

# POLICY BRIEFING

NOVEMBER 2016- JANUARY 2017

Welcome to our second NLGN ‘Policy Briefing’, exclusively for our members. This briefing collates the most interesting reports that we have come across over the last three months.

This briefing is organised into the following headings:

- Devolution, Growth and Industrial Strategy (p1)
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■ DEVOLUTION, GROWTH AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

<b>How International Cities Lead Inclusive Growth Agendas</b>	<b>JRF</b>	<b>January 2017</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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There is growing concern that economic growth in cities is not shared equitably or is not necessarily associated with better poverty outcomes, leading commentators and policymakers to try to identify more socially just forms of economic development, or inclusive growth. This research aims to identify and review international examples of cities elsewhere in Europe and the US that have developed an inclusive growth agenda, in order to generate evidence and ideas that can influence UK city leaders. It recommends city regions to: see economic growth not as an end in itself but as a means to achieve inclusion and shared prosperity; prioritise connectivity and expand social networks so that they are less exclusive; view people as assets and invest in them at the outset and at key points in their lives; provide support to people at key transition points in their lives through providing social safety nets; innovate and create opportunities for shared leadership; see citizen engagement as a way to generate knowledge from the bottom up; and focus on small incremental changes as well as large ‘flagship’ schemes.

<b>Devolution to the North East: Will it Finally Happen?</b>	<b>Institute for Government</b>	<b>December 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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Local government representatives, academics and others from the north east of England gathered in Newcastle to discuss the history and future of devolution initiatives in the region. This report summarises the contents of that discussion. It highlights the challenges of generating consensus over the appropriate geographical or ‘functional economic’ area to cover in devolution deals, ongoing resistance to the Metro Mayor model, and the incentives for economic growth resulting from business rates reforms and the loss of EU structural funds which are considered to make smaller authorities particularly vulnerable.

<b>Secretary of State's Annual Report on Devolution</b>	<b>HMG</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<a href="#"><u>Link</u></a>
<p>This reports on the devolution deals made with city regions up to the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2016 in line with the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016. It details areas with agreements; areas which have submitted proposals; functions that have been devolved; details of additional functional and economic resources which have been handed to local areas; and devolved public functions. It also comments on possible future legislation and areas of devolution requiring statutory provision. The report also comments on implementation of devolution deals, and mechanisms to secure a strong business voice in their delivery.</p>			
<b>Building Our Industrial Strategy: Green Paper</b>	<b>HMG</b>	<b>January 2017</b>	<a href="#"><u>Link</u></a>
<p>This Green Paper sets out an industrial strategy for Post-Brexit Britain, focusing on closing the gap between the most and least productive places and people. The strategy is built on ten pillars, including: investing in science, research and innovation; developing skills for a modern economy; upgrading infrastructure; supporting businesses to start and grow; improving procurement to support innovation in UK supply chains, encouraging trade and inward investment; delivering affordable energy and clean growth through a low-carbon economy; cultivating world-leading sectors with competitive advantage; driving growth across the whole country; creating the right institutions to bring together sectors and places (be they local, civic, educational, trade associations or financial networks).</p>			
<b>Where Now for Combined Authorities? The Impact of the Vote to Leave the EU</b>	<b>Balfour Beatty</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<a href="#"><u>Link</u></a>
<p>This paper considers the implications of Brexit for the process of devolution deal making. It highlights that the political uncertainty creates short-term uncertainty about prospects for devolution and the Combined Authority agenda, causing devolution to stall and become mired in uncertainty. It is therefore possible that the process of devolution could be slowed or even halted as politicians turn their attention to new political priorities. The report makes ten recommendations, including: the Government should maintain its commitment to the devolution agenda during the EU exit negotiations; clarity from the chancellor about support for combined authorities following the loss of EU regeneration funds; a holistic review of authorities income and expenditure; a clear plan for devolution to all remaining areas in England; devolution of taxes such as stamp duty; measures to increase value for money in procurement, and the full involvement of combined authorities in negotiating the UK's exit from the European Union.</p>			
<b>Taxation, Government Spending and Economic Growth</b>	<b>IEA</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<a href="#"><u>Link</u></a>
<p>This monograph presents a statistical review of the effect of taxation and government spending on economic growth and welfare. Using statistics, the book explores whether the assumption that increasing taxation and government spending are a zero sum game – one group benefits and another (less-deserving) group loses. The authors of this monograph take a data-driven approach to documenting the size of the state and how government spending and regulation affect the wider economy. The report presents an original statistical analysis of the economic costs of high taxes and, equally importantly, which taxes cause the 'most economic harm'. Some of the twenty taxes which they suggest should be abolished includes business rates, council tax, corporation tax and more.</p>			
<b>Economic Growth and the Strategic Road Network</b>	<b>Highways England</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<a href="#"><u>Link</u></a>

This report was commissioned by Highways England to inform the emerging Strategic Economic Growth Plan (SEGP) and better understand the relationship between economic growth and the strategic road network. It presents research which demonstrates that the strategic roads network supports economic growth nationally by increasing productivity and increasing trade, whilst facilitating investment is important for local economic growth. The evidence suggests that highways investment can: improve productivity through reduced business costs, agglomeration economies and increased competition; facilitate investment, and therefore local economic growth through unlocking land for housing and employment uses; increase trade by reducing transport costs domestically and internationally, by improving access to international gateways; reduce unemployment and increase labour supply by increasing the scale of labour markets and improving access to jobs. However, evidence from the UK suggests that given the already extensive network, the potential of achieving this through further investment may be limited.

<b>Good Growth for Cities</b>	<b>Demos-PWC</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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The Demos-PwC Good Growth for Cities Index measures the current performance of a range of the largest UK cities (and Local Enterprise Partnership areas) against a basket of 10 categories, based on the views of the public and business as to what is key to economic success and wellbeing. Employment, health, income and skills are the most important of these factors, as judged by the public, while housing affordability, commuting times, environmental factors and income inequality are also included in the index as well as new business start-ups (new this year). This report presents the findings of this year's review and argues that there has seldom been a better time to deliver deep economic reform and embed a more inclusive approach to growth across cities and regions, supported by a place-based industrial strategy.

<b>Housing Supply and Household Growth, National and Local: Briefing Note</b>	<b>Civitas</b>	<b>December 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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Recently-published figures showed housing supply at a post-2008 high, but still well short of most estimates of need. This short paper considers how many new homes are needed to keep up with population projections for the coming years, and how last year's housebuilding compares with those. It also considers the geographical distribution of those homes. It shows that, while housing output is below the required levels nationally, it is particularly inadequate in those areas that are expected to experience the highest growth in the years ahead. The national figures therefore disguise the scale of the housebuilding challenge, which is not only to get enough homes built, but also in the right places.

<b>The Scale-up Review on Economic Growth</b>	<b>The Scale-Up Institute</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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Building on a 2014 'Scale-up Report on UK Economic Growth' this executive summary tracks progress made since 2014 in scaling up businesses with growth potential. The key conclusions are: the nation is on track in increasing the number of scale-ups with a rise to 11,575 nationally in 2015, but further concerted effort is needed if we are to reach our target of £225 bn (net) GDP by 2034.; the UK Government has excellent data sources, which if harnessed to even greater effect, can ensure better tailored support to scale-ups and those businesses with high growth potential; progress has been made locally, however, more still needs to be done to address disparities; business leaders continue to most need help on talent, leadership and access to markets with finance and infrastructure remaining an important complement to these needs, with specific actions required to address local disparities and to unlock further institutional investment; large corporates, business schools and universities, alongside local authorities can help scale-ups with talent, leadership development and sales opportunities at home and abroad.

## ■ PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM

<b>A New Public Service Ethos: Next Generation Public Service Reform</b>	<b>Localis</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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A form of the public service ethos has been around since the 1920s, and nearly a century on, it is still a defining feature of the public sector. Localis explored how the public service ethos is changing and its meaning today. The research found that the public service ethos still matters, even as it evolves to reflect modern needs. There is a clear perception of the public service ethos both in the NHS and in local government. Senior managers within these sectors characterised the public sector ethos as one of accountability, community responsibility, customer service and integrity. The research did find some differences according to region and age: for example, younger workers placed less emphasis on accountability, customer service, integrity and social justice than older workers. The report also reveals a perception that private sector values are not aligned with public sector ones, with a negative impact on public sector ethos.

<b>How to Keep It Local: Five Step Guide for councillors and commissioners</b>	<b>Locality</b>	<b>January 2017</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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As part of their 'Keep it Local' campaign, community group Locality has written a handbook for locally commissioned, locally delivered public services. Shrinking budgets mean that many local authorities see outsourcing to big companies and national charities as the only way to shrink budgets, but this can result in a standardised, one-size-fits-all service. 'Keeping it local' can create more responsive services, invest in the local economy and save money. This 'how to guide' shows how councillors and commissioners can work to make this a reality. The five steps outlined to 'keep it local' are: take a place based approach; demonstrate social value; commit to building community capacity; impose a maximum value on contracts; and involve local people through co-designing services. The document addresses how councils can do this in detail, addressing things like the Social Value Act and EU procurement laws.

<b>A whole-system approach to offender management</b>	<b>IPPR</b>	<b>December 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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This report outlines a 'whole-system' approach to managing people in the criminal justice system in which responsibility for probation is devolved to police and crime commissioners (PCCs) and city region mayors. As the report notes, many of the policy levers for reducing reoffending lie at the local level – including housing and homelessness support, substance misuse support, and the Troubled Families programme. In the long term, city region mayors or PCCs should have responsibility over probation services and some custody budgets. This would enable a joined up system which can address the causes of offending and increase incentives to reduce re-offending.

<b>Faulty by design: The state of public-service commissioning</b>	<b>Reform</b>	<b>January 2017</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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At its most effective, commissioning should deliver value for money for public services by a process which can meet increasingly complex needs of service users. Yet commissioning today often fails to meet this potential. The authors argue that all too often, commissioning is fragmented, failing to meet people's needs holistically, and is only a sticking plaster solution to real problems. Additionally, the process is still too centrally controlled, and local commissioners cannot design services to meet the needs of their local populations.

The paper demonstrates the challenges from a series of different angles:

- Outcomes-based commissioning is only an illusion in practice. Services are still judged by processes and outputs that can be easily measured, rather than the outcomes that represent real progress. A risk-averse culture reinforces this focus on activity.

- The commissioning landscape is fragmented and the paper illustrates this from both the funding angle and the service user angle.
- The paper's final chapter argues for progress on the localism agenda, using examples from different areas to demonstrate why commissioning must be able to design services according to local needs.

**Making policy stick: Tackling long-term challenges in government**

**Institute for Government**

**December 2016**

[Link](#)

This paper argues that, traditionally, government has had a poor record on implementing policy change over the long term. It frequently fails to tackle 'wicked issues' such as social mobility or intergenerational poverty. This paper draws on where government has succeeded in effecting change over the long term to outline how it can be done. Issues requiring long-term policy attention have a number of features in common: they are multifaceted and span government boundaries; they are politically contested; and they often require immediate investment with benefits only being realised over the long term. The paper outlines three phases of achieving long-term policy change, showing what is necessary to sustain efforts at each phase:

- Phase 1: Rising salience. In this phase, social issues receive high levels of political interest and attention.
- Phase 2: Building Blocks. The government must outline its ambition and put in place its plan to achieve this.
- Phase 3: Embedding. Political interest in the issue has diminished and so the viability of the long-term strategy is tested.

**Stronger together: Shared management in local government**

**LGA**

**November 2016**

[Link](#)

This paper focuses on the benefits to local authorities of sharing management, in a challenging financial context. Approximately 45 councils across England share a chief executive and senior management team. Forms of shared management vary, but often prompt shared services at lower levels. In some cases, staff will become employees of the same organisation and services such as HR and ICT are often shared. In a few cases, councils have opted to fully merge. Sharing management can realise benefits such as savings and efficiency, but can also bring about greater collective capacity, more promotion opportunities to help retain talent, and system transformation.

**A Common Interest: The role of asset transfer in developing the community business market**

**NLGN for Power to Change**

**November 2016**

[Link](#)

This report is a comprehensive mapping of community asset transfer from local authorities to communities, drawing on case studies to show where it has been successful and where it has failed. Transferring assets to the community has the potential to achieve long-term social change, increasing resilience of communities and facilitating stronger networks of people and places. Yet local authorities are hampered by the priority of generating income through their assets, meaning community asset transfer is not a highly used option. Where community asset transfer is used, the success varies. The report outlines three key activities for the success of a community business: community interest, which engages both interested parties and key place leaders; effective strategies to manage risk; and creativity – the ability to innovate to become resilient.

■ DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

<b>Demanding Digital</b>	<b>Atos</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<a href="#"><u>Link</u></a>
<p>Atos commissioned an independent study of 3,150 citizens to find out what they think of the digital services local government currently provides to them. One fifth (21.8 per cent) of citizens surveyed said their experience of local government digital services was either 'poor' or 'very poor'. The challenge this creates is that there is a strong correlation between citizens' online experience and how they then perceive the offline elements of local government. In fact, a quarter of respondents stated: "The digital experience is not good and I expect more in my dealings with them on other channels". Citizens are open to the idea of smart digital technology, but they want the basics to be right first.</p>			
<b>Wise Council</b>	<b>NESTA</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<a href="#"><u>Link</u></a>
<p>Wise Council explores the many and various ways in which councils are already using data to make their services more effective, manage budget cuts and support the local economy using case studies. The report sets out 10 steps to data success for councils, from starting with a clear problem to be solved, for which data can offer impactful and actionable insight, through to evaluation of the overall impact of the work against the original objectives. The report recommends that to promote further data-led innovation: DCLG and the Government Digital Service should establish a dedicated scheme to embed data analysts alongside frontline workers, managers and leaders in councils across the country. To replicate and scale impactful data analytics and tools, the local government sector, led by the LGA, should develop a knowledge transfer scheme for existing best practice; city regions bidding for devolved powers should be required to set up an Office of Data Analytics (ODA) as part of the devolution settlements; local authorities should build systematic evaluation into data-led innovation.</p>			
<b>Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021</b>	<b>Libraries TaskForce</b>	<b>December 2016</b>	<a href="#"><u>Link</u></a>
<p>This report challenges both central and local government to think and act differently to transform library services. Libraries should be integral to all public service strategies. They must demonstrate their value to service commissioners - promoting themselves as an asset not a cost. In turn, we are urging commissioners to consider a 'Libraries First' approach when planning services for their communities. The report suggests that digital should be core to the revival of library services, becoming 'digital leaders' in their constituencies who spark innovation through public provision of digital literacy, transformation of their operating systems, and staff skills.</p>			
<b>Transforming social care through the use of information and technology</b>	<b>LGA</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<a href="#"><u>Link</u></a>
<p>This report provides examples of transformation in practice, drawing out case studies where digital technology and the use of information is actively enabling change. Findings are developed from a digital maturity self-assessment that the Local Government Association (LGA) in partnership with Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and the Society of IT Managers (Socitm), carried out with councils in early 2016. The self-assessment was completed by just under 60 per cent of councils and presents a comprehensive picture of where information and technology are already transforming services and critically, and where challenges for digital adoption across the sector remain.</p>			

<b>The Use of Digital Technologies to Target Financial Exclusion</b>	<b>Centre for Social Justice (CSJ)</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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This report summarises a roundtable discussion on how digital skills and technology can help tackle the problem of financial exclusion. Recommendations included: The introduction of one-to-one mentoring at a local authority level will help to address and reduce lack of trust and capability; financial service providers should introduce programmes that target groups and teach basic skills for online engagement; financial institutions should lower their costs as much as possible to reduce barriers to entry for low income individuals and households; KYC (Know Your Customer) regulations should be reduced to as minimum level as possible to prevent exclusion of people without fixed accommodation; joining-up different services from across the spectrum (current account, debt, credit cards, welfare payments, planning, rent related payments etc.) is essential for tackling financial exclusion by reducing complexity; the government should appoint a minister responsible for financial exclusion and put into practice a financial exclusion strategy; a metric should be devised to measure financial exclusion based in part on the extent to which an individual has sought financial support recently.

## ■ FINANCE

<b>Winter is Coming: The outlook for the public finances in the 2016 Autumn Statement</b>	<b>The Institute for Fiscal Studies</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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Written before the publication of the 2016 Autumn statement, this briefing note attempts to quantify the magnitude of the public finance challenge, comparing macroeconomic forecasts and financial indicators since the March 2016 Budget. Key findings and recommendations include:

- There is growing uncertainty about the future and general disagreement between forecasters, but trends include lower growth and higher inflation.
- Higher inflation means many working age households will see their benefits cut by more in real terms, particularly those covered by the benefits freeze; government's promise of a £12,500 personal allowance and £50,000 basic-rate threshold will be cheaper by £1.8 billion.
- The Chancellor should wait before implementing further fiscal tightening (tax rises or spending cuts). The substantial and unavoidable long-run fiscal challenges associated with demographic changes will likely be compounded by lower levels of immigration, slower economic growth and the likelihood of higher interest rates.
- As long as current budget balance is forecast to be restored by the target year, the Chancellor should implement temporary fiscal stimulus to support a weak economy.
- Preparing for this scenario will allow policy makers to adjust gradually to shocks, and prevent abrupt and frequent changes which could compound nationwide instability.
- The Chancellor also needs to prepare for the possibility of austerity in the longer term.

<b>Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2017/18 – On the Day Briefing</b>	<b>LGA</b>	<b>December 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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This briefing is the LGA's response to the provisional local government finance settlement. It concludes that:

- There have been no additional funds allocated for central government in the settlement. While allowing the social care precept an additional 1 per cent rise introduces some flexibility, it does not address the predicted and extensive social care funding gap. It risks putting further pressure on struggling households and has the potential to exacerbate uneven resource availability in different parts of the country, unrelated to need.
- The devolution of public health responsibility to councils in 2013 was a move in the right direction, but many authorities feel this hasn't been matched with the resources needed to fulfil it.

- The new Adult Social Care Support Grant, while welcome, cannot be seen as increased funding, but is instead a reallocation of savings made from the reform of the New Homes Bonus.
- The government must examine anew its spending on social care and health prior to the 2017 Spring Budget and commit to spending new money on social care in the coming decade.

**Local Government Finance Bill 2016-17 Briefing Paper**

**House of Commons**

**January 2016**

[Link](#)

The Local Government Finance Bill 2016-17 would involve amending the framework legislation for business rates in England. This briefing paper provides an overview of the current framework and details the changes proposed in the bill. It also provides in-depth background of the political history and rationale for each of the amendments, as well as the response from various sectors, particularly with regards to tensions and difficulties arising from 100 per cent retention of business rates.

**The Financial Suitability of Local Authorities**

**House of Commons Public Accounts Committee**

**November 2016**

[Link](#)

This report examines the changing nature of local authority capital spending, with many authorities using their capital programmes to generate revenue returns. Investment is moving away from physical assets (such as libraries, museums and parks) and towards commercial investments (property management). The report also expresses concern that The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has not done more to anticipate risks to local authorities' finances, council tax payers and local service users arising from this shift. Given the changing and unpredictable institutional and economic environment, it sets out a series of recommendations for the DCLG to develop a better understanding of the capital issues faced by local authorities in order to support them.

**AFS 2016: Women's Budget Group Response**

**Women's Budget Group**

**December 2016**

[Link](#)

This assessment of the Autumn Statement concludes the Chancellor missed a chance to make good on the promise to build a country and economy that "works for everyone". Key points:

- The new budget does little to tackle the social care crisis, with health and education also suffering from rising demand and inflationary pressures.
- Women and those on low incomes will continue to shoulder the biggest burden of tax and benefit changes. A new approach is needed: investment in social care creates almost twice as many jobs as investment in construction and also tackles the disparate impact of reduced overall government spending.
- Evaluating the impact of policy on women and other protected groups must be an essential part of policy and decision-making, but that the AFS 2016 did not adequately do this.

**Local Authority Arts Investment & Partnership Survey 2016/17**

**Arts Development UK**

**November 2016**

[Link](#)

This report outlines the results of an annual survey of local authorities' forecasts on spending on the arts for 2016/17, ahead of the August statement. Key findings include:

- Reduction in projected arts spending across the board with a total reduction of £26 million (13 per cent) on 2015/16.
- Councils are pessimistic about the future arts funding; with smaller authorities particularly affected and more likely to suffer from overall loss of cohesive arts services.
- The national landscape is characterised by a move away from directly managed services and towards contracting, with partnership initiatives down.
- Restructuring continues to be an important response to funding cuts, and one that makes councils more confident about their future viability.

## ■ EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

<b>Work and Wellbeing – Exploring Data on Inequalities</b>	<b>Carnegie UK Trust</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<a href="#"><u>Link</u></a>
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While unemployment continues to be a problem, the levels of work in the UK are relatively high. However, disparities between different kinds of work available and job satisfaction continue to be a pressing policy concern. This research project examines regional, sectoral and demographic inequalities in paid work through the lens of ‘fulfilment’ and proposes that more attention must be paid to change this:

- Using nationwide data and surveys, it suggests that low unemployment figures betray a dynamic of poor and unfulfilling work in many areas and sectors of the country.
- Characteristics of fulfilling work include: social connections, job security, predictable hours, sense of purpose, flexibility, adequate pay and engagement.
- Those particularly affected by unfulfilling work include: young people, people with disabilities, those belonging to ethnic minority groups, women, part-time and temporary workers, and the self-employed.

<b>Earning and Learning: Making the Apprenticeship System Work for 16-18-year-olds</b>	<b>IPPR</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<a href="#"><u>Link</u></a>
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Youth unemployment levels in the UK have stayed relatively high even as the economy has slowly recovered. To improve the experiences of young people and reduce barriers to social mobility, the government should develop better programs to help 16-18 year olds with low qualifications transition from education to work. This report evaluates the current system of vocational education and concludes that:

- Level 2 apprenticeships often do not help young people find work or to progress to higher levels of vocational training. They are too job specific, do not include practical learning and (from next year) will not necessarily include a recognised qualification.
- Evidence from other OECD countries suggests that combining workplace and classroom training results in higher-quality programmes for young people. The government can do this by focusing on a system that includes ‘earning and learning’.
- Level 2 apprenticeships should be replaced by a new system of pre-apprenticeships.
- This pre-apprenticeship would be offered by FE colleges or not-for-profit training providers and employers would be subsidized for hiring a young person in the programme.
- The pre-apprenticeship model will need to be different from the current apprenticeship one: it will involve more general education (i.e., Maths and English), classroom training and also result in a transferable qualification.

<b>Living on the edge: The rise of job insecurity in modern Britain</b>	<b>Trades Union Congress (TUC)</b>	<b>December 2016</b>	<a href="#"><u>Link</u></a>
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In recent decades there have been significant changes in the relationship between employers and working people, with risks of being unable to work due to sickness or caring increasingly transferred to workers. Technology has impacted both working experience and power dynamics, with work able to be divided into smaller tasks and the rise of low paid self-employment, insecure temporary work and zero-hours contracts. Main points:

- There have been some improvements to the rights and protections for insecure forms of work, i.e. through the creation of the ACAS pay and work helpline, the government banning exclusivity clauses within zero-hours contracts, and continued campaign from unions across the EU.
- Some changes have introduced further challenges for insecure workers, i.e. the introduction of employment tribunal fees and the doubling of the qualifying period for unfair dismissal rights.

- The TUC urges the government to: extend rights to all those working, not only those considered “employees”; make sure self-employment is a choice, not an employer cost-saving measure; ensure everyone is protected when they cannot work due to sickness or care responsibilities; enforce current protections; improve workers’ right to organise for better conditions.

<b>Young, Female, Forgotten?</b>	<b>Institute for Policy Research, University of Bath</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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This research project examines the large numbers of young women who are more likely than young men to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) and to be NEET and economically inactive. Using data from surveys and interviews, it suggests new ways of supporting them in their transition into work.

Key recommendations:

- There needs to be clarity at local level around funding to replace the European Social Fund provision.
- Policy-makers need a much better understanding of who is NEET and the difference between those who are ‘economically active’ and ‘economically inactive’.
- There needs to be specific research and policy targeted towards the growing number of 18-24 year-olds who fall outside the NEET group and have ‘unknown’ destinations.
- Government should introduce a Minister for Young People, responsible for representing the interests of young people as a whole.
- To reduce the numbers of NEET economically inactive young women, government needs more awareness of their care responsibilities and desire to transition into work gradually, particularly tackling the lack of availability of affordable childcare.
- Government and policy-makers should consider programmes that include mentoring, advice and guidance.

<b>The Skills We Need And Why We Don't Have Them: How Apprenticeships should be reformed to make the UK compete on the global stage</b>	<b>Policy Exchange</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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The Apprenticeship system is an opportunity for the UK to provide a world class alternative technical educational model, address issues in the labour market and improve social mobility. However, this will depend on the quality of skill-development and connection to the jobs available. This has not yet been achieved. To make the most of the pledge to create 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020, the government must put in place new targets. This report argues for:

- A serious effort to improve quality as well as numbers when creating and implementing policy around apprenticeships.
- The creation of an institute of apprenticeship to become the guarantor of quality and give a voice to employers.
- The involvement of the qualifications regulator, Ofqual, to set the standards for the future assessment of apprenticeships.

<b>Going Places: Innovation in Further Education &amp; Skills</b>	<b>The Skills Commission</b>	<b>December 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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This report focuses on innovative changes taking in place in colleges around the UK in the context of the Apprenticeship Levy, Area Reviews, and the Post-16 Skills Plan. Highlighting examples of good practice, it emphasises the importance of flexibility and creativity in weighing and transforming the needs of learners and employers. In exploring the future of further education and skills, it emphasises what form of devolution would enable these kinds of initiatives to become commonplace throughout the country and to radically transform practice around further education and skills. With adequate funding and responsive to local needs, local governments are well-placed to facilitate collaboration between providers, employers and learners.

<b>IFS Green Budget 2017: Reforms to apprenticeship funding in England</b>	<b>Institute for Fiscal Studies</b>	<b>January 2017</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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Written in association with ICAEW and the Nuffield Foundation, this pre-released chapter of the forthcoming IFS Green Budget tackles the new apprenticeship levy and apprenticeship policy. It recommends against the new (legally-binding) minimum target for public sector bodies with more than 250 employees to employ at least 2.3 per cent of their workforce as apprentices. It argues that it was created as a way to hit the government's 3 million national target for apprentices, not as a measure to improve public services. This emphasis on targets runs the risk of distorting policy and could lead to poor service delivery and inefficiencies. The costs of the levy will affect more individuals than is suggested by the government statistic that only 2% of employers will pay the levy. The IFS estimates that at least 60% of employees work for an employer who will be affected. The government has presented apprenticeships as having a high return on public investment, however the IFS argues that this has been overstated. So while apprenticeships may be the answer to the low-skills UK workforce, the government needs to move away from large-scale target-driven implementation.

## ■ ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

<b>Outside the Box: The Council Workforce of Tomorrow</b>	<b>NLGN</b>	<b>December 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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Councils are rapidly changing, with very different roles compared to the big institutions of the past. Now more than ever, local government needs a strategy to ensure employees are motivated, productive and flourishing, ready to take on the challenges of tomorrow's council. This paper outlines how local government can recruit and retain talented staff with a broad range of experience, drawing on the motivations of the current workforce. It focuses on the potential benefits of a much less hierarchical culture in which all staff can take initiative and make decisions, and also argues that councils should become much more outward-facing, to counter perceptions of local government as insular and unhelpful. The paper's recommendations include:

- Councils should co-produce and implement clear workforce strategies that prioritise increasing autonomy and reducing hierarchy
- Councils should become more outward-facing and engage with the public to counter negative perceptions of working for a council. This must be seen as fundamental to their drive to build a dynamic workforce from a range of professional backgrounds.
- Senior leaders within and outside local government – including elected members – have a responsibility to model and drive forward a culture change

<b>User Voice: Putting people at the heart of impact practice</b>	<b>NPC</b>	<b>November 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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This report explains how charities can best harness the views and needs of their beneficiaries in order to improve their impact. It is aimed at charities, but also those bodies that fund them, which have the ability to incentivise and encourage certain approaches. Charities do not have a built in 'feedback loop' to gain user input in the same way that the public sector and the private sector do, in the forms of democracy and the market respectively. Yet there are clear benefits to service user feedback; for example, it can help improve services and it provides moral legitimacy. The report highlights the steps charities should take to use the 'service user' voice to better understand their own impact and how they can improve. It draws on a range of examples of good practice in service user involvement.

<b>LGA corporate peer challenge: An introduction to the peer challenge process and role of peers</b>	<b>Local Government Association</b>	<b>December 2016</b>	<b><a href="#">Link</a></b>
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This guidance document introduces the role of corporate peer challenge to local government to promote improvement. Peer challenge involves ‘peers’ spending time at a council onsite, helping the council to improve and learn by providing a practitioner perspective and critical friend challenge. Rather than feeling like an inspection or assessment, peer challenge should provide practical advice and suggestions, considering the local and organisational context.

**How can job security exist in the modern world of work?**

**Citizens Advice**

**January 2017**

[Link](#)

Citizens Advice have produced a short document with policy recommendations outlining how job security can exist in a flexible labour market. The workforce is increasingly mobile and flexible, yet sometimes this is exploited and workers face an insecure income. Citizens Advice make a number of recommendations around transparency and accessibility to information around employment rights. They call for government to establish a Fair Work Authority which is dedicated to enforcing workplace rights. Additionally, they recommend increased transparency for large employers around the types of contracts they implement, as well as implementing a clear, statutory definition of self-employment, accessible via an intuitive online test.

**Targeted pay increases in the Public Sector: Theory and Practice**

**Office of Manpower Economics, HM Government**

**November 2016**

[Link](#)

While public sector workforces are funded for pay awards of 1 per cent per year up to 2019-20, these can be used in differentiated ways so that some employees receive greater pay increases than others. This document gives guidance on the use of targeted pay awards, and what employers in the public sector should and should not do. For example, it considers the role of targeted pay increases to recruit and retain skills that are in demand; as well as if and how to reward good performance through salary increases. Throughout, the authors highlight relevant research which has looked at issues such as the effect of performance related pay and the relationship between productivity and pay.

**Research Paper: the Management of Mental Health at Work**

**ACAS**

**November 2016**

[Link](#)

Mental health is affected by the workplace, and management of mental health at work can be complex and challenging. Of course, factors within but also outside the workplace can contribute to poor mental health – outside the workplace, relationship breakdown, addiction and genetics can all contribute. However, there are key factors within the workplace too. This research found that organisational change, downsizing, increasing workloads and pressure at work can all contribute negatively to employees’ mental health, sometimes leading to people leaving their jobs. The paper is based on research with several ‘case study’ organisations, and highlights examples of where employers have taken positive action to address mental health, as well as making recommendations.

**Beyond Brexit: Assessing key risks to the nursing workforce in England**

**Institute for Employment Studies**

**December 2016**

[Link](#)

This paper has considered the effects of Brexit on the nursing workforce, looking at the regions of the UK most vulnerable to these risk factors. The paper notes that a reduced flow of nurses from the EU is to be expected in the near future, alongside a projected increase in the number of people aged 85 or over. Additionally, the nursing workforce is itself ageing. The NHS is increasingly reliant on the recruitment pipeline from Europe, with nurses less likely to come from the rest of the world: they currently make up 4.5 per cent of the total nursing workforce in England – up from just over one per cent in 2009. And this figure masks differences in regional dependence on EU labour. The paper’s analysis shows that the NHS trusts in the London, Thames Valley and the East of England regions are most vulnerable to be affected by Brexit, as they are most reliant on EEA nurses.