professional
  2. Chartered Manager **\*\*NEW\*\***
  3. Degree Apprenticeship Hub Managers/Leads **\*\*NEW\*\***
  4. EQA of End Point Assessment for Integrated Degrees **\*\*NEW\*\*** next **meeting on 25 July 1330-1630 REGISTER [HERE](#)**
  5. Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) **\*\*NEW\*\*** next **meeting on 13 July 11-1230: contact [liz@ecleaver.co.uk](mailto:liz@ecleaver.co.uk) to express an interest in joining**
  6. Police Constable
  7. Recognition of Prior Learning **\*\*NEW\*\***
  8. Social Worker **\*\*NEW\*\***



# Feedback

- **Discussions open, honest, frank – VERY USEFUL!**
  1. Participant comments confirm the value and benefit of practitioners sharing insight/concerns
  2. Open and honest sharing of concerns but also solutions / strategies
  3. Regulatory/Compliance issues invariably arise – Ofsted, ESFA but a lot of positive and useful discussions about learning / teaching / pedagogy / best-practice
  4. As degree apprenticeships mature from *new business* to *business as normal AND growth* there is increased activity / interest in research themes and issues linked to DA's
    - pedagogy | programme design | assessment | on/off the job



# Future Networks

- **Good-bye Dr John Lanham and hello! former Associate Professor Ann Minton**
- 1. Face to Face events run in 2022/23 to move from online “transactional” to enable greater networking / community of practice building / relationship building.
- 2. Experience – 50% of face to faces run – reflects tight budgets in the sector, ease of digital meetings
- 3. BUT – face-to-face does give a richer opportunity to engage | discuss | connect
- 4. Investigating ideas / options for next sessions including **\*\*NEW\*\* for Mentors/Coaches**
- 5. Run several face to face on same day at same host?
  - subject discussions a.m.
  - cross network/themes/discipline discussions p.m.
- 6. Hybrid – online/face to face



# Live Issues

## 1. Integrated Degree Apprenticeship Model of Delivery

- *'In integrated degree apprenticeships, the same organisation must provide the off-the-job training (the degree) and end point assessment' (Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships, DfE, March 2023)*

## 2. '4th non-degree route' to police constable. See UVAC's letter to the Minister [HERE](#) and his response [HERE](#)

## 3. Register of End Point Assessment Organisations (REPAO) – **Apprenticeship Providers and Assessment Register (APAR)**

- *'From 1 August, when an organisation receives recognition to deliver EPA for a standard from the appropriate regulator, they will be automatically placed onto our list of approved EPAOs. This list of EPAOs will form a subset of the Register of Apprenticeship Training providers (RoATP). The RoATP will be renamed the 'Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register' (APAR). The choice of EPAO will automatically revert to the training provider unless the employer wishes to retain the decision. These changes will benefit EPAOs by giving them entry to the APAR **once accreditation with their EQA body is attained** therefore removing any double regulation' (DfE advice given 6 July 2023)*

# Live Issues

## 1. Impact of the marking strike on Apprentices – we are looking for examples

1. On Apprentices who start a job on an apprenticeship requiring a degree - and what happens if they have failed
2. On regulated professions where the acquiring of the degree impacts pay, or the ability to be registered or progress to their professional status
3. Others

## 2. Subcontracting Rules & Audit

1. Bigger test than the main audit
2. Capacity in audit firms to take on the work
3. Significant desk work and evidence base 'pre-work' required
4. Same process for all values, or where the only subcontracting is for English & Maths
5. Programme for reviewing the Standard – when and how to feedback

# 2023/2024 TEMPLATES:

application to [r.rhodes@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:r.rhodes@bolton.ac.uk)



Employer services contract



Evidence Checklist



Tri-partite Review Template



INA 'Commitment Statement'



UVAC Training Plan Template



INA Judgement Template

End July :

- EPAO and subcontract Template
- Line Manager Responsibilities Guide

# Final Word

- **Recording** of this SoTN Address available plus slides ++ **briefing note** on key issues addressed this month can be found [HERE](#)
- **UVAC National Conference 30 November 2023**

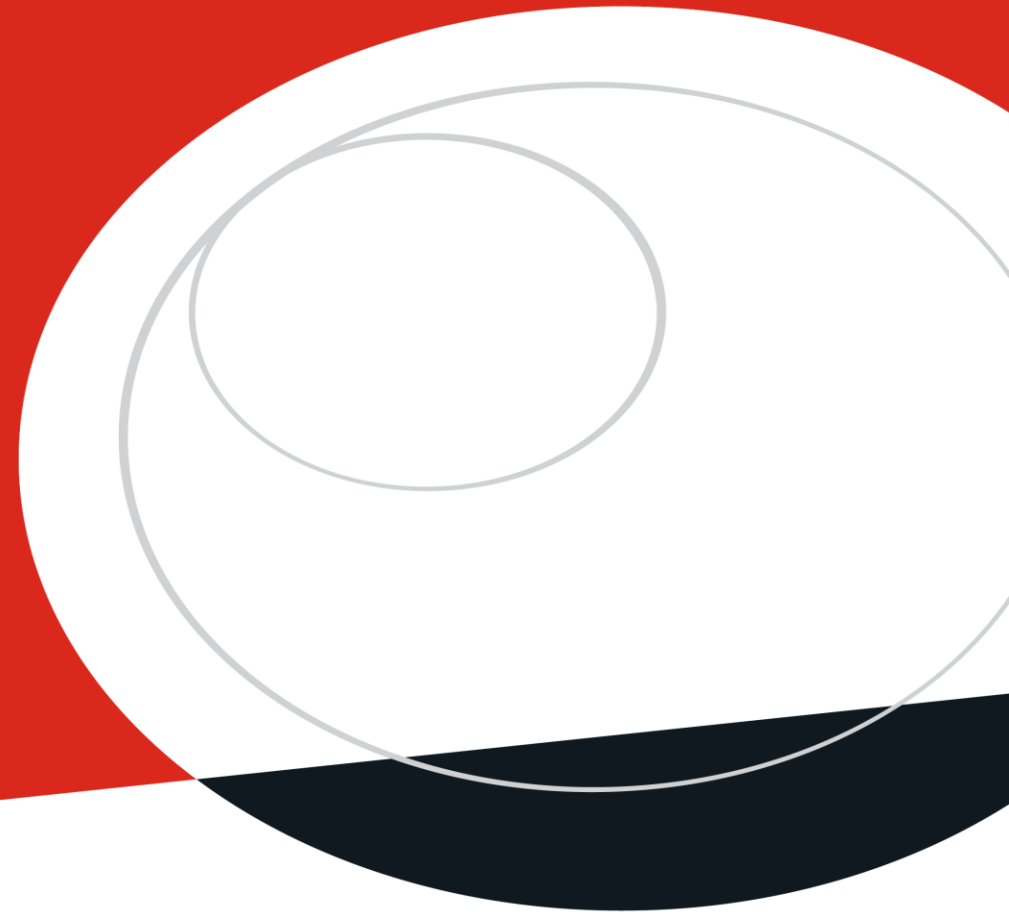


- Breakout sessions invited
- Registration is [HERE](#)
- Exhibition and Sponsorship

Contact [m.crawfordlee@bolton.ac.uk](mailto:m.crawfordlee@bolton.ac.uk)

- **Membership Renewals INVITED: Contract Templates** will follow

# Have a great summer



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