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Planning

## **Market Engagement Exercise – Life Sciences Apprentices Community**

Department for Science, Innovation & Technology

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-032465

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-0548fa

Published 16 June 2025, 9:37am

### **Scope**

#### **Description**

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), for the purposes of this early engagement notice acting through the Office for Life Sciences (OLS) in collaboration with InnovateUK, is conducting this Consultation to gather views on the use of apprenticeships in the Life Sciences sector specifically in terms of:

1. Role of apprentices in Life Sciences companies;
2. Existing apprenticeship support for employers delivered by training providers and other organisations; and
3. Priority skills needs

The Life Sciences Sector refers to biopharmaceutical and medical technology principal sectors. Veterinary and industrial biotechnology businesses are not in scope.

Structure and timing of the market engagement exercise

ISSUED: MONDAY 16TH JUNE 2025

EMAIL RESPONSES BY: FRIDAY 18TH JULY 2025 (17:00 HRS)

Responses and enquires should be sent to: [skillsteam@officeforlifesciences.gov.uk](mailto:skillsteam@officeforlifesciences.gov.uk)

Consultation reference: Life Sciences Apprenticeships

How to respond:

Your response will be most useful if it is framed in direct response to the questions in the Questionnaire within this document as a minimum, but further comments and evidence are also welcome.

In addition to Questionnaire Responses (“Responses”), OLS is offering the opportunity for Contributors to attend a one-to-one online meeting with OLS and InnovateUK to discuss the issues raised by the Consultation in more depth (“Consultation Meetings”) and gather the views of Contributors. Whilst it is OLS and InnovateUK’s intention to hold Consultation Meetings with all Contributors who express an interest in so meeting, appointments will be allocated on a ‘first come first served’ basis. Organisations requesting a meeting will be asked to complete a brief survey to provide background to inform the Consultation Meeting. No additional weight will be given to Responses received from Contributors attending a Consultation Meeting.

The aim of the Consultation Meetings is to further discuss the Questionnaire. Not least to allow Contributors to provide information on aspects of the questions and answers which are not easily communicated through the Questionnaire format. However, Contributors who are unable to attend a Consultation Meeting will be able to submit documents (alongside their answers to the Questionnaire) as part of their Response. Please do not include general marketing information.

Should you ask a question in respect of the Consultation and OLS believe that the answer to that question would be of benefit to all potential Contributors, then these questions and answers will be circulated to all individuals and organisations who have expressed an interest in the Consultation. These questions and answers will also be published on the Contract Finder website. (Prior to publication (and in agreement with the Contributor), questions and answers will be anonymised, and any potentially confidential information removed).

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information provided in response to this consultation will be shared with InnovateUK.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including any personal data, may be

subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with UK access to information laws, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004

If you wish any information you provide to be treated as confidential, please clearly indicate this in writing when you submit your response. It would be helpful if you could explain why you consider the information confidential. While we will carefully consider your reasons, we cannot guarantee that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances, particularly if disclosure is required by law.

Please note that an automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be regarded as a valid confidentiality request unless it is explicitly stated in your written response.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS NOTICE IS FOR MARKET ENGAGEMENT ONLY. (tender/contract dates shown in this notice are projected, and an indicative guide only).

### **Total value (estimated)**

- £0 excluding VAT
- £0 including VAT

Below the relevant threshold

### **Contract dates (estimated)**

- 3 November 2025 to 2 November 2026
- 1 year

### **Main procurement category**

Services

## **CPV classifications**

- 80000000 - Education and training services
- 33000000 - Medical equipments, pharmaceuticals and personal care products
- 73000000 - Research and development services and related consultancy services

## **Contract locations**

- UK - United Kingdom

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## **Engagement**

### **Engagement deadline**

18 July 2025

### **Engagement process description**

How to respond :

Your response will be most useful if it is framed in direct response to the 25 questions in the Questionnaire within this document, but further comments and evidence are also welcome.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS NOTICE IS FOR MARKET ENGAGEMENT ONLY. (tender/contract dates shown in this notice are projected, and an indicative guide only)

In addition to emailing your Questionnaire Responses (“Responses”) to us (on the email address shown), OLS is offering the opportunity for Contributors to attend a one-to-one online meeting with OLS and InnovateUK to discuss the issues raised by the Consultation in more depth (“Consultation Meetings”) and gather the views of Contributors. Whilst it is OLS and InnovateUK’s intention to hold Consultation Meetings with all Contributors who express an interest in so meeting, appointments will be allocated on a ‘first come first

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NOTICE ISSUED: MONDAY 16TH JUNE 2025

Please take a copy of the 25 questions below, answer them and email your responses back to [skillsteam@officeforlifesciences.gov.uk](mailto:skillsteam@officeforlifesciences.gov.uk)

EMAIL RESPONSES BY: FRIDAY 18TH JULY 2025 (17:00 HRS)

Request for information:

## ABOUT YOU AND YOUR ORGANISATION

This section helps us understand the context of your responses and tailor future apprenticeship and training initiatives to different types of organisations.

### 1. Contact Name

Full name of the individual completing this form.

### 2. Contact Email:

Primary email address for correspondence.

### 3. Name of Your Organisation:

Please enter your full organisation name and parent organisation, where applicable.

4. How would you describe your organisation?

e.g. Further education college, public sector organisation, micro/small/medium/large enterprise, academic institution, social enterprise, not-for-profit, registered charity.

You may include additional information to help us better understand your organisation's purpose and operations.

5. Current Annual Turnover (if applicable):

Please provide an approximate figure or range.

6. Current Number of Staff/Employees (if applicable):

Please indicate both full-time and part-time employees.

7. If you are a Life Sciences organisation, which sub-sector(s) do you operate in?

Please list all that apply:

8. Are you an apprenticeship or training provider, or do you provide support to companies employing apprentices?

Please specify your role, including any apprenticeship standards delivered or the type of support offered to employers.

## ROLE OF APPRENTICES IN YOUR ORGANISATION

We are seeking your input to better understand how apprentices contribute within your organisation and the support needs related to apprenticeship programmes.

9. Do you currently have apprentices in your organisation?

If yes, please provide details such as number of apprentices, apprenticeship standards used, and qualification levels.

10. What barriers or challenges do you face in taking on apprentices?

Examples might include funding, recruitment, internal capacity, or lack of suitable standards.

11. What additional support would help your organisation to take on apprentices?

This could include administrative assistance, mentoring support, funding guidance, etc.

12. Do you currently transfer any of your apprenticeship levy contributions to other organisations, or do you receive transferred levy funds?

Please specify which applies and include details on the type of organisations involved in the transfer (e.g. SME partners, charities, training providers).

13. Have you taken on apprentices in the early stages of their careers? If so, please describe any challenges or barriers you've faced in recruiting or supporting them.

EXISTING APPRENTICESHIP SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES DELIVERED BY TRAINING PROVIDERS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS (please answer questions where applicable)

We are seeking input to better understand and improve the support available to employers—particularly in the life sciences sector—who are engaged in or considering apprenticeship programmes. Your responses will help shape more effective resources and partnerships.

14. Do you currently provide apprenticeship training?

If yes, please provide details such as number of apprentices, apprenticeship standards you provide, and qualification levels and any evidence and insights you use to determine your apprenticeship provision.

15. Do you provide support specifically to Life Sciences companies to help them take on apprentices?

If so, what kind of support do you offer

16. Are you aware that the government offers financial support and guidance to help SMEs employ apprentices?

Please respond 'yes' or 'no'. If 'yes', briefly describe the extent of your awareness.

More information is available here: [Employing an apprentice: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

17. Are you aware of or have you received support from any apprenticeship support programmes such as the Advanced Therapies Apprenticeship Community (ATAC), Cogent Skills, or similar initiatives?

Please provide details of your involvement, the type of support received, and your assessment of its effectiveness.

18. Are you aware of any formal or informal networks within the Life Sciences sector that

connect apprenticeship providers, training organisations, employers, and other stakeholders?

Please list any networks or partnerships you are part of and describe their role or impact.

19. If your organisation currently has, or is considering taking on, apprentices – would you consider paying for external support to facilitate this process?

What kind of support would justify a cost (e.g. application handling, legal compliance)?

20. Would you be interested in delivering 'wrap-around' support services to help Life Sciences employers effectively recruit and retain apprentices?

This could include mentoring, onboarding, or performance monitoring.

21. For apprentices themselves – what forms of additional support do you think would be most beneficial?

(e.g. one-to-one mentoring, mental health resources, career coaching, networking opportunities, peer support groups)

## PRIORITY SKILLS NEEDS

We are gathering insights to better align apprenticeship provision with the evolving skills needs of employers—particularly in the life sciences and related sectors. Your feedback will help shape future training and apprenticeship strategies.

22. What skills and capabilities does your organisation currently need training support for?

Please specify any technical, digital, regulatory, leadership, or other skill areas that are a priority

23. What skills and capabilities are you currently addressing through apprenticeships?

Please reference any specific apprenticeship standards you are using, and how they align with your workforce development goals.

24. What skills or capabilities would you like to develop through apprenticeships in the future?

Are there emerging roles or gaps where existing apprenticeship standards are not yet available or widely used?



25. Do existing apprenticeship standards adequately meet your organisation's training needs?

If not, please highlight specific gaps, limitations, or improvements you would suggest (e.g. relevance, level, flexibility).

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## **Participation**

### **Particular suitability**

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)

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## **Submission**

### **Publication date of tender notice (estimated)**

27 October 2025

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## **Contracting authority**

### **Department for Science, Innovation & Technology**

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PVWZ-3216-PVQL

22 Whitehall

London

SW1A 2EG

United Kingdom

Email: [skillsteam@officeforlifesciences.gov.uk](mailto:skillsteam@officeforlifesciences.gov.uk)

Region: UKI32 - Westminster

Organisation type: Public authority - central government