The Skills Coach – Successful models and the Future

Summer 2025

Rebecca Rhodes, Associate Director, UVAC
Sammy Shummo, Group Director of Apprenticeships, London South Bank University
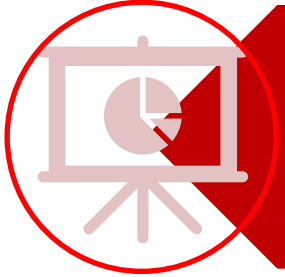Dr Helen Charlton, Associate Professor of Work Based Learning; Head of Executive Education; Newcastle Business School
Dr Phil Power-Mason – Associate Professor of Leaning & Teaching; Head of Dept. & Exec Ed; Hertfordshire Business School
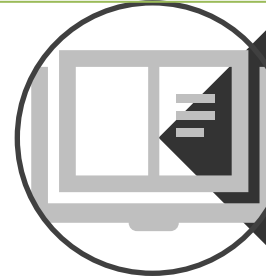
WELCOME !

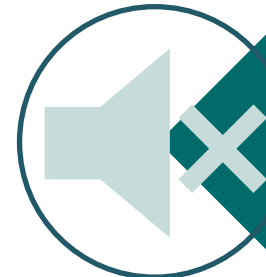Slides and recording will made available after the session

The session will be recorded

All materials can be accessed from the members portal page - see Resources Slide

All participants will be on mute for the session but can unmute
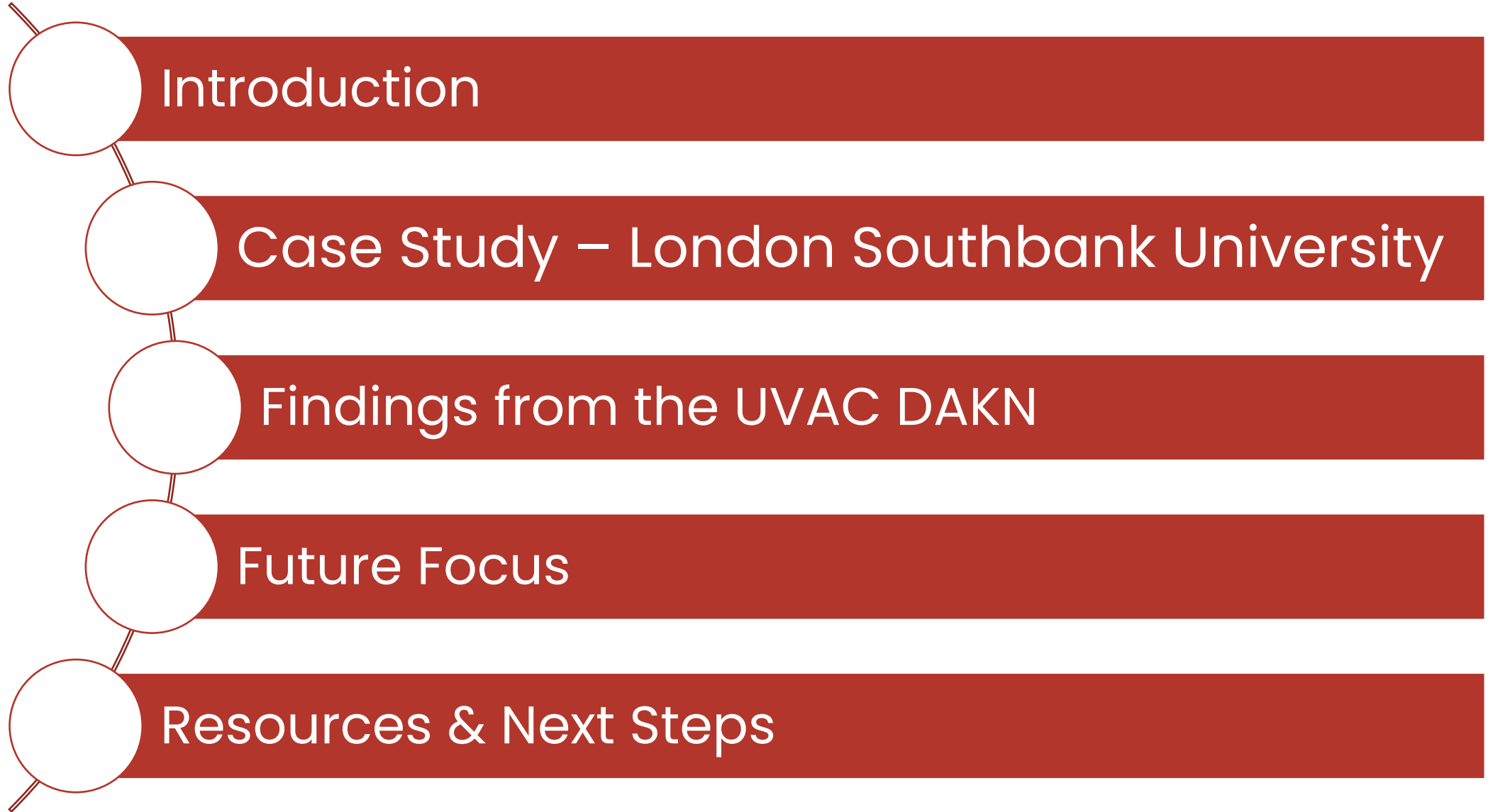
To ask a question just raise your hand or add to the chat

Please stay online for the evaluation survey at the end

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Case Study – London Southbank University
- Findings from the UVAC DAKN
- Future Focus
- Resources & Next Steps

Challenges in 2025

- **Pressure for Savings**

- **Increasing challenges to recruit**

- **Increasing caseload levels**

- **Burnout and turnover**

- **Because we can't seem to prove value for money**

- QAA 2024 - A 2024-2025 QAA collaborative project Manchester Metropolitan and Middlesex Universities:
- Coaches are pivotal in bridging **academic learning and workplace practice**.
- Mode of delivery varies significantly across providers—leading to inconsistent apprentice engagement.
- The study calls for a **standardised coaching framework** to enhance consistency in pedagogy and outcomes

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- A study at the Outward Bound Trust mapped coach development against **cognitive apprenticeship methods**—including modeling, scaffolding, reflection.
- Finding: elements of this approach exist, but remain **inconsistent** and not formally embedded in coach training
- Suggesting that more intentional use of this framework could elevate coaches' decision-making and adaptive capabilities.
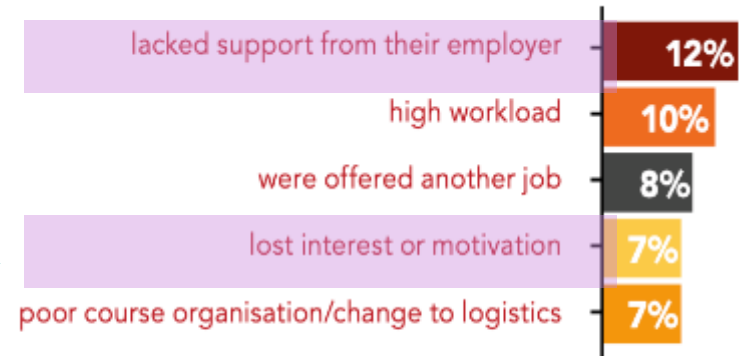
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Coach Contribution

Why do apprentices leave?

Most commonly cited reasons for leaving an apprenticeship:

Reason	%
lacked support from their employer	37%
poor course organisation/change to logistics	32%
high workload	29%
lost interest or motivation	27%
lacked support from their tutor	26%

Single main reason for withdrawal:

Reason	%
lacked support from their employer	12%
high workload	10%
were offered another job	8%
lost interest or motivation	7%
poor course organisation/change to logistics	7%

What would prevent them from leaving?

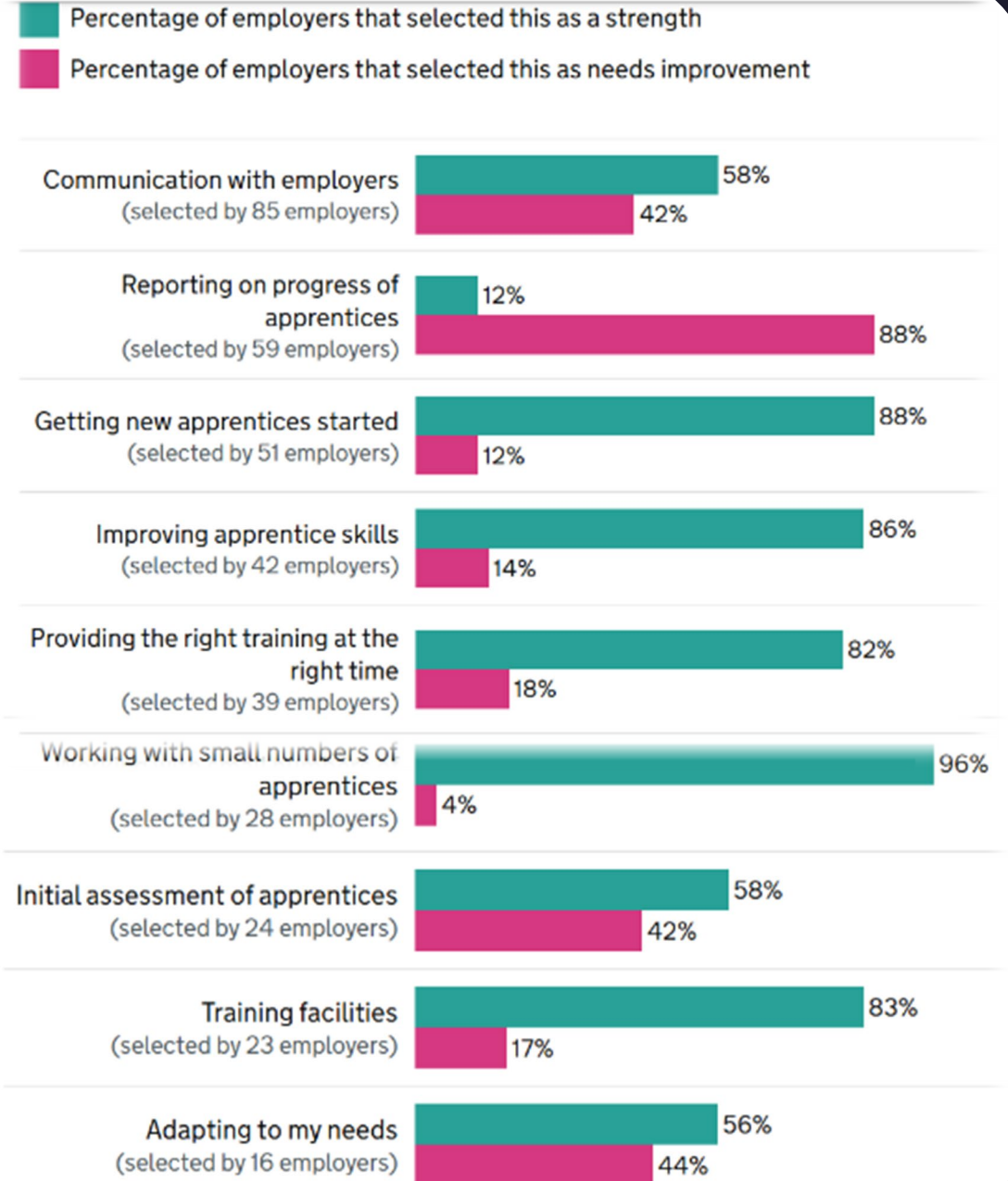| Reason	%
support from their employer with time to study, complete assignments or for off-the job training	37%
support from their training provider or tutor, e.g. study support or support networks	31%
support from my employer with a workplace mentor / support networks	27%
financial support (e.g. with childcare or transport costs)	10%
practical support (e.g. access to transport, childcare)	4%

Access the full report at stmartinsgroup.org

What does the data tell us? (Employers)

- Communication with employers

- Improving apprentice's skills

- Providing the right training at the right time

- Adapting to my needs

Percentage of employers that selected this as a strength
Percentage of employers that selected this as needs improvement

Category	Strength	Needs improvement
Communication with employers (selected by 85 employers)	58%	42%
Reporting on progress of apprentices (selected by 59 employers)	12%	88%
Getting new apprentices started (selected by 51 employers)	88%	12%
Improving apprentice skills (selected by 42 employers)	86%	14%
Providing the right training at the right time (selected by 39 employers)	82%	18%
Working with small numbers of apprentices (selected by 28 employers)	96%	4%
Initial assessment of apprentices (selected by 24 employers)	58%	42%
Training facilities (selected by 23 employers)	83%	17%
Adapting to my needs (selected by 16 employers)	56%	44%

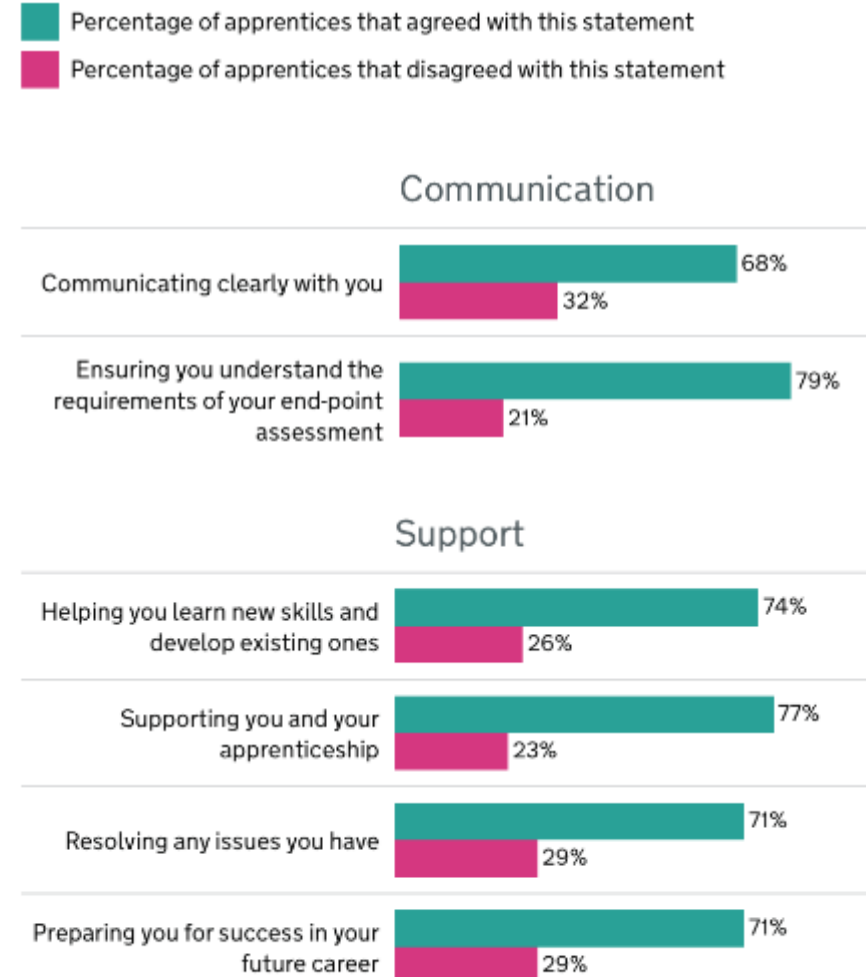# What Does The Data Tell Us? (Apprentices)

- Communicating clearly with you

- Giving you relevant training that helps you do your job better

- Supporting you and your apprenticeship

- Resolving any issues, you have

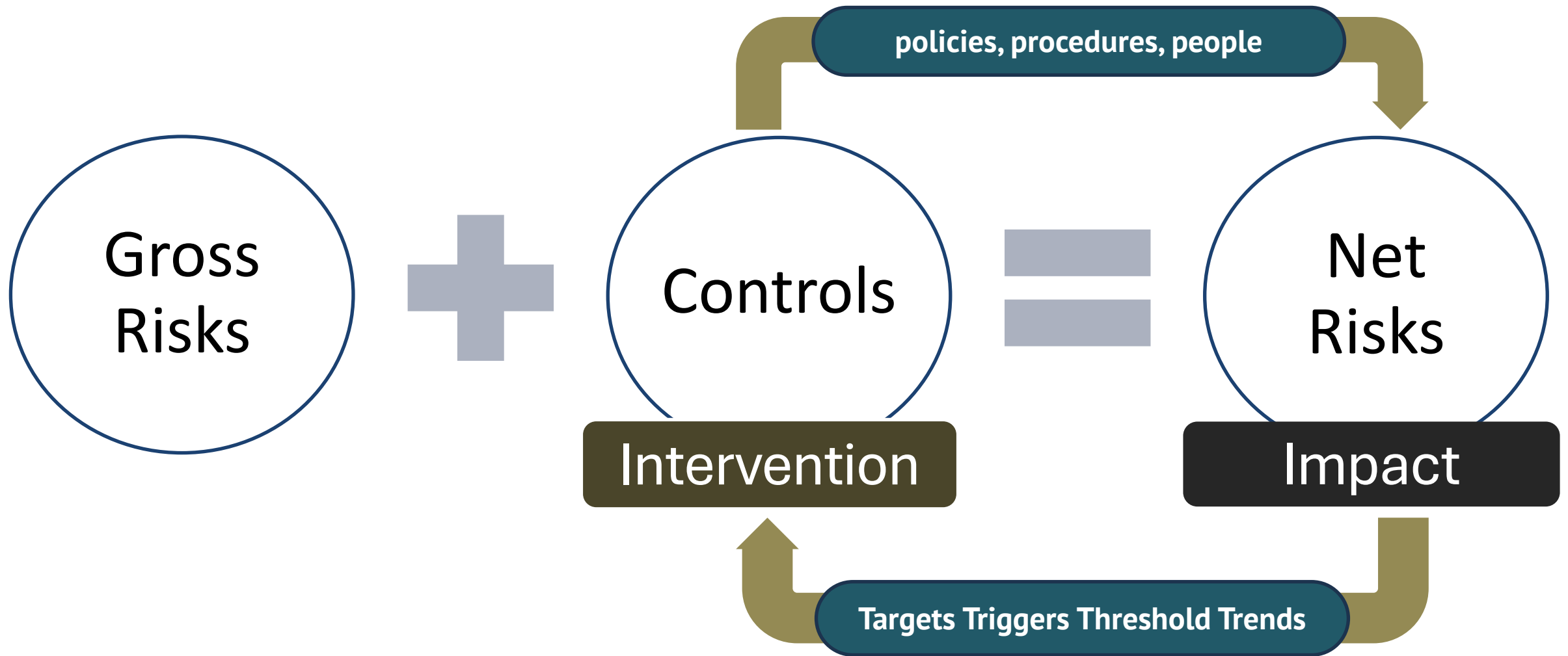- Preparing you for success in your future career

Apprentice reviews

★★★☆ **Good** (384 reviews)

▼ Apprentice review details

Change to table and accessible view

■ Percentage of apprentices that agreed with this statement
■ Percentage of apprentices that disagreed with this statement

Communication

Communicating clearly with you — 68% / 32%

Ensuring you understand the requirements of your end-point assessment — 79% / 21%

Support

Helping you learn new skills and develop existing ones — 74% / 26%

Supporting you and your apprenticeship — 77% / 23%

Resolving any issues you have — 71% / 29%

Preparing you for success in your future career — 71% / 29%

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Not the Skills Coach Focus

CASE STUDY

Sammy Shummo, Group Director of Apprenticeships
London South Bank University

Reimagining Progress Reviews: Centralising Support in a Complex Apprenticeship Model

Sammy Shummo

EST 1892 LSBU

Introduction

Welcome and context

My role: Group Director of Apprenticeships at LSBU Group

Scale: >3,400 apprentices across FE and HE

Over 40 standards, including 30 at Levels 4–7

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Why Revisit the Progress Review Model?

- Historic approach: devolved to tutors/course teams

- Outcomes: variability, patchy quality, unclear employer interface

- Growing regulatory demands (Ofsted, ESFA, DfE)

- New critical skills required for the role:
  - Data interpretation and action planning
  - Safeguarding awareness across diverse workplace settings
  - Proactive engagement and influence with employers
  - Confidence in compliance and risk escalation

LSBU

The Case for Centralisation

Consistency, visibility, and accountability

Dedicated, trained Skills Reviewers

Centralised monitoring via Aptem and Power BI

Improved employer communication

Efficient staff utilisation, reduced duplication

Easier alignment to quality and compliance frameworks

One team, one approach

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Implementation Journey

- Started late 2023, completed by January 2025

- Phased rollout:
  - Prioritised high-risk standards
  - Mapped every apprentice to a central reviewer
  - Introduced two Skills Reviewer Team Leaders
  - Created an EPA Success Team led by a Team Leader
  - Support from compliance, CPD, and EPA Success Leads

- Interim reports to Apprenticeship Steering Committee at 3 months, 6 months and final report at 12 months following phase 1

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The Outcome and What We have Learned

+110% increase in review completions

Better early identification of learners at risk

Stronger employer engagement

Improved EPA readiness

Collaboration with tutors essential to preserve subject insight

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Devolved vs Central – Key Tensions

Issue	Devolved Model	Centralised Model
Subject expertise	Strong, but siloed	Informed via collaboration
Consistency	Variable	High and monitored
Employer experience	Inconsistent	Structured and repeatable
Risk identification	Often delayed	Proactive and preventative
Regulatory readiness	Patchy	Embedded and auditable

Protecting the Reviewer Function

Economic pressure risks reducing support roles

Reviewers are critical to:

- Learner retention

- Employer confidence

- Safeguarding

- EPA success

LSBU response: protected team, CPD, integration into audit, personal tutors
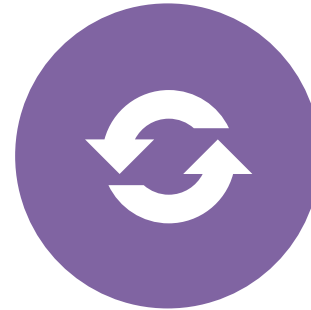
EST 1892 LSBU

Looking Ahead
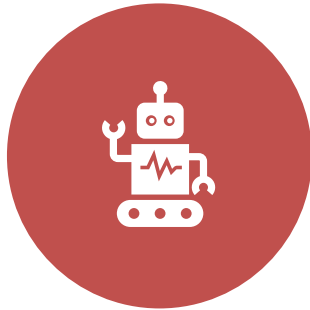
USE OF APTEM AI TOOLS (CHECKPOINT, ASSESS)
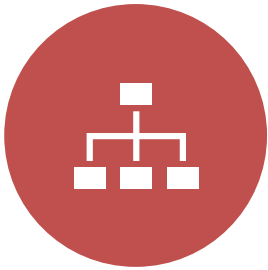
PROGRESS REVIEWS TIED TO LEARNER DEVELOPMENT PLANS

CONTINUOUS IMPACT EVALUATION

DATA INFORMS SLT REPORTING AND OFSTED READINESS

LSBU EST 1892

Final Reflections

REVIEWS ARE STRATEGIC, NOT ADMINISTRATIVE

CENTRALISATION WORKS — WITH FLEXIBILITY

CRITICAL FOR QUALITY, RETENTION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

COORDINATED, INSIGHT-DRIVEN SUPPORT IS KEY

LSBU EST 1892

Thank You / Q&A

Contact: sammy.shummo@lsbu.ac.uk

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UVAC DAKN – Tripartite Professionals

Dr Helen Charlton, Associate Professor of Work Based Learning; Head of Executive Education; Newcastle Business School
Dr Phil Power-Mason – Associate Professor of Leaning & Teaching; Head of Dept. & Exec Ed; Hertfordshire Business School

Tripartite Professionals: The Heart of Apprenticeships

"Tripartite practitioners stand at the heart of HDAs, with significant transformative potential for apprentices, industry and academia." **(Charlton & Power-Mason, 2025)**

Dr Helen Charlton – **Associate Professor of Work Based Learning; Head of Executive Education;**
Newcastle Business School
Dr Phil Power-Mason – **Associate Professor of Leaning & Teaching; Head of Dept. & Exec Ed;**
Hertfordshire Business School

University of Hertfordshire UH

Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

Recruitment And Counselling Executive
Course Mentor Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship
Assistant Professor Programme Leader Cmda Open
Operations Manager Degree Apprenticeships PL For Cmda Sports Business Management Skills Development Coordinator
Apprenticeships Operations Manager
Module Lead Degree Apprenticeship Work Based Tutor Workplace Coordinator In Construction
Uvac Associate Apprenticeship Tutor Head Of Apprenticeships And Employer Skills
Work Based Educator
PGR Director Of Corporate Programmes Principal Lecturer Skills Coach
Lecturer Academic Skills Tutor Employer Liaison Tutor
ALST Business Development Manager Degree Apprenticeship Lead
Senior Lecturer Academic Mentor
Trainee Solicitor
Workplace Coordinator
Freelance Coach And Coach Supervisor Workplace Coach Programme Leader Work Based Learning Officer Faculty Director For Apprenticeships
Apprentice Coach Business Programmes
Coach Degree Apprenticeship Work Based Visit Tutor Workplace Tutor Lecturer In Management
Work Based Learning Tutor Apprenticeship Link Tutor
Degree Workplace Reviewer - Business Executive Education Administrator
Apprenticeships Manager Registrar (Apprenticeships)
Work Based Learning Coach
Assistant Head Of Student Experience Apprenticeships
Student Experience Manager Apprenticeships
Assoc Director Apprenticeships
Student Experience Manager Senior Lecturer In Life Sciences
Associate Dean
Lecturer In Work Based Learning

What's in a name?

Professionalising a new body of practice in experiential learning

❑ **Regulatory influence** – critical to shaping practice

❑ **Cross-sector evidence** – growing cross-sector consensus that the success of the tripartite relationship is critical to apprenticeship success (Gov.uk; IfATE; UVAC; CMI; ILM; Minton & Lowe, 2019; Roberts et al, 2019 etc.)

❑ **#CUBA2023 & HETP KN** – Coaching in University Business Apprenticeships & UVAC Higher Education Tripartite Professional Knowledge Network

❑ **Dual professional focus** – The intersect of disciplinarity and modality

"Being able to give real-world examples... is a major advantage." (Construction)

"Dual professional identity provides relevance and credibility within the coaching aspect." (Business)

What sort of things do tripartite professionals do?

Table 1: HETP responsibilities

Responsibilities	Always/regularly involves	Occasionally involves	Infrequently involves
Onboarding	Induction activity	Initial skills assessment	Recognition of prior learning Recruitment
On program activity	Developmental related activity, including knowledge, skills and behavior interventions Development/compliance bridging activity, such as PRM and safeguarding Compliance related activity, such as "off the job" record management and "RAG" ratings	Mentor training Group coaching Portfolio development activity	Liaison with academic teams Academic feedback support
Offboarding	-	EPA support activity	-

HETP, higher education tripartite practitioner; PRM, Progress Review Meetings; RAG, red, amber, green; EPA, End Point Assessment.

(Charlton & Power-Mason, 2025)

Professional Recognition

- Contracts: ~50% academic, ~50% professional services; 71% part-time
- Almost all employed by HEI; one freelance example
- Highly qualified academically, but few hold pedagogy / coaching awards
- Role crosses institutional boundaries yet lacks formal recognition
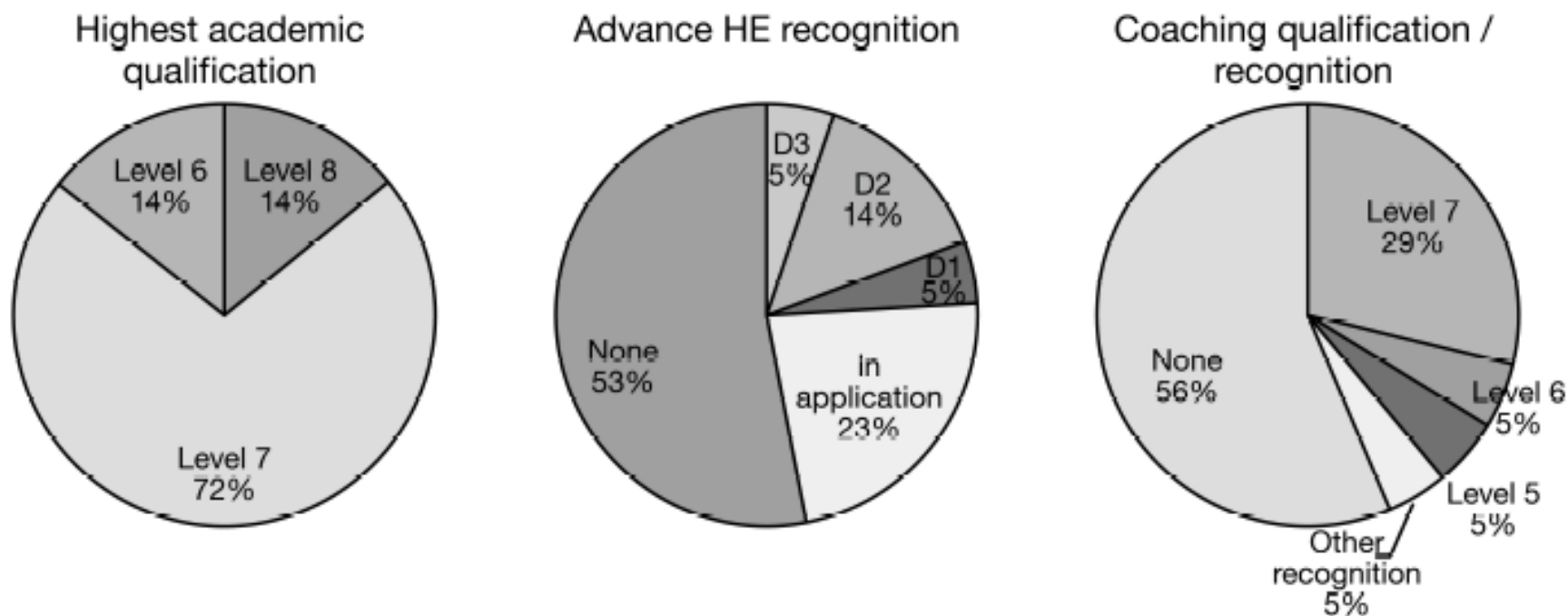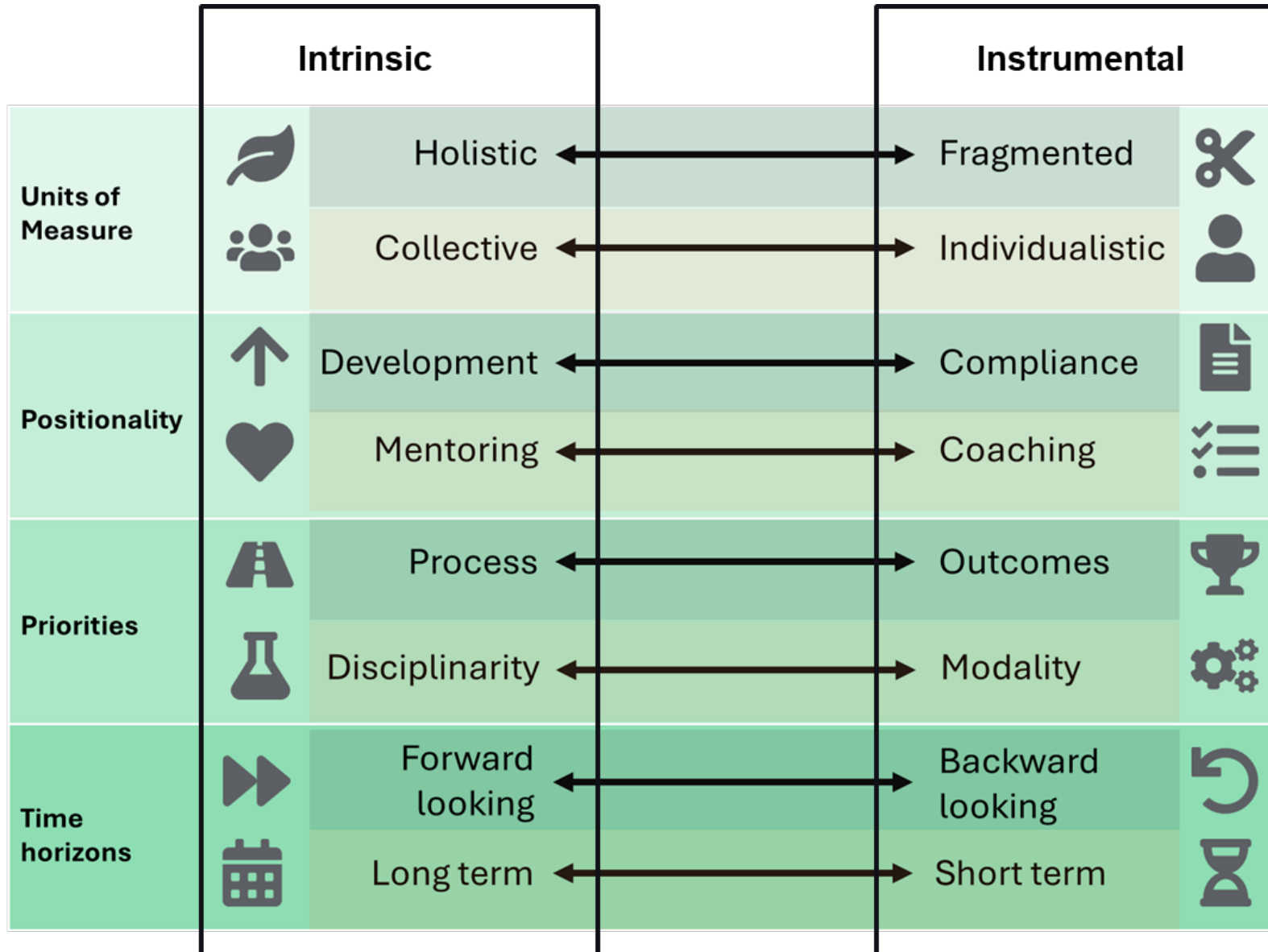
(Charlton & Power-Mason, 2025b)

Figure 1. Contractual types and HETP role holder qualifications. HETP, higher education tripartite practitioner.

(Charlton & Power-Mason, 2025)

Conceptualising the Role

Key Skills for Tripartite Practice

– *A heuristic model*

Boundary-Spanning and Negotiation

- **Skill:** Negotiation and boundary-spanning.

- **What it is:** Working fluidly across institutional, employer, and learner boundaries. Mediating tensions, translating policy into practice, and brokering expectations across all stakeholders.

- **Use in practice:**
  - *"I have countless times when I have had to navigate the competing priorities and at times work with the employer and apprentice 'against' the university… or vice versa."* (Construction)

- **Insight:** The HETP must continually negotiate conflicting demands to maintain relationships, uphold compliance, and protect learner development — requiring diplomatic skill and contextual agility.

Coaching-Infused Conversations

- **Skill:** Facilitating reflective dialogue and coaching conversations.

- **What it is:** Moving beyond checklists to engage apprentices in reflection, goal setting, and linking theory with practice through open questioning.

- **Use in practice:**

  - *"My approach is continually evolving... I now focus more on understanding individual learners' needs... integrating workplace responsibilities with university learning."* (Business)

  - *"Another important aspect is to bring reflection into the conversation... Asking open questions... to relate learning experience to work."* (Construction)

- **Insight:** Skilled questioning, listening and reframing are essential. This coaching-infused approach supports both compliance and learner growth.

Time and Project Management

- **Skill:** Time horizon management and planning.

- **What it is:** Balancing short-term compliance tasks with long-term developmental aims; project-managing multiple apprentices' learning journeys.

- **Use in practice:**
  - *"I view my role as a project manager and the project is the apprentice. Trying to plan ahead... resolve issues before they come up."* (Engineering & Manufacturing)
  - *"We find ourselves managing short-term compliance deadlines while still trying to maintain a long-term developmental vision."* (Business & Administration)

- **Insight:** Effective HETPs scaffold learning across time, helping apprentices link reflection on past progress with future goals, sustaining motivation.

Relational Care

- **Skill:** Emotional intelligence, pastoral care and relationship-building.

- **What it is:** Building trust and rapport; providing psychosocial support to prevent isolation; maintaining motivation during tensions.

- **Use in practice:**
  - *"It can be difficult to support apprentices… but this can be done in a collaborative way by forming a good rapport… being consistent in meeting and making time."* (Health & Science) *"The issue about people feeling quite isolated is a real one."* (Business & Administration)

- **Insight:** The emotional labour of sustaining connection and community is vital to prevent disengagement in apprentices working across dispersed settings.

Recommendations for the Sector

- **For institutions:**
  - Clarify HETP roles – towards professionalisation
  - Invest in professional development
  - Foster communities of practice to reduce isolation.

- **For practitioners:**
  - Develop hybrid skills in negotiation, coaching, stakeholder alignment.

- **For policymakers:**
  - Recognise HETPs formally to promote consistency and impact.
  - Simplify compliance frameworks to enable expansive practice.

Towards a Universal Professional Identity

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

HETPs:

1. Ensure effective delivery of induction activities during onboarding.
2. Coordinate ongoing developmental interventions to build apprentices' knowledge, skills, and behaviours.
3. Lead on compliance and quality activities, including Programme Review Meetings (PRMs) and safeguarding.
4. Ensure accurate and timely completion of compliance tasks such as off-the-job record management and RAG ratings.
5. Support apprentices in preparing for End Point Assessment (EPA).
6. Undertake initial skills assessments and recognition of prior learning activities.
7. Support portfolio development activities as required.
8. Provide pastoral support and signpost apprentices to relevant University services.
9. Collaborate with apprentices, employer mentors, and stakeholders to align objectives and clarify responsibilities.
10. Deliver or support mentor training to develop employer mentors' understanding of their role.
11. Work with academic teams to deliver group coaching, feedback, and ensure timely apprenticeship success.
12. Support recruitment activities and maintain effective liaison with employers, stakeholders, and academic teams as needed.

Towards a Universal Skill Set

PERSON SPECIFICATION

QUALIFICATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS
- Relevant undergraduate/postgraduate degree or equivalent, or substantial proven work experience
- Recognised teaching or coaching qualification (or willingness to undertake one)
- Coaching or mentoring qualification
- Safeguarding training

EXPERIENCE
- Proven experience working autonomously, managing own workload and priorities
- Experience delivering knowledge, skills, and behaviour interventions
- Experience supporting apprenticeship compliance activities
- Experience providing pastoral and academic support
- Experience supporting portfolio development and EPA preparation
- Experience liaising with employers and academic teams

KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY
- Knowledge of apprenticeship standards, off-the-job learning and compliance requirements
- Excellent interpersonal, communication and coaching skills
- Good organisational, administrative and IT skills
- Knowledge of safeguarding processes and Progress Review Meetings
- Ability to motivate apprentices to achieve and meet targets

BEHAVIOURS AND ATTRIBUTES
- Interpersonal behaviours – Supportive, Collaborative, Empathetic
- Personal Effectiveness – Dependable, Accountable
- Initiative – Proactive, Adaptable, Resilient

"It's passing the baton along through the whole apprenticeship journey really. Who is taking responsibility, who is passing things on, who is communicating, who is nurturing, who is teaching? <u>*And there's no right way, is there?*</u> *It's just taking the bits of it that work and playing around…. it'll be interesting to see what we all pick up within our teams to either drop or add.* <u>*There's not one kind of scientific utopian formula, is there?*</u> *…That's what I came in here for."*

(Business and Management)

UVAC KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS

To join the network contact:

Dr Nicky Westwood-
n.westwood@uvac.ac.uk

Shameless Plug

HIGHER EDUCATION TRIPARTITE PROFESSIONALS KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

UVAC — Degree Apprenticeship Knowledge Network

This is a newly formed UVAC knowledge network that seeks to support everyone involved in representing Universities in the apprenticeship tripartite relationship, and those who lead and support this work. If you undertake Progress Review Meetings, provide coaching/mentoring/tutoring to apprentices, or monitor individual learners' compliance with funding rules, or lead or manage people who do this, then this network aims to support you and develop this professional community of practice.

Upcoming events:

17 September 2025

Online

11.00-14.00

Thank You

P.power-mason@herts.ac.uk
h.charlton@northumbria.ac.uk

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Taylor-Smith, E., Smith, S., Fabian, K., & Bratton, A. (2022). Apprentices' perspectives of the tripartite collaboration at the heart of degree apprenticeship: a

FUTURE FOCUS

Integrated Key Findings:

Engagement & Retention

Coaches re-engage marginalised apprentices and employers and through this; improve completion rates = earnings.

Role Scope & Depth

Coaches combine technical, academic, and personal support—acting as academic guides *and* emotional anchors.

Pedagogical Inconsistency

Variation across providers highlights a need [or opportunity] for coherent frameworks.

Framework Potential

Structured approaches offer a path for more consistent and expert coaches.

Apprentice Experience

Regular workplace reviews and personalised support enable alignment between job tasks and academic goals.

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Future Focus

Employer

- Line manager relationship and engagement to deliver **on** the job learning
- Support line manager to fulfil their role

Partnership

- Risk assessment – at INA, with tutors in a more active role in the RAG assessment /
- Coordination of other support and progress monitoring
- Action Plan checking *effectiveness*

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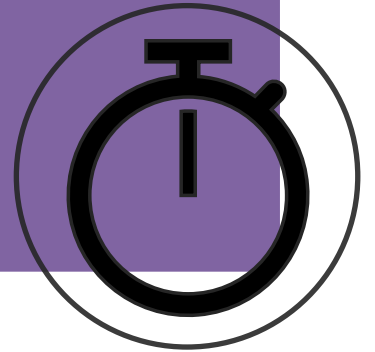
Future Focus

- Ensuring relevance :
- 'In the x apprenticeship course leaders do not suitably link models and theory to apprentice job roles and apprentice do not understand the relevance to their workplace'
- Leaders do not link theory to specific workplaces or allow time or take steps to clarify and consolidate learning for each apprentice

Linking off and on the job learning

- Early engagement in planning support 'Teachers and coaches do not always use information about apprentice starting points to ensure they can achieve their potential'
- '... or use this information to plan the curriculum and how they can make this interactive and relevant for each apprentice

Starting Points

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Future Focus

Quality
- Moderating for consistency
- 'value' defined by apprentice – how does it help them
- Contexting learning, 'core curriculum topics, prevent etc
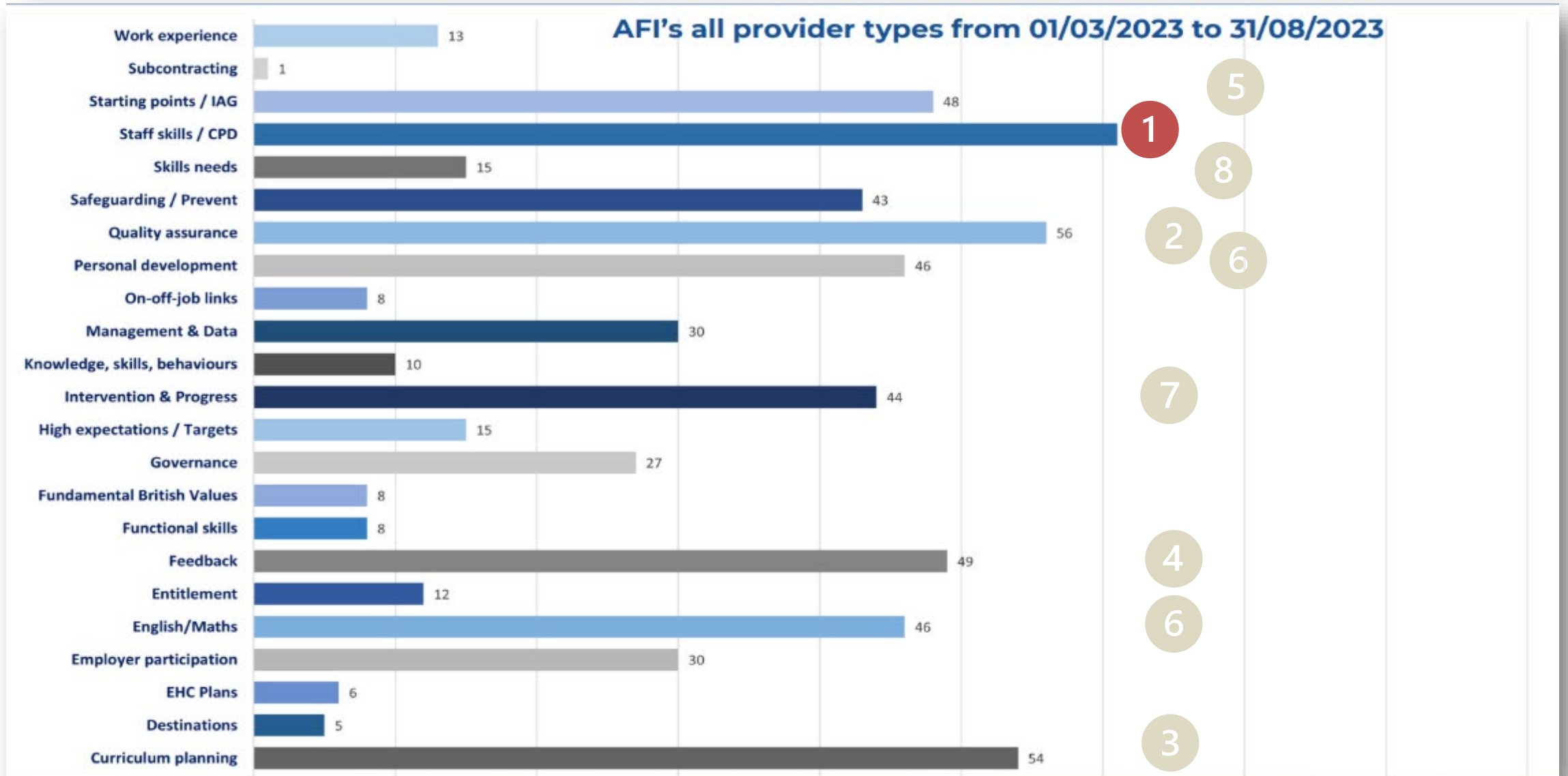- Recruit & Develop skilled practitioners

Impact
- Triaging by risk
- Increasing value of tactical interventions
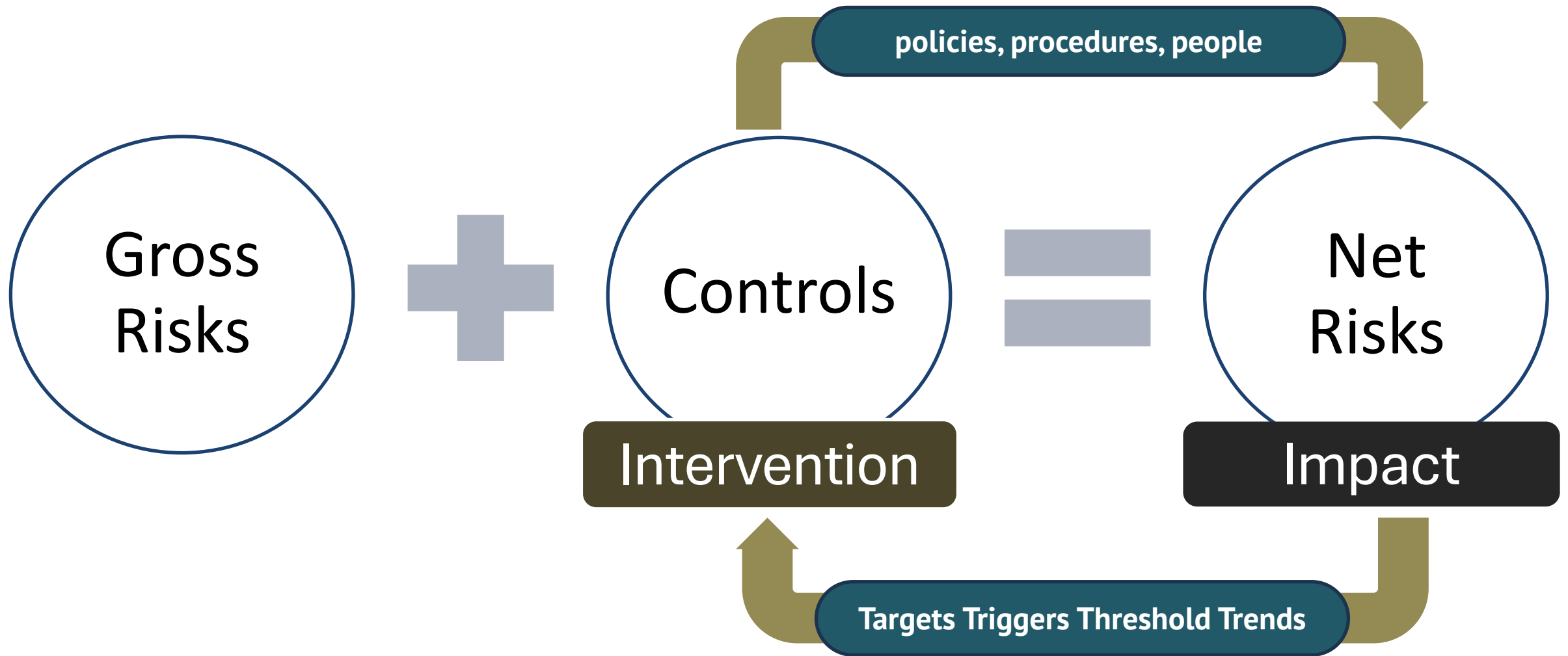- Additional shorter sessions – for action planning

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Ofsted Areas for Improvement

Not the Skills Coach Focus

Gross Risks + Controls = Net Risks

policies, procedures, people

Intervention

Impact

Targets Triggers Threshold Trends

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High Performing 'Not Coach' Characteristics

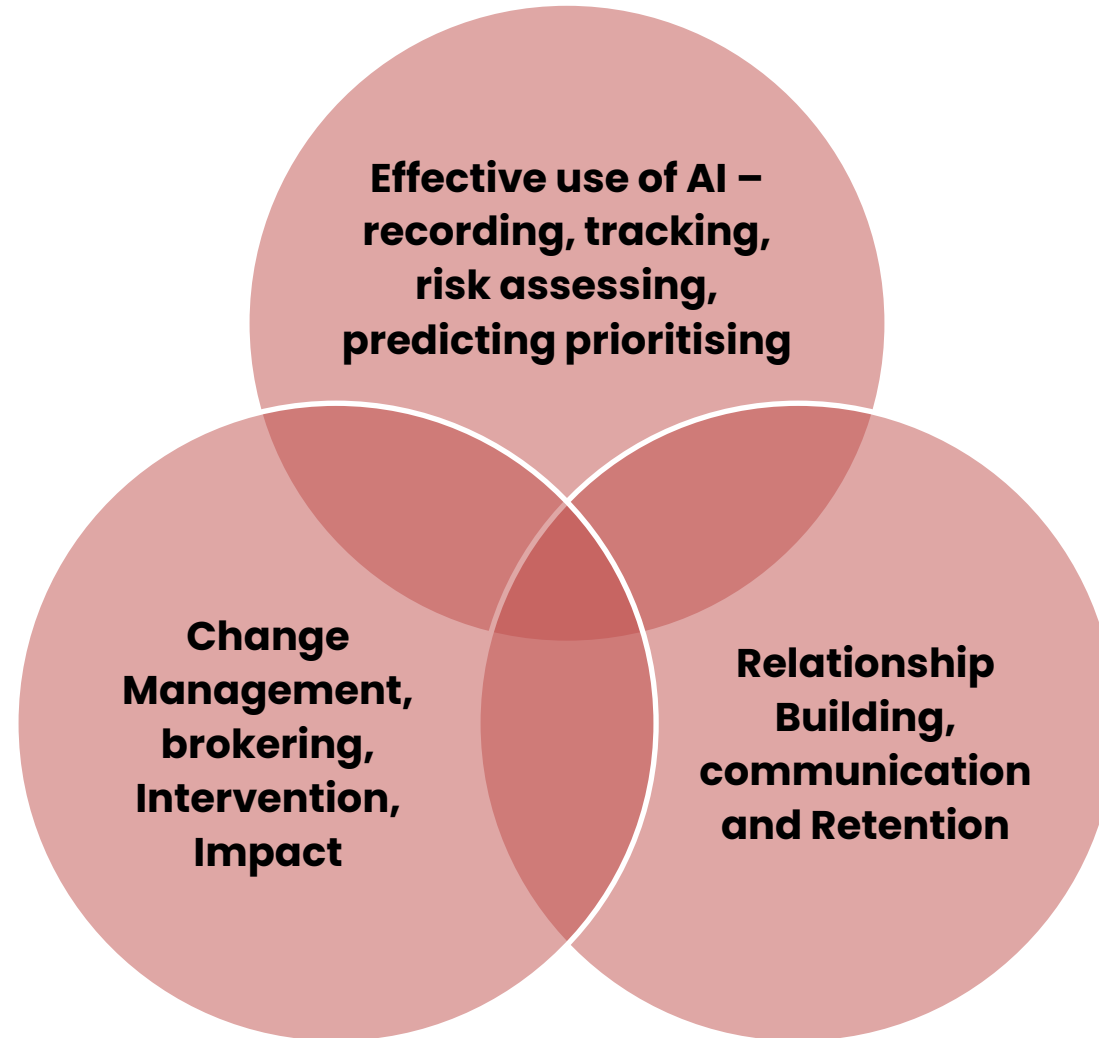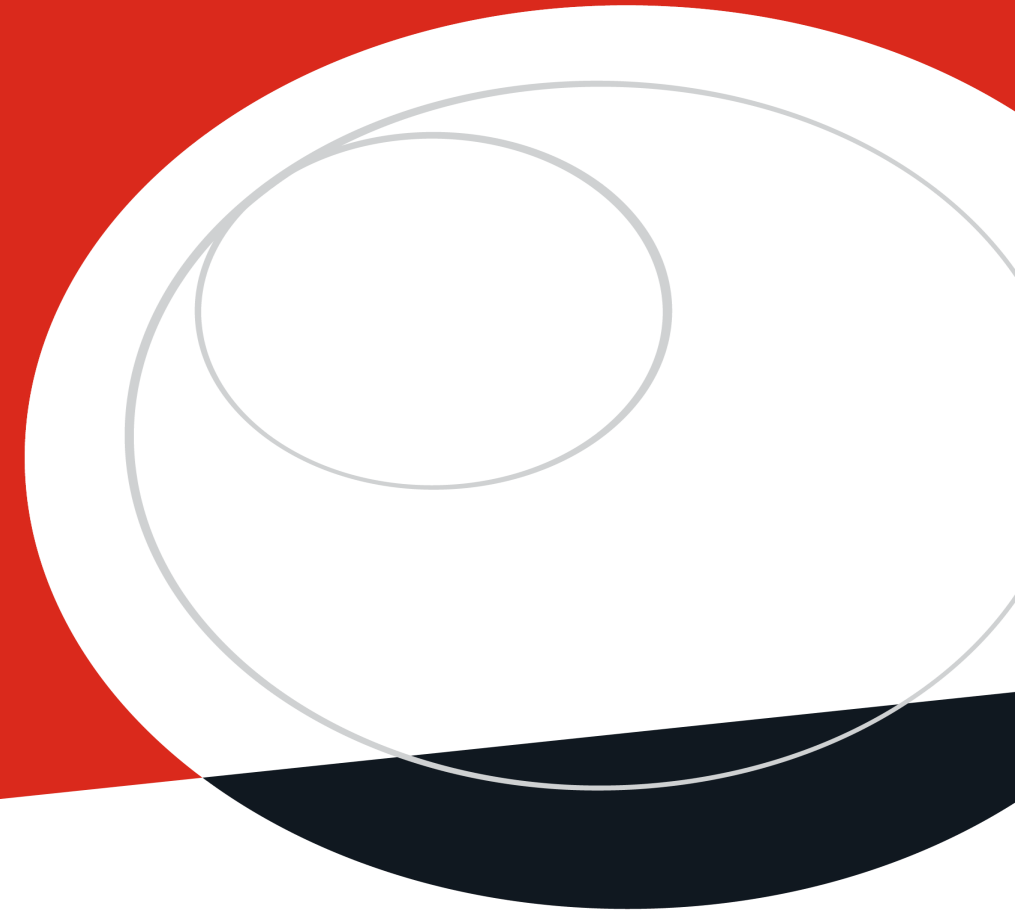| Risk Manager	Change Agent	Improvement Specialist
• Triangulates data to decide action • Triages time to where and which support is most effective • Creates differentiated support as a planned response • Early trend spotter • Intervention focussed • Decision taker	• Builds Relationships & Commitment as a priority skill • Replans and updates plans • Ensures commitment to the plan • Has the hard conversations • Influences and Persuades others to act • Focuses on future outcomes	• Prevention Focussed • Collaborates with others to identify and implement change that works • Ensures lessons learned are identified • Looks for trends and takes time to forecast • Focusses on improvement inside the organisation

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2025: Efficient & Financially Essential Service

**Effective use of AI –
recording, tracking,
risk assessing,
predicting prioritising**

**Change
Management,
brokering,
Intervention,
Impact**

**Relationship
Building,
communication
and Retention**

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Next Steps & Resources

Autumn:

UVAC Toolkit & Resources; DAKN model

Coach Induction live sessions and online via BBX

Questions & Further Information

Click HERE for Today's Listen Again Webcast

Resources - Click HERE
BBX – Click HERE

Queries and Questions to:
R.Rhodes@bolton.ac.uk

Summer Webinars & Events
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Recording Timestamps	
Introduction- key features of the changing coach role	00:00:00
Case Study – London Southbank	10:11
UVAC DAKN: Tripartite Professionals	00:54:00
Future focus – themes for future coaches	1:41:30

UVAC
UNIVERSITY VOCATIONAL AWARDS COUNCIL

	MEMBERS EVENT PROGRAMME BY DATE		
	Topic	**Content**	**Registration Link**
1.	Funding Rules - 2025/2026 Impact and Implications	This session is for everyone involved in apprenticeship delivery from onboarding to EPA and those involved in implementing the ESFA Funding Rules in any aspect of their role. This session will set out the changes in the DfE 2025/ 2026 Apprenticeship Funding Rules and explore the implications of these changes on day-to-day practice, policy and procedures.	Wed 21 May 2.00 – 4.00
2.	A Guide to Audit and Risk Governance and Oversight	This deep dive session will set out a framework for apprenticeship audit and risk review over the 12-month cycle of apprenticeship delivery. The framework will consider the schedule activities to be included in risk assessments, the reporting and monitoring to underpin oversight of risk, and how to combine the activities taking place across a university year into a systematic risk assurance process for the apprenticeship programme.	Thur 12 June 9.30 – 11.30
3.	EQA Assessment & the EQA Visit	This session is aimed at teaching and learning, quality and apprenticeship teams involved in the preparation and execution of OfS external quality assurance frameworks and visits. You will hear from member speakers about learning over successive visits including visits from the last few months as we consider how the EQA process has changed policy and practice internally and consider the impact of possible future EPA changes on EQA.	Tue 19 June 9.30 - 11.30
4.	The Skills Coach – Successful models and the Future	This session is aimed at Apprenticeship Teams and Skills Coach leads - this most vital of roles in apprenticeship delivery. These are the people accountable for delivering the tri-partite progress review and evidence of compliance, and for ensuring that apprenticeship momentum, apprentice progression and employer engagement are maintained. This session is for everyone who leads a team of coaches and/or designs or manages the structures in their organisation. We will explore the latest and emerging structures and staffing levels within our delivery teams whether these are centralised, devolved or contracted out. With input from member speakers on effective models and how the coach role enables success we will explore the impact of current challenges in apprenticeships on these critical roles.	Thur 10 July 9.30 – 11.30
5.	Audit Update – Preparing for 2025/2026	This UVAC session explores the themes from 2024/25 audits and the impact of the 2025/2026 Funding Rules on the DfE's approach to future funding audits. Developed and run with Karl Bentley, this session will provide an early insight into possible changes to audit in response to the Funding Rules and will equip members with suggestions for some early adaptations to process, procedures and paperwork ahead of the release of the audit papers later in 2025/early 2026.	Wed 16 July 9.30 – 11.30
6.	Exploring the options for L7	This session will explore how Universities and providers delivering L7 provision are responding to the (by this point we hope final) position on Level 7 Funding. We will explore the latest DfE guidance and hear from guest speakers and members on their plans for 2025/2026.	Tue 22 July 9.30 – 11.30
7.	The future of EPA and the Impact of New Flexibilities on Curriculum	This session is for curriculum designers, quality teams, teaching and learning teams. Pending announcements about how the EPA flexibilities, which we hope will be clear by this point, will be implemented, this session will review of the impact that the flexibilities proposed will mean for apprenticeships, particularly in design, delivery and quality assurance. Hearing from some of our key End-point Assessment Organisations and from members on their plans to use the opportunities presented this session will enable members to prepare for implementation as this is rolled out from September 2025.	Tue 29 Jul 9.30 – 11.30
8.	ESFA Funding Rules – Final Rules	This session is a 'hold the date', pending announcements of any further changes to the Funding Rules ahead of the start of the 2025/26 funding year. We are anticipating a range of reissues of the Funding Rules this year as different aspects of the announced changes to the apprenticeship programme are implemented…... this session is likely to be the first of several short updates over 2025/2026.	Tue 5 August 9.30 – 11.00