

Academy Issues Urgent Warning to HR Departments and Company Bosses Following Budget

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The MD of one of the UK's leading training and apprenticeship providers has issued an urgent warning and call to company bosses and HR departments before the UK government withdraws vital funding for L7 leadership courses.

Managing Director Jemma Perks of national apprenticeships and commercial training provider [S&A Academy](#), has urged company bosses, HR directors and departments to enrol their employees onto final Level 7 (L7) Senior Leadership courses or face increased costs of up to £14,000 per employee.

S&A Academy are leaders in bespoke training and apprenticeships for executive leadership and management skills in business, insurance, financial services, science and tech.

From 1st January 2026 the UK government will no longer provide funding for individuals aged 22 and over which currently stands at £14,000 per employee. The L7 Senior Leadership apprenticeship – which is an equivalent to a master's degree – is hugely popular with employees who want to become future senior managers and leaders in their organisations. The qualification is a requirement for progression into senior management and can be undertaken alongside full time employment.

Just under £240 million was spent by UK companies and organisations on L7 apprenticeships in the 2023-2024 period. The courses are currently subsidised by the government as part of the enterprise levy scheme which allows companies access to funding for training.

The December course will be the last intake that employers and employees can get access to the

subsidised funding. After the 1st January 2026 any employee wanting to undertake a L7 Senior Leader apprenticeship will either have to self-fund or seek funding from their employer, which will cost around £14,000 per employee.

The unwelcome news follows a controversial budget delivered by Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves and comes at a time when UK companies are faced with tough market trading conditions, rising energy costs, spiralling staffing costs and still absorbing the impact of the employer National Insurance (NI) hike.

London headquartered S&A Academy which operates across the UK – the sister company to S&A Transform one of the UK's top challenger consultancies – is an independent Ofsted regulated 'Good' provider of professional government funded apprenticeships, commercial training, corporate learning and development programmes (L&D). The S&A Tech Academy was last year awarded a 100% 'achievement rate' for its apprenticeship training.

Commenting on the announcement Managing Director of the S&A Academy Jemma Perks said: "We would urge all company bosses and HR departments to sign up as many employees onto the L7 senior leader programme before the funding is withdrawn on the 1st January 2026. After this deadline companies will then have to pay £14,000 for each employee undertaking an L7 course. This adds more financial pressure that UK companies are currently facing and is likely to impact future training of their senior leaders."

The S&A Academy L7 Senior leader program lasts 18 months and is delivered across England in all regions and sectors, working with SMEs through to global corporates. A tailored and bespoke delivery model, the training is provided through a flexible blend of online workshops, one-to-one coaching and on-site training that fits around executive diaries and operational pressures. Executive coaching is included throughout the course ensuring every leader has personalised support to embed learning into their role. There is also cohort-based learning to foster networking across industries, encouraging peer-to-peer exchange at senior level.

Ms Perks added: "The government's withdrawal of vital funding means employers will be faced with finding an extra £14,000 per employee to put them onto the L7 courses. For a company wishing to put 10 employees onto this course will now cost £140,000 and for many SME's this will be prohibitive. This is likely to impact senior leadership roles in companies with not enough talented future leaders coming through the executive leadership pipeline. This in turn this will have an impact on growth within UK companies and organisations."