change could price assessors out of running exa

inancially viable for
es to run end-point
ams, after it emerged that
ed to base their costs on
with employers without

ing into force in May will
al apprenticeship exams
verall training costs
an employer and a training
g away from previous
set the charge at no
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at standard.
that this means they will
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the handbook for
sment organisations, seen
es it clear that the change
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ublished rules confirm
nt is of the total agreed
cent of the funding-band

s because if the agreed
the funding-band
ures that the assessment
ionately lower as well."
t, the chief executive of the
arding Bodies, issued a stark
e impact of the new rule.

"Like every other organisation, awarding organisations can only provide their services for a fair price," he said.

"If the percentage of the price between the trainer and the employer is too low to deliver a valid assessment, then awarding organisations will simply not offer end-point assessments, which will undermine the whole system."

Graham Hasting-Evans, the managing director of NOCN, a major awarding body, said that awarding organisations need control of the exam charges, to make sure they cover their costs and are able to make some profit.

He stressed that apprenticeship exam costs "are driven by the employer group's specification for testing as set out in the assessment plan, and have nothing at all to do with the training costs".

Details of what should be included in an apprentice's final exam are set out by the employer groups developing a standard, and are outlined in the assessment plan.

Some of these can be highly detailed, and therefore have high costs attached to them.

For example, the gas network team leader assessment plan estimates the final exam to cost £3,808.

But the

standard has a funding-band ma
£9,000 and the agreed price may
than that.

As the assessment costs are no
the cost of training, the cost of d
these exams to the specification
the assessment plan is unlikely t
regardless of the negotiated pric
apprenticeship.

Mr Hasting-Evans said that on
the government could reduce the
apprenticeship exams was to "re
the specifications with a view to
efficiency and reducing costs".

FE Week understands that a nu
assessment organisations are re
difficulties in recruiting assesso
payment rates that would allow t
break even.

The government has already s
struggling to persuade organisat
sign up to deliver apprenticeship
exams.

By the end of January just ove
out of 159 – standards approved f
had at least one assessment orga
in place.

But the proportion of learners
standards without an approved a
organisation has been dropping
from 42 per cent in July to 18 per
October.

The Department for Education
to comment either on the rule ch
the concerns raised by Mr Hasti
and Mr Wright.