

Work Package 3a



### UK REPORT



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Education and Culture DG Lifelong Learning Programme



**LEONARDO DA VINCI TRANSFER OF INNOVATIONS PROJECT DEVAPPRENT**

**WORK PACKAGE 3a**

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF APPRENTICESHIP  
IN GERMANY, FRANCE, THE NETHERLANDS AND THE UK  
REPORT**

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England, 2011



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this report is to research and analyse Apprenticeship practice in the UK to enable and propose practical measures of the findings which can and would be transferable in developing Apprenticeship programmes in Lithuania. Referring to the experience of Apprenticeships in the UK and other participating countries will enable the leading partner of the DEVAPPRENT project to prepare the guidelines for the implementation and development of effective apprenticeship practices in Lithuania.

An initial literature review examined a range of materials relevant to the project, particularly reports and research documents by the NAS- National Apprenticeship Services, fdf – foundation degree forward, LSC (Learning and Skills Council now replaced by successor organisations SFA Skills Funding Agency and YPLA - Young People's Learning Agency), SSCs (Sector Skills Councils)

The majority of case studies were interviews of key stakeholder's e.g employers, NAS, training providers, apprentices, unions, government institutions relevant to shaping and influencing apprenticeship policy, governance, delivery and development of best practice in the UK.

The draft report was produced by unionlearn with the Midlands TUC. Much has been achieved in the realm of trade union education and union learning including Apprenticeships and Life Long learning over the past few years. Unions are making changes to reach out to all the members who could benefit from study at the workplace or a local college or learning provider. That's why the TUC has established unionlearn to help unions develop and diversify their provision.

Apprenticeships are at the heart of the Government's skills strategy. By 2014-15, the government will expand the numbers of adult apprenticeships available by up to 75,000, leading to in excess of 200,000 starts a year.

The Government is working with employers, through Sector Skills Councils and other representative bodies to ensure that all apprenticeship frameworks meet the needs of the real economy. Re-shaping the apprenticeships programme so that more learners achieve higher level Advanced Apprenticeships and above will help drive the technician level skills that a modern, dynamic industrial economy needs.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families has stated its intention to make apprenticeships a "mainstream" part of England's education system.

A recent report from BIS showed how valuable further education is to business, boosting the economy by £75 billion. Apprenticeships offer the best value to the economy in return for Government investment in spending on post-16 education and training. For every £1 of taxpayers' money, the return is equivalent to £40, according to the BIS report. But employers need to do more to ensure that there are enough apprenticeships available, particularly for young people, who are finding getting jobs difficult in the present economic climate. Union

learning reps can act as mentors for apprentices and negotiate quality training and decent pay with employers.

Apprenticeships have existed for hundreds of years but had fallen into decline until a decade ago when the scheme underwent resurgence. The number of people starting apprenticeships has risen from 65,000 in 1996/97 to 239,000 in 2008/09 and the Government is committed to boosting the number of apprenticeship starts in England to over 250,000 by 2020.

diversity in programmes available today means that there will be apprenticeships in the sectors covered by most unions. While more traditional apprenticeships continue, the largest area of expansion has been in the service sector – comprising half of the 10 most popular apprenticeships.

In November 2009, a Government Act proposed measures to realise the Government's commitment on numbers and to ensure that apprenticeships provide a high-quality route for young workers – and adults in some cases – to acquiring skills.

The TUC has strongly supported the Government's commitment to raise the number and quality of apprenticeships and broadly welcomed the new measures. However, more could be done to increase employers' engagement with high-quality Apprenticeships.

In the sustainable economy of the future apprentices must have the opportunity to develop transferable skills, as well as the opportunity for progression.

The expansion of apprenticeships must be backed by increased efforts to ensure that all programmes are of a high quality and lead to good jobs, and that expansion has tackling inequality and improving diversity at its heart.

Union negotiators and representatives – including learning representatives, equality reps and safety reps – have a key role to play through collective bargaining in encouraging more employers to set up quality apprenticeships, allowing underrepresented groups to access them and ensuring that all apprentices receive good training, decent pay and a safe working environment. And apprenticeships provide an ideal opportunity for unions to recruit and organise young workers who are currently under-represented at all levels in the union movement.

A distinct element is the role and impact of trade unions in supporting and developing the quality and provision of apprenticeships in the UK. As outlined within the document there are many organisations that oversees the Apprenticeship programme, these concentrate on legal requirements of training, the content, delivery model and in some case the cost of qualification and training. The trade union perspective is to ensure that the training is fit for purpose but also to deal with employment status and rights of the apprentice. How this is done can vary between trade union, vocational sector and a commitment of other key partners. But ideal scenarios exists within established sectors like engineering and construction, they broadly follows this route way.



1. The union and employer negotiate an apprenticeship opportunity ensuring that the opportunity exists, is sustainable and is not substituting an apprentice for an existing member of staff.
2. The employer and the union engage in a joint recruitment process utilising other agencies such as the young person's careers and guidance service (connexions), the NAS job matching website or local media. The interview would include an employer, trade union rep and potentially the training provider,
3. During induction the apprentice fulfils an individual learning plan which is committed to by the apprentice, employer, trade union and vocational training provider.
4. The trade union rep will spend time during the induction to explain the role of trade union and the individual roles and responsibilities of the site representatives (industrial, health and safety and learning)

This model shows a genuine partnership between the constituent partners for the delivery of a quality vocational route way.

Trade unions will then play a supporting role in ensuring that apprentices who are in a potentially vulnerable position are given a genuine, independent voice to raise any potential issues that they may be facing as younger members of the workforce. These issues could include discrimination, bullying, asked undertake duties that are not part of the job role. Unions are developing coaches and mentors to support the integration into the workforce of younger workers by having a better understanding of the issues these workers are facing and a grasp of vocational frameworks and training being undertaken by the apprentice. In some workplaces trade unions are looking in developing apprentice champions who are younger workers completed apprenticeship and become role models to inspire those newer entrants to the workplace.

Overall strategy is for trade unions to play a proactive role in encouraging employers to engage with the apprenticeship programme in the UK. This will present itself in many different ways and although no legal right exists unions would like to include apprenticeships within collective bargaining agreements (this does exist in some traditional industries and large workplaces in particular engineering where unions have negotiated agreement that have existed for many decades). Although on completion there is no guarantee of sustainable employment, where ever possible unions will support apprentices to gain full time employment and negotiate with the employer for this outcome. This brings additional value to the role of the union and is part of the core values of the labour movement in delivering good quality proper jobs.

Cheryl Pidgeon Regional Secretary of Midlands TUC is a great supporter and advocate for apprenticeships and the expansion of job opportunities for young workers expressed 'that she believes that every trade unionist in the workplace should support young workers in achieving their potential by using the bench mark of how if they had a child entering the workplace what would they expect the trade union to do for their child: keep them safe, look after their learning and help them to gain full time employment.'

This is not always possible if there isn't an independent advocate like trade union in a workplace it will become more difficult to follow the outlined model.

The final strand of work that trade unions are doing to support apprentices is to become a part of the 'apprentice voice' this is about developing forums independent of the workplace and vocational provider where apprentices can talk about good and not so good aspects of employment, training and their whole introduction to the workplace. These forums have started to function in several places in England and have started to influence how organisations such as NAS engage with apprentices giving a direct route way for young people to express their views about their training and how changes and improvements could be made. Other key elements include young workers exchanging information, good practice and inviting key external agencies to talk about issues particularly relevant to this group within society. This could include financial advice on best utilisation of money, independent pension's advisers and looking at negotiating group discounts for things such as driving lessons. These forums will hopefully become self sustaining and continue to enable apprentices to raise issues and challenges and be a direct line to key decision makers.

## **2 Short outline of Apprenticeship processes in the UK**

Apprenticeships provide on-the-job training leading to nationally recognised qualifications, developed by industry. They help attract high-quality new recruits into industry, from the age of 16. As a result, they encourage younger people into a workforce and help employees of all ages to keep pace with new technologies and working practices.

Entry requirements may differ based on the occupational sector. However, person needs to be living in England and not taking part in full-time education. For example:

- school leavers
- those who have been working for years and want to improve their skills
- those seeking a new challenge and
- wanting to start a new career

Government funds 100% training costs for apprentices aged 16-18 and 50% of training costs aged 19+.

The Apprentice's wages are paid by their employer.

Each apprentice must have a registered training provider (which can also be their employer)

There are 25 000 providers able to deliver Apprenticeships across the UK.

Each apprentice must have an employer and be paid. About 130,000 employers in England have apprentices.

Government funded apprentices must study one of 200 Apprenticeship 'qualification framework' areas. Frameworks are at European qualification framework levels 2, 3, or 4.



Governance structures for apprenticeship in England do not look very different across eight leading apprenticeship countries (Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland).

England's governance structures are complex and receive more public funds than in the dual-system countries.

Accountability for public funding creates a much higher administrative burden in England than in other countries.

### **3 History**

Apprenticeships have a long tradition in the United Kingdom, dating back to around the 12th century and flourishing by the 14th century. The parents or guardians of a minor would agree with a Guild's Master craftsman the conditions for an apprenticeship which would bind the minor for 5–9 years (e.g. from age 14 to 21). They would pay a premium to the craftsman and the contract would be recorded in an indenture. In 1563, the Statute of Artificers and Apprentices was passed to regulate and protect the apprenticeship system, forbidding anyone from practising a trade or craft without first serving a 7-year period as an apprentice to a master (though in practice Freeman's sons could negotiate shorter terms).

From 1601, 'parish' apprenticeships under the Elizabethan Poor Law came to be used as a way of providing for poor, illegitimate and orphaned children of both sexes alongside the regular system of skilled apprenticeships, which tended to provide for boys from slightly more affluent backgrounds. These parish apprenticeships, which could be created with the assent of two Justices of the Peace, supplied apprentices for occupations of lower status such as farm labouring, brick making and menial household service.

In the early years of the Industrial Revolution entrepreneurs began to resist the restrictions of the apprenticeship system, and a legal ruling established that the Statute of Apprentices did not apply to trades that were not in existence when it was passed in 1563, thus excluding many new 18th century industries. In 1814 compulsory apprenticeship by indenture was abolished.

The mainstay of training in industry has been the apprenticeship system, and the main concern has been to avoid skill shortages in traditionally skilled occupations, e.g. through the UK Industry Training Boards (ITBs) set up under the 1964 Act. The aims were to ensure an adequate supply of training at all levels; to improve the quality and quantity of training; and to share the costs of training among employers. The ITBs were empowered to publish training recommendations, which contained full details of the tasks to be learned, the syllabus to be followed, the standards to be reached and vocational courses to be followed. These were often accompanied by training manuals, which were in effect practitioners' guides to apprentice training, and some ITBs provide training in their own centres. The ITBs did much to formalize what could have been a haphazard training experience and greatly improved its quality.

The years from the mid 1960s to the mid 1970s saw the highest levels of apprentice recruitment, yet even so, out of a school leaving cohort of about 750,000, only about 110,000 (mostly boys) became apprentices. The apprenticeship system aimed at highly developed craft and higher technician skills for an elite minority of the workforce, the majority of whom were trained in industries that declined rapidly from 1973 onwards, and by 1979 it was clear that in manufacturing this decline was permanent. (Apprenticeship in the United Kingdom: From ITBs to YTS Author(s): Peter Haxby and David Parkes Source: European Journal of Education, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1989), pp. 167-181). Traditional apprenticeships reached their lowest point in the late 1970s: by that time, training programmes were rare and people who were apprentices learned mainly by example. The exception to this was in the high technology engineering areas of aerospace, nuclear, automotive, power and energy systems where apprentices served very structured five year programmes of both practical and academic study to qualify as engineering technicians and technologists and even go on to university and earn an engineering degree and qualify as a Chartered Engineer. Engineering technicians and technologists attended the local technical college (1 day and 2 evenings per week) on a City & Guilds programme or Ordinary National Certificate / Higher National Certificate course. In effect becoming a chartered engineer via the apprenticeship route involved 10 - 12 years of both academic and vocational training at an employer, college of further education and university. In 1986 National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) were introduced, in an attempt to revitalize vocational training. Still, by 1990, apprenticeship took up only two-thirds of one percent of total employment.

In 1994, the Government introduced Modern Apprenticeships (since renamed 'Apprenticeships' in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; Scotland has retained Modern Apprenticeship), based on frameworks that are now devised by Sector Skills Councils. Apprenticeship frameworks contain a number of separately-certified elements:

- A knowledge-based element, typically certified through a qualification known as a 'Technical Certificate'
- A competence-based element, typically certified through an NVQ ;
- Key Skills
- Employment Rights and Responsibilities (known as ERR) to show that the Apprentice has had a full induction to the company or training programme, and is aware of those right and responsibilities that are essential in the workplace; this usually requires the creation of a personal portfolio of activities, reading and instruction sessions, but is not examined.

There are over 200 apprenticeship frameworks. Unlike traditional apprenticeships, the current scheme extends beyond craft and skilled trades to parts of the service sector with no apprenticeship tradition. The Department for Children, Schools and Families has stated its intention to make apprenticeships a "mainstream" part of England's education system.

Employers who offer apprenticeship places have an employment contract with their apprentices, but off-the-job training and assessment is wholly funded by the state for



apprentices aged between 16 and 18. In England, Government only contributes 50% of the cost of training for apprentices aged 19 and over.

Government funding agencies contract with 'learning providers' to deliver apprenticeships, and may accredit them as a Centre of Vocational Excellence or National Skills Academy. These organisations provide off-the-job tuition and manage the bureaucratic workload associated with the apprenticeships. Providers are usually private training companies but might also be Further Education colleges, voluntary sector organisations, Chambers of Commerce or employers themselves.

## 4 Legislation

Apprenticeship in England is regulated by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (ASCL) 2009. The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) sets out the minimum requirements to be included in a recognised English Apprenticeship framework. Compliance with the SASE is a statutory requirement of the Act.

Legislation in England now requires information on apprenticeship to be offered in schools.

- Raising of the participation age, requires all young people under the age of 19 to participate in full time education or training
- The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act commenced in April 2011:
- New Specification for Apprenticeships
- Apprenticeship Certificates
- Employment Status
- The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act introduces the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE.)
- The SASE sets out the minimum requirements to be included in a recognised English Apprenticeship framework.
- Compliance with the SASE will be a statutory requirement of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act.
- The Issuing Authorities, (SSCs) designated by the Secretary of State, are responsible for ensuring that only those Apprenticeship frameworks which comply with the SASE are issued as recognised English Apprenticeship frameworks.

There are 4 recognised levels of Apprenticeships in England:

- Intermediate Level (2)
- Advanced Level (3)
- Higher (4 and 5)

Framework developer, in consultation with the Issuing Authority, will decide and agree content of the Apprenticeship framework.

### 4.1 SASE completion and certification

SASE have completed a full framework of requirements to achieve full accreditation for Vocational pathways involved with Apprenticeships frameworks. Developing a credit based system for achievements outlined in the grid below.

<b>Statutory Requirement</b>	<b>Competency Qualification (min 10 credit)</b>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="text-align: center; margin-right: 10px;">↑</div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-right: 10px;">↓</div> </div> <b>Certification Requirements + Apprenticeship Agreement</b>
	<b>Knowledge Qualification (min 10 credits)</b>	
	<b>English / Maths / ICT Qualifications</b>	
	<b>Employment Rights and Responsibilities</b>	
	<b>Personal Learning and Thinking Skills</b>	
	<b>Guided Learning Hours</b>	
<b>Non-Statutory Requirements</b>	<b>Entry Conditions</b>	
	<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	
	<b>Progression Routes</b>	

The ASCL bill explanatory note states the Employment Status of the Apprentice:

“The Apprenticeship Agreement will be a contract entered into between the employer and the apprentice.

The Government expects that it should set out both the on-the-job training and the learning away from the workstation that will be delivered; make clear what job role an apprentice will be qualified to hold upon completion; and stipulate the supervision that an apprentice will receive throughout the period of the Apprenticeship. ”

Apprenticeship content must be delivered within contracted hours.

### 4.2 The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009

The key sections of the Act came into force on 1 April 2010.

The Act is largely an amending Act; many of the powers and duties being given to local authorities are simple transfers from the LSC, but the offender learning provisions are new. The fundamental shape of the new 16-19 arrangements is that local authorities will commission education and training for 16-19 year-olds, and the Young People’s Learning



Agency will fund it; so the key strategic relationship will be between local authorities and the YPLA.

Chapter 1 of the Bill is largely concerned with apprenticeships, including apprenticeship frameworks and standards, and information about apprenticeships for young people.

Chapter 2 relates to local authority functions. Local authorities are required to secure enough suitable education and training to meet the reasonable needs of young people aged 16-19 (and to 25 with learning difficulty assessments) in their area. Together with the Education and Skills Act 2008, this makes local authorities responsible for rising the age of participation in education, training or work with training.

To enable local authorities to meet this duty, the power to direct admission to schools is extended to colleges, subject to consultation with the college.

Young people are able to elect for either or both of the core entitlement or the additional entitlement. The core entitlement includes mathematics, English and ICT; the additional entitlement will include GCSE and 'A' levels and Diplomas.

Local authorities will be able to secure boarding provision for young people with a learning disability assessment.

'Host' local authorities are required to secure sufficient suitable provision to meet the reasonable needs of children and young people up to age 19 in youth detention ('detained young people') in their area. In addition, the 'host' local authority must ensure that the learning provider has regard to information provided by the 'home' local authority about the detained young person's literacy and numeracy, and any other information passed on by the 'home' authority. The 'home' authority is required to take appropriate steps to promote the fulfilment of young people's learning potential whilst in youth custody and on their release, and to make appropriate arrangements for education and training provision after release.

There are a range of provisions relating to transport for young people in education and training, and for adult learners, including young adults with learning difficulty assessments.

Part 3 sets up the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) as a non-departmental public body. The core role of the YPLA is to provide funding to local authorities for the education and training of young people. The YPLA will have intervention powers where local authorities are failing, or likely to fail, to perform their duties. The YPLA has the sponsoring role for open academies. In addition the YPLA has a duty to fund education and training in juvenile custody and will have powers to intervene in the event that local authorities were failing in their duties to secure suitable provision.

Part 4 sets up the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) within the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. The SFA will be responsible for training post-19 and both 16-18 and 19+ apprenticeships. The SFA to make provision for people with learning difficulties over the age of 19 where they are not subject to a learning difficulty assessment. The SFA will sponsor general FE colleges, while the YPLA and local authorities will have the power to notify the

SFA where they have concerns about educational standards for young people attending a college, and requires the SFA to have regard to such concerns.

The staff and assets of the LSC are transferred to the successor agencies, including local authorities.

Sixth form colleges have a new and distinct legal identity; they will remain as independent institutions with a corporation, but with closer links to their local authority in which they are located than hitherto, and in particular will be performance managed by their local authority. The designation process is presently underway.

### **4.3 The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE)**

Following its introduction through the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) act, the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) was published by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, Department for Education and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) on 20 January 2011.

The SASE sets out the minimum requirements to be included in a recognised English Apprenticeship framework and compliance with the SASE will be a statutory requirement of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act.

There are three key roles involved in ensuring that we have SASE compliant frameworks: proposer; developer and issuing authority:

Proposer - an organisation who has an idea for an Apprenticeship framework but who does not necessarily want to develop one, who is then encouraged to work with the relevant Sector Skills Council (SSC) to develop an appropriate framework.

Framework Developer - the organisation who will develop the framework for submission to the Issuing Authority.

Issuing Authority (SSC/UKCES commissioned body) - Organisations appointed by the Secretary of State in England to issue Apprenticeship frameworks for a particular sector. The Issuing Authority is responsible for ensuring that only those Apprenticeship frameworks which comply with the SASE are issued as recognised English Apprenticeship frameworks. There is only one Issuing Authority for each sector and they will support framework developers, if they wish to make sure that their frameworks comply with SASE requirements.

Issuing Authorities do not exist until the relevant provisions of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009 come into effect. In England this will be on 6th April 2011. As an interim measure and until commencement of the ASCL Act, SSCs and UKCES commissioned bodies will publish frameworks which comply with SASE or SASW. References to the 'Issuing Authority (SSC/UKCES commissioned body)' acknowledge the non-statutory interim role of SSCs and UKCES commissioned bodies in publishing frameworks.



The Issuing Authority will issue their SASE compliant frameworks through the web portal managed by UKCES/Alliance of Sector Skills Councils. They are required to notify the Skills Funding Agency and submit a completed list of qualifications within the framework along with an activity cost model. The Agency will then assign the appropriate funding rate for each framework and publish on the Learning Aims Database (LAD).

NAS have agreed with UKCES and SSCs that the funding implementation date will be 4 weeks after the SASE compliant framework has been issued. This will allow the Agency to notify providers of the forthcoming framework and hence prepare for its implementation.

## 5 Organisations involved in Apprenticeship programmes

The learning and skills system in England is currently under-going a major transformation with the demise of the Learning and Skills Council and the creation of, amongst other bodies, the Skills Funding Agency, the Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) and the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). Two pleas were made by stakeholders:

1. the learning and skills system has been subject to much institutional change over the past 30 years and the system could benefit from a period of consolidation with settled institutional arrangements;
2. the roles of the various actors in the new Apprenticeship system are clearly defined to avoid duplication of effort across agencies.

There are a number of other key partners and stakeholders involved in apprenticeships, each of which has their own role to play. Please see table below.

	SELECTION ISSUES	PROCESS ISSUES	OUTCOME ISSUES
EMPLOYERS	Use of selection processes used by the best in the sector  Clear rationale from employer about why they want apprentices	Providing support necessary as specified in partnership agreement with trainer and apprentice  Maintaining close liaison with provider  Monitor progress in workplace  Provider ‘mentor’ in workplace’	Clear signal by employer about the progression in workplace following Apprenticeship  Indicate importance of Apprenticeship to organisation
TRAINING PROVIDERS	Ensure that employer and apprentice is capable of meeting demands of the Apprenticeship  To play a part in the	Close monitoring of progress  Provide regular updates to employer and apprentice about progress	Ensure that training is relevant to the apprentice’s occupation

	selection process undertaken by employers	to date Provide a 'mentor' Avoid APL exemption confusion	
APPRENTICES	Have a clear rationale for wanting to undertake the Apprenticeship	To articulate concerns about progression or lack of access to learning time	
NAS / SFA / YPLA	Establish good practice / rules to govern  Recruitment of apprentices and setting out obligations for providers, apprentices and employers  Establish rules of good engagement/partnership	Establishment of a 'mentor' system for apprentices  Establish rules for monitoring progress and providing progress reports	Follow up of those who drop-out
Others	Provision of IAG about what to expect from an Apprenticeship – so would be apprentice can gauge employer commitment		Provision of IAG about to expect from an apprenticeship (e.g. rates of return from completing)

## 6 Government departments and funding agencies

The four governments of the UK sponsor apprenticeships. Through their departments that are responsible for education and skills, the four governments develop apprenticeship policy and are responsible for the funding agencies that distribute funds to learning providers, who deliver the apprenticeship programmes by working with apprentices and employers.

### Apprenticeships are funded by:

- Skills Funding agency the successor of previously Learning and Skills Council in England (LSC)
- Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills in Wales (DCELLS)
- Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland (DEL)
- Skills Development Scotland (SDS).



## **Regulatory Bodies**

Apprenticeship programmes are made up of qualifications that are accredited by Qualifications Curriculum Authority (QCA) for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) for use in Scotland.

QCA works with DCELLS in Wales and the Council for the Curriculum Examination and Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland to accredit technical certificates that deliver underpinning knowledge and skills, National Vocational Qualifications NVQs that assess occupational competence and the Key Skills.

SQA accredits qualifications that deliver underpinning knowledge and skills, Scottish Vocational qualifications (SVQs) that assess occupational competence and the Core Skills.

## **Awarding Bodies**

There are many Awarding Bodies (in excess of 100) that are authorised by the regulatory bodies to develop and award qualifications. These bodies range in size and scope. For example, the larger awarding bodies offer qualifications in many subjects whilst smaller awarding bodies tend to offer specialist industry qualifications. Awarding bodies submit their qualifications to the regulatory bodies for accreditation. It is the responsibility of awarding bodies to monitor and verify that qualifications have been achieved and then issue the certificate of achievement. Awarding bodies will award the component qualifications of an apprenticeship as they are achieved, whilst the relevant SSC or SSB will issue the apprenticeship certificate when they receive evidence that all of the component parts have been achieved.

## **Training Providers**

Training providers deliver the "off the job" training in an apprenticeship. Sometimes, large employers will have their own training arm and will therefore be the training provider. It is often the training provider that will make the initial contact with an employer, offering the apprenticeship programme as a way of addressing skills gaps. Training providers are usually the organisation that receive the government funds from the funding agency, on behalf of the employer and are contracted to deliver the training.

## **Employers**

Employers themselves have a key role to play in the success of an apprenticeship. It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that the apprentice receives the "on the job" training" from somebody that is considered highly skilled in their occupation. It is also important that they give the apprentice the time to study "off the job", otherwise the full potential of the apprenticeship will not be realised. Employers should mentor, coach and support an apprentice.

Apprenticeship programmes are run by employers, usually in partnership with a learning provider. They are central to the Government's plans for developing the nation's skills base.

## Apprentices

In order for an apprenticeship to be successful, the apprentice must be dedicated to achieving it. An apprenticeship must not be viewed as an easy route or soft option. A successful apprentice is committed, hard-working and determined to succeed.

As employees, apprentices earn a wage and work alongside experienced staff to gain job-specific skills. Off the job, usually on a day-release basis, apprentices receive training to work towards nationally recognised qualifications. Anyone living in England, over 16 and not in full-time education can apply.

Apprenticeships can take between one and four years to complete depending on the level of Apprenticeship, the apprentices' ability and the industry sector. The minimum salary is £2.50 per hour; however, many apprentices earn significantly more.

Key benefits for an Apprentice:

- earn a salary
- get paid holidays
- receive training
- gain qualifications.
- learn job-specific skills.

## NAS

In January 2008 a new organisation, the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), was announced and officially launched in April 2009. The service was created to bring about a significant growth in the number of employers offering Apprenticeships.

The NAS has total end to end responsibility for the delivery of Apprenticeships that includes: Employer Services; Learner Services; and a web-based vacancy matching system (Apprenticeship vacancies). This online system enables individuals to search and apply for live vacancies and allows employers, and their training providers to advertise their vacancies to a wide range of interested applicants.

The service has ultimate accountability for the national delivery of targets and co-ordination of the funding for Apprenticeship places. It acts to overcome barriers to the growth of the programme and assumes responsibility for promoting Apprenticeships and their value to employers, learners and the country as a whole.

NAS main role is to work with employers, helping more of them take on apprentices; and to work with those who advise learners so that more young people and adults are able to benefit from the experience of work based learning.

The NAS will provide a consistent, expert service across all of England. This includes:

- promoting Apprenticeships and their value to employers both in the public and private sectors



- promoting Apprenticeships and their value to learners, particularly 16- to 18 year olds
- co-ordinating the funding for Apprenticeship places
- maintaining the national online Apprenticeship Vacancies system for aspiring apprentices and the employers that take them on
- ensuring that Business Link and other employer intermediary organisations have all they need to actively promote Apprenticeships to employers
- working with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to establish Apprenticeships alongside other 14 19 options
- improving the certification arrangements for successful apprentices.

These responsibilities will be delivered through a national policy and business delivery team, and regional teams with a dedicated employer and learner services field force.

The national team will work with key national stakeholders and partners to promote Apprenticeships and develop policies and practices which enhance the learner and employer experience.

The regional teams will have a local presence and will support employers from their initial interest in an Apprenticeship through to the selection of a training provider to work with and the recruitment and progression of an apprentice.

The regional team will also support training providers and careers guidance staff in schools and colleges, as well as IAG (information, advice and guidance) providers in further education. The NAS will work collaboratively with Business Link brokers and other intermediaries to increase the number of employers who actively engage in Apprenticeships.

The recently established National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has recently been set up with overall responsibility for Apprenticeships and ultimate accountability for the national delivery of services and targets.

**Skills Sector Councils (SSC's)** are employer driven organisations and are responsible for identifying the vocational qualifications employers need.

SSC's develop Apprenticeship frameworks. SSCs also work with other organisations that want to develop frameworks including employers, learning providers and awarding organisations.

The Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) are responsible for developing and specifying the content (within set criteria) of the apprenticeship programmes so they meet the skill needs of employers and employees.

When developing an apprenticeship framework, SSCs and SSBs consult with employers within the sector to identify what the skills gaps are and how an apprenticeship may address them. Simply put, apprenticeships are developed in partnership with industry to deliver the needs of industry.

Within the sector headings below there are Apprenticeships in everything from photo imaging to dental nursing, floristry, footwear and leather goods, telesales, and beauty therapy; as well as more traditional Apprenticeships such as construction and engineering.

Apprenticeship frameworks are devised and accredited by Sector Skills Councils.

The main sector groups are:

- Leisure, Travel and Tourism
- Construction, Planning and the Built Environment
- Information and Communication Technology
- Arts, Media, and Publishing
- Health, Public Services and Care
- Agriculture, Horticulture and
- Animal Care
- Education and Training
- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Technologies
- Retail and Commercial Enterprise
- Business Administration and Law

Many of these are available as Advanced Apprenticeships and some are available as Higher Apprenticeships.

**Skills Funding Agency (SFA)** - an agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and its job is to fund and regulate adult further education and skills training in England. SFA is to ensure that people and businesses can access the skills training they need to succeed in playing their part in society and in growing England's economy. It's done in the context of policy set by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and informed by the needs of businesses, communities and sector and industry bodies.

SFA houses the National Apprenticeship Service, with a field force located across the country, working to develop the relationship with business to drive forward the government's ambition for increasing apprenticeships.

### **Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs)**

ATAs (Apprenticeship Training Agencies) are a hot topic in the world of apprenticeships. They are based on an employment agency model of apprenticeship training which has its roots in the Australian apprenticeship system.

Due to the casualised nature of the relationship between the employer and the apprentice, ATAs are a cause for concern for many unions. The TUC has been working with the National



Apprenticeship Service (NAS) to ensure that the ATAs which have received government funding are properly monitored and evaluated and offer a good deal to apprentices in terms of pay, conditions, job security and employment prospects.

ATA is an employment agency for apprentices. It directly employs and manages individuals who undertake their apprenticeship with an approved training provider whilst being hired out to 'host employers'. The ATA outsources the training activity for the apprenticeship to training providers.

### **Group Training Association (GTA)**

A Group Training Association (GTA) is a not for profit organisation providing support on accessing and managing training for a group of employers to encourage their involvement in Apprenticeships. The crucial difference is that an ATA employs the apprentice whereas a GTA just offers training to apprentices who are employed directly by an employer.

In 2009 the government announced £7m funding for 12 ATAs. Since then the government has given additional funding to several more ATAs.

Less is known about non-government funded ATAs. Changes to funding for further education and vocational training may mean that this model becomes more attractive and we will see more ATAs starting up. There is currently no way of identifying where new, non-government funded ATAs are. ATAs are operating in a wide range of sectors.

### **A direct employment relationship between an employer and apprentice will always be preferable to agency labour.**

Furthermore, it is crucial that ATAs respect existing sectoral pay agreements. For example, in the construction sector, apprentices employed by an ATA should be paid the rate for the job set out in the relevant collective agreements, rather than £95 per week.

It is important that the quality of apprenticeships offered by ATAs is monitored. If there are any issues with the quality of apprenticeships being offered by an ATA, the TUC should be notified who will ensure that NAS are made aware of the issue.

A high quality apprenticeship experience would include sufficient time off the job for training, adequate workplace supervision, mentoring, and, at the very minimum, should meet all of the requirements of the Specification for Apprenticeship Standards in England (SASE).

ATAs are essentially employment agencies. They are defined as Employment Businesses and Employment Agencies under sections 13(2) and 13(3) of the Employment Agencies Act 1973. One key point arising from this is that ATAs may be inspected by the Employment Agencies Standards Inspectorate.

ATAs should endeavour to place apprentices with 'host' employers who are likely to take them on as employees after they have completed their apprenticeship. ATAs should also provide support for apprentices in seeking employment. This might include job searching

skills, CV writing skills, interview technique skills, networking events, and agreements with local employers who may be in a position to recruit.

ATAs should only offer services to employers who genuinely could not take on apprentices themselves due to the nature of their business or concerns about the future viability of the business. For example, SMEs or Micro employers who could not guarantee security of employment for an apprentice for the duration of their apprenticeship if they were to recruit them directly. Large employers should recruit and employ apprentices directly. This applies to public as well as private sector.

ATA's apprentices should not be used to substitute for other jobs (i.e., do work which was done by another employee or by a function which is being made redundant).

Apprentices working through an ATA must have a contract of employment. All apprentices are entitled to a contract of employment. An ATA should not be using 'self employed' apprentices. Young and often vulnerable apprentices should not be subject to the weaker employment rights afforded to self-employed individuals (e.g. with regard to sick pay entitlements, collective bargaining, maternity/paternity leave and pay entitlements).

## **7 Trade unions involvement**

Unions have a long history of involvement in apprenticeships. Many industries developed generations of apprentices who 'did their time' to learn their trades. After years of decline, apprenticeships were reintroduced during the 1990s and today more people than ever have the chance to 'earn and learn'.

But this new apprenticeships picture now looks very different, which opens up new opportunities and challenges for unions. Apprenticeships are available across a wide range of traditional sectors, as well as newer areas such as business administration, retail, health and public services. Apprenticeships are now available to people of all ages.

### **7.1 The importance of union involvement**

Unions can help encourage more organisations to employ apprentices or up-skill existing workers. And union involvement can secure a fair deal for apprentices, high quality learning and support, as well as a safe working environment and increased equality and diversity.

In turn, apprentices will experience the positive role that unions play in today's workplaces. Union negotiators can help by putting apprenticeships on the bargaining agenda. And by working together, shop stewards, union learning representatives, health and safety reps and equality reps can support apprentices and secure a fair deal.

Unions will have their own approaches to bargaining on Apprenticeships. Some will include Apprenticeships in learning agreements, some will draw up specific Apprenticeship agreements, and some will treat apprentices like any other category of worker. Below are some suggestions for key points on Apprenticeships that reps and negotiators may find useful when entering into negotiations that include apprentices:



**No job substitution** – It is vital that unions negotiate to ensure that apprentices are not used for job substitution, and that they are recruited to fill genuine skills shortages and plan for future skills gaps.

**Contract of employment** – Apprentices are employees and should have contracts of employment for at least the duration of the training period. Ideally an Apprenticeship should lead to a guaranteed job. In some industries, short-term contracts are the norm and the union can play a role in supporting newly qualified apprentices in getting their first full job. Unions and employers can help apprentices to improve their chances of getting a job by offering guaranteed interviews to apprentices or by offering training and support on CV writing skills and interview skills.

**Access to a trade union** – apprentices are often young people with little experience of the world or work or of trade unions. Union reps should negotiate with employers to make sure that the union has the opportunity to speak to apprentices when they start work. Reps should also encourage other union members to speak to apprentices about why it is important for them to join the union.

**Mentoring** – there should be a clear system for supervision, support and mentoring, ideally with union involvement.

**Pay** – apprentice rates should reflect the job done; if an apprentice does a full job they should be paid for it, or quickly progress incrementally to that point. If percentage rates are negotiated, they should start as high as possible and progress by time served or milestones or competencies achieved, rather than by age. In industries such as construction, with nationally agreed apprentice pay, ensure the local employer is complying with that agreement.

**Union learning reps** – ULR's have statutory rights to promote learning or training with their colleagues and to work with their employers and local providers to ensure all the workforce can take up opportunities. ULRs should work closely with the senior steward in a workplace and it could be appropriate for a ULR to undertake a mentoring role within the Apprenticeship system. If there aren't already ULRs in the workplace, the introduction and support of apprentices would be a good opportunity to recruit to these posts.

**Training and study** – union negotiators will want to ensure that Apprenticeship programmes in their workplace identify a clear programme of training, including sufficient time spent off the job, such as in college, in dedicated training centres at the workplace, or in private study.

## 7.2 Equality and diversity

A good Apprenticeship programme should include strategies to ensure that Apprenticeships are accessible to the widest possible demographic spread of people. In 2008/9 the proportion of Apprenticeships started by women increased to 50 per cent following the expansion of Apprenticeships from traditional craft Apprenticeships to a wider range of occupations.

Despite the increase in Apprenticeship starts by women, they are underrepresented in sectors such as construction and engineering, which tend to have better pay and prospects than

Apprenticeships in sectors that are predominantly female, such as hairdressing and early years care. Only six per cent of those starting an Apprenticeship are from ethnic minorities even though they make up nine per cent of the population. EHRC evidence suggests that disabled young people are not receiving information about opportunities in work based learning and Apprenticeships, and that the information received on further education options is often negative.

**Suggestions how tackle inequality and lack of diversity in the workplace:**

1. What reasonable adjustments employers could make and what support services they could make available in order to make their Apprenticeship programmes accessible to disabled people.
2. Encourage applications for Apprenticeships from underrepresented groups – consider how marketing and recruitment strategies could reach a wider audience.
3. Review recruitment and selection criteria to ensure they don't exclude or discourage under-represented groups.
4. Consider giving all “atypical” applicants who meet the minimum selection criteria an interview, and consider using positive action to address underrepresentation.
5. Carry out equality and diversity training for managers and others involved in recruitment.
6. Offer work experience to local schools
7. Ask current apprentices and employees from under-represented groups to act as role models or “champions”.
8. Target particular groups by holding recruitment days at community events.
9. Look for training providers who are actively involved in training atypical apprentices, and have incorporated their views in the design, development, review and delivery of Apprenticeships.
10. Target information at parents of young people from disadvantaged groups in order to help to address their underrepresentation.

Unions have a crucial role to play in redressing this balance and ensuring that women, disabled people, ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups are not discouraged from taking up Apprenticeship opportunities.

### **7.3 Government recognition of union contribution to Learning/ Apprenticeship Agenda**

Speaking at a unionlearn conference in London, 8 February, 2011 John Hayes - Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning (jointly with the Department for Education) said that his aspiration as a skills minister is to go beyond the all-time record of



400,000 apprentices in the workforce. He praised the contribution of the unions in their work in promoting apprenticeships.

He said: 'It's always a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to acknowledge in public the importance of unionlearn in particular and the union movement in general to our skills landscape. I think that Frances O'Grady (TUC Deputy General Secretary) will agree with me that, although there are some issues on which the Government and the trades unions don't always see eye to eye, that makes it all the more important to celebrate the issues on which we do share common ground.

'That includes the belief that a high-quality further education system can be a vital asset in meeting our shared ambition to help more people out of unemployment and into a job. The conviction that learning in all its forms is a powerful force for social justice because it can offer everyone not just better earning and employment prospects, but also greater self-esteem and a more fulfilled life.'

Mr Hayes also announced that he is to chair a cross-governmental group, to include ministers from the departments of education, work and pensions and business to develop a strategy to combat youth unemployment.

## **7.4 Apprentice's voice**

Unions negotiate fair pay and equal treatment in the workplace. Unions also tackle discrimination based on age, race, gender, sexuality and disability. Unions will help ensure that apprenticeships are high quality and that the apprentice is properly supported while doing it. Unions will negotiate with employers, making sure apprentices get time off to study or train, and ensuring that apprentices receive impartial information, advice and guidance, and are supported by a mentor. The employer must give apprentice the chance to join an appropriate union, unless apprentice is working for the Ministry of Defence.

### **Apprenticeships offer**

Apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships are made up of four compulsory elements:

- a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) – the sector/industry-based vocational element;
- a technical certificate to show you understand the underpinning theory or knowledge;
- Functional Skills – including communication skills and application of number, plus wider key and business skills as required by the sector; and
- a component called Employment Rights and Responsibilities (ERR) in the workplace.

### **Apprentices are entitled to:**

- a full induction in the workplace
- a contract of employment

- a negotiated training plan or contract between
- yourself, the employer and the training provider
- a fair wage
- a safe working environment and protection from discrimination or bullying
- release from work to attend formal training provision of an appropriate range of work
- experiences to enable apprentice to complete relevant qualifications
- access to support, guidance and mentoring
- quality training
- regular assessments and review of progress
- sufficient time away from work station or desk to study in work time.

**The benefits for Apprentice:**

- a chance to learn while earn – to get real work experience
- an opportunity to get nationally recognised qualifications
- access to progression routes to higher education
- the possibility of long-term employment with promotion prospects
- a chance to learn from experienced workers in the sector

**Apprentices Responsibilities:**

- Hours of work – it is important to keep to agreed hours of work including break times.
- Work rate – it is essential that apprentice work hard to complete tasks in the time set.
- Behaviour – the responsibility is not to distract people from their work by doing things that apprentice know should not be doing.
- Confidentiality – businesses are in competition with each other. There may be rules about things apprentice must not tell other people about their work.
- Materials – there are usually strict rules about the removal of materials from the workplace. Apprentice have to make sure that they do not remove any materials unless with the agreement of supervisor (e.g. apprentice has a completed piece of work which has been agreed to take home).
- Computer and telephone –employers may have rules about the use of the internet and phone for personal use. There may also be strict rules about the use of email and intranet. Messages are
- often monitored and saved and there can be serious consequences for misuse.

Tools and equipment –Apprentice needs to ask permission before using equipment or materials for themselves or for schoolwork at the work place.



Union officials can help young people to find their feet as they have their first experience of the office, factory and workplace. Union learning reps are acting as mentors to apprentices and the TUC is working to ensure that apprenticeships are of high quality, are fairly paid and lead to full-time employment.

Unionlearn is working with government and the National Apprenticeship Service to persuade employers to offer more, and better, apprenticeship places, with the chance for all learners to progress to level 3 and beyond. We aim to tackle the problem of gender imbalance: there is a 20 per cent pay gap between men and women, with young women tending to go into the lower paid sectors such as hairdressing and childcare.

Frances O'Grady, TUC deputy general secretary, said: 'With over a fifth of under-25s now out of work, with graduates chasing non-graduate jobs in huge numbers, and with tuition fees about to be trebled, the need for a world-class system of vocational education with apprenticeships at its heart is surely self evident. Socially and economically - apprenticeships are an investment in all our futures.

'We welcome the commitment to expand the number of schemes and to increase funding. We welcome plans to improve the status of vocational qualifications. We welcome the pledge to tackle important equality, diversity and progression issues. And we welcome the recognition that unions have a unique contribution to make in supporting apprentices, bargaining for better schemes, and engaging with employers. But we need to raise our game.

I want us to transform the way we promote apprenticeships within our movement and in our negotiations with employers. I want us to transform the support we give to apprentices, with our union learning reps becoming 'apprenticeship champions'.

#### **7.4.1 Aiming Higher**

It was after being picked on by bullies because of height that Scott Walker turned to help from a union official and now it is thanks to his union that he has completed his HNC in business administration as an apprentice.

Scott, 23, started work at City Lincoln Council as an apprentice in business administration, studying an NVQ at Level 3. After completing his GCSEs, he had joined the Royal Air Force, but it did not work out and he left after three months. He said: 'Since doing work experience, I discovered that I preferred working to going to school, so I started to look for jobs rather than apply for college.' He saw an advert for the apprenticeship at Lincoln and decided that the mixture of hands-on experience and being paid while he did his one day a week at college suited him.

His first job was in sports and leisure, organising the applications to the city's 10K run. When that was over he worked at the allotments department and had to deal with gardeners coming into the city hall to complain about maintenance and broken fences. He said: 'One man came in and threatened me with a padlock and then burst into tears.'

Scott then became a receptionist within the maintenance department and enjoyed the job, but then found that he was being picked on because of his 5ft 3 inch stature. He was ready to

leave the department, but thanks to a UCATT rep he found support and he gained his qualification in 2008. It was the union again who helped him when he wanted to extend his studies to HNC, Level 5. 'I wanted to get on, but needed more qualifications for the jobs I was going for,' he said. 'The union negotiated with my line manager who was very supportive and they agreed to let me go to college for half a day a week.'

He is now fully qualified and although there is jobs freeze at the council, he knows that it will stand him in good stead. Scott has also taken on new responsibilities as a youth rep for UCATT and is a member of the TUC youth council. He has taken a TUC course on being a mentor for apprentices. 'One young lad came to me in tears the other day. He was struggling with his college work and had been called into a meeting with his management. I was able to give him advice and support him,' he said. Scott works on reception, which means he is very accessible to the young apprentices. 'They know I am always here if they have a problem,' he said.

The unions at City Lincoln have been very involved in making learning available, even the caretakers have access to NVQ qualifications. And the council has since won a Large Employer of the Year at the National Apprenticeships Awards.

Scott is training to become a shop steward. 'It is great experience learning how to negotiate with management; it has given me lots of confidence. The council is making redundancies and it is important that the union is there. It is also important that there are young people coming up through the union,' he said.

#### **7.4.2 Post graduate apprenticeship employed by the union**

Having a degree in international relations, Anna Barnes, 21, hopes to become an education officer for GMB when her apprenticeship with the union is completed. It was through a recruitment fair at Sussex University that Anna came to take up the apprenticeship in business administration at the GMB's Brighton office. She said: 'I soon found that having a degree was not enough in the very competitive field of international relations, so when I saw the advert I was immediately interested.'

Anna had been involved in student campaigns during her time at university and the post at the union was something she was interested in. She is now working towards an NVQ Level 2 in business administration. It is 100 per cent office-based and she is assessed by tutors from Brighton City College. 'The qualification will be good for the cv, but what is most important is getting work experience... and being paid for it. Some of my friends from uni are finding hard enough to get unpaid internships,' she said.

She has been doing spreadsheets and database work, has work-shadowed union reps and is learning about employment law and negotiating skills. She has also been using her contacts to try and persuade students at Sussex to think about joining a union. What has most impressed her has been the education and training work carried out by the union. 'Everybody thinks that unions are all about strikes,' she said. 'But it is nothing like that. What has been great is seeing the difference the union can make in terms of getting people back into learning. The work done, for example in Skills for Life, at the learning centre at the GMB's Brighton and Hove



Cityclean depot is amazing. Surveys showed that at first people were not interested in doing courses, but now they are all very keen. I have seen at first hand the dramatic effect that having educational and re-training opportunities has had, and it can all be attributed to the union. It has inspired me to want to become a GMB education officer.'

It has also been a learning process for the GMB in taking on two apprentices. Anna said: 'The union thought that as they were trying to encourage local employers to take on apprentices they should lead by example. So they have had to look at the best way to use and train us.'

Anna is keen to help other young people become apprentices. She said: 'The big selling point is that you are being paid while you are learning and you are getting that vital hands-on work experience that is so hard to get when you leave university, college or school. Most people do not realise that apprenticeships are available in business administration, but today they are available in a huge range of disciplines.'

In a difficult and competitive jobs market, John Patterson believes that he will have the edge over his friends who have taken the university route.

He is an IT apprentice at Redcar and Cleveland borough council and believes that as well as having a diploma and industry-recognised IT qualification, having had two years' worth of work experience for a large organisation will make him an attractive candidate for any employer.

He said: 'I would like to think that if they had two job applications, one from someone with qualifications from university and one from me with qualifications and hand-on technical experience, plus working with the public and learning council procedures and protocols, then I would have a better chance.'

After taking his A-levels, John, 19, was not sure that university was for him. 'I'm the type who enjoys applying my knowledge and I had had enough of sitting in a classroom.' He scanned the local job vacancy sites and was offered two apprenticeships, but plumped for the post with Redcar and Cleveland. He studies one afternoon a week at the local college and the rest of the time he is a member of the council's IT team.

He said: 'It is fantastic experience. I am out and about working on a large number of sites from ones with a couple of PCs, to schools, leisure centres and council offices. I have had to learn how to conduct myself with the public and the council's procedures. A lot of the work involves careful planning; we cannot allow the system to go down when we are repairing it. I have been involved in a big project, upgrading the council's computer system, but have also worked on the help desk answering queries. What I love about the job is that I learn something new every day. That's true for my colleagues too; it's that sort of job.'

He hopes to be taken on by the council when his apprenticeship is completed. His line managers are pleased with his work and he was a runner up in the finals of North East region's Apprentice of the Year. He said: 'I'd love to stay on, but the job situation is difficult at the moment. But I'm sure that my experience here will lead on to something else.'

John is a member of Unison and the union helped him to get an allowance for his car and cheaper parking fees. He said: 'I've been lucky. I have had no problems here, even on the help desk where you the clients can get a bit agitated. One of the lads in the IT team is a shop steward and it is good to know that there is always someone to go to if I need to.'

## 8 Training

Training is undertaken using a dual method of work based and institution based learning. Delivered by registered providers whose staff have formal teaching or formal qualifications and are vocationally competent with relevant knowledge and skills.

### 8.1 System of vocational education in the UK

The system of vocational education in the UK initially developed independently of the state, with bodies such as the RSA and City & Guilds setting examinations for technical subjects. The Education Act 1944 made provision for a Tripartite System of grammar schools, secondary technical schools and secondary modern schools, but by 1975 only 0.5% of British senior pupils were in technical schools, compared to two-thirds of the equivalent German age group.

Successive recent British Governments have made attempts to promote and expand vocational education. In the 1970s, the Business And Technology Education Council was founded to confer further and higher education awards, particularly to further education colleges in the United Kingdom. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Conservative Government promoted the Youth Training Scheme, National Vocational Qualifications and General National Vocational Qualifications. However, youth training was marginalised as the proportion of young people staying on in full-time education increased.

In 1994, publicly-funded Modern Apprenticeships were introduced to provide "quality training on a work-based (educational) route".<sup>[15]</sup> Numbers of apprentices have grown in recent years and the Department for Children, Schools and Families has stated its intention to make apprenticeships a "mainstream" part of England's education system.

There is no legal definition of vocational education and training (VET) in England. It tends to be regarded as a "system of education or training that has as its subject matter knowledge and skills used within certain trades, occupations or professions". Major programmes of IVET begin after the completion of compulsory education which ends with the school year in which the young person reaches age 16 years. Compulsory education focuses mainly on general education, but the last phase (ages 14-16) includes an element of work-related learning. IVET is delivered in schools, the further education sector, higher education institutions, Government funded and private training providers, and employers.

The main providers of IVET are:

- school sixth forms which provide mainly academic courses but some vocational ones as well;



- further education institutions: providers of initial vocational education and training. The further education sector includes sixth-form colleges, tertiary colleges, general further education colleges, specialist colleges (mainly in land-based provision and art and design) and colleges, which cater for people who have learning difficulties or disabilities, or both. All of these provide both initial and continuing vocational education and training, catering for
- both young people and adults through both full-time and part-time courses, as well as specialist short courses;
- the higher education sector: initial vocational education is provided by many universities and other institutions, covering not only the traditional areas such as law and medicine, but also ‘newer’ areas such as hospitality;
- work-based learning providers (publicly funded): offer Apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3 and may also offer ‘Entry to Employment’ programmes for those not yet able to benefit from an Apprenticeship, and training both young people and adults on the New Deal programmes for the unemployed;
- private providers that offer training independently of Government funding;
- employers may provide various forms of training for new recruits without recourse to Government funding.

## 8.2 Providers

There are 2500 registered providers for Apprenticeship programme delivery in the UK.

Training provider will provide an employer representative who will be able to support and guide the employer.

Training provider will work with an employer to:

- Help to decide which Apprenticeship is right for employer
- Explain the way that Apprenticeship Apprenticeships might work for the employer and if funding is available;
- agree a training plan with apprentice;
- recruit an apprentice or support your existing staff into Apprenticeships;
- manage the training and evaluation; and
- ensure that national quality standards are met and deliver integrated, coherent training.

The UK Register of Learning Providers is a 'one-stop' portal to be used by government departments, agencies, learners, and employers to share key information about learning providers. The UKRLP allows providers to update their information in one place and share this across agencies such as the Skills Funding Agency, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and UCAS.

Since provider registration opened on 1st August 2005, the UKRLP has grown to over 25,000 providers. Each of these has been verified against a recognised external source and has been allocated a UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN). This is the unique identifier used to share information with the UKRLP partner agencies.

An overwhelming majority of providers –regardless of type –deliver apprenticeship training in-house, with only small proportions delivering through sub-contracts or consortia. While consortia have been mooted as a possible solution to expansion, these findings suggest that this is an approach that might be encouraged as a future trend perhaps rather than a current reality. There are some innovative uses of sub-contracting provision by providers to facilitate employer delivery of apprenticeships, with the provider holding the main contract and undertaking the administration, with the learning delivered by the employer.

A range of delivery models are used by providers including programme-led apprenticeships, day release study and fully workplace delivered training, which are used according to the employer's preferences. The vast majority of providers also operate flexible enrolment - colleges more so than other provider types. Programme-led apprenticeships (PLA) are seen as particularly important in sectors with strong health and safety requirements, but also for young learners who are furthest from the labour market and pose more of a risk to employers. PLA delivered in the workplace can then provide the employer a safe opportunity to 'try' the learner, with a view to employing them at the earliest opportunity.

Employer demand is the factor strongest influencing levels of apprenticeship delivery followed by learner demand, minimum levels of performance, and the availability of appropriate staff. Nearly half of all providers noted both learner demand and employer demand as strongly influencing the level of apprenticeship delivery, half of which were organisations in business in their own right.

Providers note the following factors as key to successful apprenticeship delivery and expansion:

### **Staff**

Having good sales staff and assessors and lecturers that work well with the learners is key to the success of the apprenticeship programme. It is also important as a provider to be able to offer flexible employment in order to attract staff.

### **Employer engagement**

Having a close relationship with employers and ensuring their role (as well as the provider's) in the programme is clear is essential to keep employers on board. The employer is seen as absolutely key to the programme, and the provider's job is as a facilitator. 'The provider has to be the catalyst rather than the prime reason for the programme being there.'



### **Flexible and/or innovative delivery**

Being able to provide learning in a way that suits employers –be it in the workplace, block release, evening or weekend learning –is vital to engage employers with the programme. Providers have to be prepared to change the way you deliver if the employer needs it.

### **Learner support**

Providing 100 per cent support to the learner, monitoring their progress closely and regularly, and moving them on at a pace that suits them ensures the learner has the best possibility to achieve.

### **High quality teaching and learning**

Keeping high quality of teaching and learning and high success rates is not only vital to maintain funding, but also for employer engagement (repeat business; word of mouth; alumni recommendations).

### **Communications**

Having good internal communications between teams, but also good communications with the key stakeholders is important. The latter is particularly important to ensure that providers keep up with policy and understand where the funding is going, so that business model can be adjusted accordingly.

An employer delivering apprenticeships also noted that it is important for employers to give the apprentice a job at the end of the programme; to see them as a future workforce. As an employer, they have noticed that if this is used as a principle, the calibre of applicants improves year on year, as it is an attractive prospect to the learner.

## **9 Apprenticeship programs**

An Apprenticeship is essentially a set of qualifications called a ‘framework’. These are developed by Sector Skills Councils. Sector Skills Councils are licensed by government to work with employers to develop National Occupational Standards and design Apprenticeship frameworks for the industries they represent.

- An Apprenticeship includes the following components:
- A minimum of 16 hours per week paid employment
- A minimum of 280 guided learning hour per year
- A knowledge based element
- A competency based element
- Transferable or “key skills”
- A module on employment rights and responsibilities

The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) sets out the minimum requirements to be included in a recognised English framework. Compliance with the SASE is a statutory requirement of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act. This is the first statutory SASE.

There are three levels of Apprenticeship available for those aged 16 and over:

### **Apprenticeships (equivalent to five good GCSE passes)**

Apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as an NVQ Level 2, Functional Skills. (Maths, English and IT)

And, in most cases, a relevant knowledge-based qualification such as a BTEC.

These provide the skills required for the apprentice's chosen career and allow entry to an Advanced Apprenticeship.

### **Advanced Apprenticeships (equivalent to two A-level passes)**

Advanced apprentices work towards work based learning qualifications such as an NVQ Level 3, Functional Skills and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge-based certificate such as a BTEC. To start this programme, the applicant should ideally have five GCSEs (grade C or above) or have completed an Apprenticeship.

### **Higher Apprenticeships**

Higher apprentices work towards work based learning qualifications such as an NVQ Level 4 and, in some cases, knowledge-based qualification such as a foundation degree.

Apprentices can also progress to higher education, including university degrees.

## **10 Legal requirement for preparing training programs**

The SASE sets out the minimum requirements to be included in a recognised English Apprenticeship framework and compliance with the SASE will be a statutory requirement of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act.

There are three key roles involved in ensuring that we have SASE compliant frameworks: proposer; developer and issuing authority:

### **Proposer**

An organisation who has an idea for an Apprenticeship framework but who does not necessarily want to develop one, who is then encouraged to work with the relevant Sector Skills Council (SSC) to develop an appropriate framework

### **Framework Developer**

The organisation that will develop the framework for submission to the Issuing Authority



### **Issuing Authority (SSC/UKCES commissioned body)**

Organisations appointed by the Secretary of State in England to issue Apprenticeship frameworks for a particular sector. The Issuing Authority is responsible for ensuring that only those Apprenticeship frameworks which comply with the SASE are issued as recognised English Apprenticeship frameworks. There is only one Issuing Authority for each sector and they will support framework developers, if they wish to make sure that their frameworks comply with SASE requirements.

The Issuing Authority will issue their SASE compliant frameworks through the web portal managed by UKCES/Alliance of Sector Skills Councils. They are required to notify the Skills Funding Agency and submit a completed list of qualifications within the framework along with an activity cost model. The Agency will then assign the appropriate funding rate for each framework and publish on the Learning Aims Database (LAD).

NAS have agreed with UKCES and SSCs that the funding implementation date will be 4 weeks after the SASE compliant framework has been issued. This will allow the Agency to notify providers of the forthcoming framework and hence prepare for its implementation.

## **11 Completion rates, success**

Apprenticeship completion rates currently stand at 70-75 per cent (for both Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeships, 2009/2010). To gauge whether this is high or low requires comparisons to be made with similar programmes. In practice this proves difficult given the lack of comparable programmes in this country, and the difficulties associated with making comparisons with Apprenticeship programmes in other countries due to differences in the calculation of completion rates and differences in the structure of national Apprenticeship systems.

Bearing in mind the caveats about making international comparisons, evidence from various countries suggests rates of completion of between 75 and 80 per cent being achievable. But these comparisons must be treated with caution.

On the basis of the evidence presented in Maximising Apprenticeship Completion rates report, 2009 there is scope to increase Apprenticeship completion rates in England to between 70 and 80 per cent through adoption of existing good practice by a wider range of employers and training providers.

Although there is scope to increase completion rates, a 100 per cent completion rate is neither feasible nor desirable. Achieving a 100 per cent completion rate suggests that people are locked into their Apprenticeship even though they may not be, in some instances, particularly well matched to it (however that may be defined). Moreover there are many events which bring about non-completion which are difficult to control; for instance, redundancy, firm closure, the apprentice becoming pregnant or ill.

It also needs to be borne in mind that there is a tension between raising the level of participation in Apprenticeships and increasing completion rates. For example, where

Apprenticeships are extended into sectors of the economy where there is little tradition of Apprenticeship training there will be a number of transitional issues which are likely to impede the attainment of higher overall completion rates at least over the short term. Hence there is a timing issue attached to achieving higher rates of completion.

### **Improving Completion Rates**

A number of factors are associated with relatively high completion rates and from these it is possible to obtain an indication of how policy can be developed to raise completion rates even further.

The use of rigorous recruitment procedures by employers and training providers improves completion rates because it ensures a better match between the aptitude of the apprentice and the needs of the employer.

It is clear that the characteristics of apprentices are related to completion which may indicate that some groups of apprentices are more in need of support than others. The evidence points to:

- women being more likely to complete than men at Level 2, but the gender difference is not
- significant for Advanced Apprenticeships;
- the higher the level of qualification on entry the greater the probability of completion;
- Apprenticeships are somewhat more likely to be completed if based in a public sector organisation than a private sector one (regardless of size), and large private sector employers have a slight edge over small/medium sized businesses and public sector organisations in regard to Advanced Apprenticeships;
- Black and Pakistani apprentices are somewhat less likely to complete than their White counterparts;
- where apprentices have a learning difficulty, disability or a health problem, they are less likely to complete.

If the profile of people entering Apprenticeships changes as a result of the drive to increase levels of participation, then additional support may be required to help groups new to Apprenticeships attain average rates of completion.

Employers and training providers which provide both pastoral and academic support are, other things being equal, more likely to achieve higher completion rates. For example, some young people struggle to make the transition between school and work. Where this is closely managed by employers and training providers through the provision of appropriate pastoral and academic support, the greater the likelihood that the young person will complete.

There was a consensus amongst stakeholders that Apprenticeship completion is facilitated by a close partnership between employer, apprentice, and training provider. Where each is aware of their obligations, the greater the chance of completion.



Close monitoring of the apprentice's progress towards completing each element of the Apprenticeship aids completion. Where training providers and employers are in close communication with one another, and the progress of the apprentice is regularly appraised by both parties, appropriate actions can be taken where the apprentice is falling behind.

Completion is related to good framework design. If the training and underpinning knowledge acquired during the Apprenticeship is relevant to the current or future job the apprentice might undertake, apprentices tend to be more committed to completing their training.

Related to good framework design is the issue of progression. If apprentices are clear about the options available to them at the end of the Apprenticeship – such as progression from Level 2 to 3, access to Foundation Degrees, promotion within the company – then completion rates are improved.

Management of the Apprenticeship is an important determinant of completion.

Maximising completion rates is dependent upon a strategic approach to delivering Apprenticeships which combines many of the issues above. This is based on:

- understanding how to recruit suitable apprentices and then supporting them through their
- training;
- monitoring apprentices' progress;
- embedding quality maintenance / improvement measures in an Apprenticeship;
- ensuring good programme design, ensuring the structure of the Apprenticeship is
- appropriate to the occupation and that delivery is interesting;
- the apprentice understands the need to acquire competencies; and
- the employer is suitably engaged in the delivery of the Apprenticeship.

## **12 Funding**

Employers are normally expected to enter into a contract of employment with an apprentice and, having done so, to take responsibility for paying the agreed wage and other costs. Apprenticeship funding is available from the National Apprenticeship Service. The size of the contribution varies depending on the sector and the age of the candidate. If the apprentice is aged 16-18, the government funds 100 per cent of the cost of the training; if the apprentice is 19+, the government funds up to 50 per cent. Government funding to cover the cost of apprentice training is not paid directly to the employer unless the company has 5000 employees or more. Government funding is paid directly to the organisation that provides the apprentice training; in most cases this will be a learning provider. In 2009 government announced that businesses which already have a proven track record in offering high-quality apprenticeships will be able to access additional funds to train extra apprentices – over and above those they already employ. There are also additional financial incentives (wage

subsidies) available to small businesses which employ 16-18 year old apprentices through one of the Apprentice Training Agencies (ATAs).

The latest (2010) statutory requirements for apprentice pay under minimum wage legislation provide for a minimum apprentice wage of £2.50 an hour for apprentices aged 16-18 and for 19+ apprentices in their first year (£95 a week for a 38 hour week).

Working in line with the annual budget, targets and priorities set by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills through the Skills Investment Strategy, SFA allocates funding to colleges and providers, who have discretion over expenditure to meet the needs of local businesses and communities. The Skills Funding Agency funds and regulates the adult learning and skills sector. It is a funding body intended to facilitate the sector delivering the services that meet the needs of business and individuals and the government's ambitions. SFA applies funding policy fairly, consistently and professionally on a national basis.

### **13 The benefits of Apprenticeship**

The attitude towards apprenticeships varies tremendously particularly between large and small firms; it has also varied over time. Years ago most large businesses had apprentices (where appropriate) and for many young people it was a great step on the ladder and many apprentices managed to climb the ladder to the very top; for others it enabled them to develop skills and training which provided them with gainful employment for much if not all their working lives.

The 1980s saw a reduction in the number of apprentices and this trend has continued into the 1990s and for much of the last decade. However things are changing again. Both employers and prospective apprentices are again realising the real benefits that an apprenticeship brings. For the last 10-15 years young people have been encouraged to get a degree, but many found that their type of degree was not what was wanted by business and many became unemployed as a result. Nowadays many young people recognise that, rather than go for a degree, they might be better off entering into an apprenticeship because an apprenticeship, apart from providing skills and on the job training, generally results in a permanent job at the end of the day.

As a business it is now more important than ever to invest in your workforce to allow talent to grow and your company to build towards a brighter future. Large employers are now seeing the light again with businesses such as British Gas and Network Rail amongst those leading the way.

For small businesses providing apprenticeships can also be a valuable and cost-effective way of training up new recruits. Moreover help is at hand in many ways and it is possible to gain access to apprenticeship funding.

To summarise the benefits that apprenticeships bring to the business, staff and the UK economy include:

- Increased productivity



- Reduced recruitment costs
- Harnessing of new work-force skills
- Develop a highly skilled workforce
- Ability to fill skill gaps
- Improved staff retention levels
- Motivated workforce with improved morale

### **13.1 Benefits to employers**

Employers do not receive a direct monetary incentive to take on apprentices. However, the off-the-job training costs are subsidised in full, or in part, by the National Apprenticeship Service.

The Learning and Skills Council recently surveyed businesses throughout the UK on the benefits of hiring an apprentice (Populus, January 2009). Of those surveyed:

- 81 % said that employing apprentices generated higher overall productivity for their company.
- 66 % said that their Apprenticeship programme made them more competitive in their industry.
- 92 % said that their Apprenticeship programme better motivated staff and increased job satisfaction.
- 74 % said that apprentices tended to be more loyal, remaining at their company longer than non-apprentices.

Apprenticeships make good business sense. Skills shortages are still one of the biggest threats to UK business. Apprenticeships can help businesses in all industries by offering a route to harness fresh talent. By training people with the right skills for the job they can do a wider range of tasks and take on new responsibilities – this can help to reduce skill shortages, minimise staff turnover and workplace accidents, and increase productivity.

Taking on an apprentice is cost-effective because people can learn while they're on the job and the Government contributes to the costs of learning. There are clear financial benefits to employers and their investment in Apprenticeships is repaid many times over.

A recent study by the University of Warwick's Institute of Employment Research found that the costs of Apprenticeship training are recouped relatively quickly – in some cases, within one year – and that where the investment is nurtured, the returns are significant. The report found that “the evidence points to employers obtaining a range of qualitative benefits from the Apprenticeship training in which they invest, but importantly that investment is recouped in monetary terms within two to three years in most instances.”

Another study by Sheffield University measured the long-term financial benefit of investing in Apprenticeships. A Level 3 advanced apprentice will generate an additional lifetime benefit to themselves and their employer of £105,000 compared to someone who does not gain an Apprenticeship. The Level 2 additional benefit is £73,000. This represents a gain of £16 for every £1 of taxpayers' money.

## 13.2 The benefits for Apprentices

### Apprentice terms and conditions of employment

Most young people on apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships have employed status. All employed apprentices are covered by the terms and conditions contained in their contract of employment and any relevant employment legislation. Apprentices should receive the time off for study or train. Learners are entitled to their terms and conditions in writing. There should also be a contract of employment or training agreement in place.

The amount paid to employed apprentices, as for all employees, is negotiated with the employer. Pay rates vary between sectors, regions and between different employers. Your union can help in negotiating pay rates. There is a national minimum wage (NMW) in Britain, although unions generally negotiate pay rates well above that.

### Current NMW rates

There are different levels of NMW, depending on the age and whether employee is an apprentice. The current rates are:

- £5.93 - the main rate for workers aged 21 and over
- £4.92 - the 18-20 rate
- £3.64 - the 16-17 rate for workers above school leaving age but under 18
- £2.50 - the apprentice rate, for apprentices under 19 or 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship

The age at which employee become entitled to the main rate was reduced from 22 to 21 on 1 October 2010. The apprentice rate of £2.50 was introduced on the same date.

Rates from 1 October 2011

The NMW rates are reviewed each year by the Low Pay Commission and from 1 October 2011:

- the main rate for workers aged 21 and over will increase to £6.08
- the 18-20 rate will increase to £4.98
- the 16-17 rate for workers above school leaving age but under 18 will increase to £3.68
- the apprentice rate, for apprentices under 19 or 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship will increase to £2.60



There are transitional arrangements in place to ensure that no apprentice loses out as a result of the new apprentice minimum wage rate being introduced.

An apprentice would have to work a 38 hour week at £2.50 an hour in order to earn £95 per week. Therefore, if an apprentice works less than 38 hours per week, they will still be entitled to £95 per week. These transitional arrangements only apply to apprentices in England.

The new minimum wage rate applies to apprentices in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well.

The new minimum wage arrangements for apprentices will be enforceable in the same way as the full minimum wage. HMRC has responsibility for enforcing the minimum wage.

An apprentice who is not receiving the minimum wage rate that they are entitled to would also be able to recover the unpaid wages through an employment tribunal.

Apprentices who are not getting paid the minimum wage rate that they're entitled to should contact their union. They can also seek advice and assistance with enforcement from the HMRC Pay and Work Rights Helpline.

There are some findings from the survey by LSC April 2009:

- Most Apprentices benefited from a positive Apprenticeship experience. Only 1 in 20 said the employer where they were placed had a negative attitude towards their Apprenticeship and only 1 in 50 said other staff in the workplace was negative. 84% said the off-the-job training they received was good.
- Over 90% of Apprentices believe their NVQ and Technical Certificate have some value and over half believe they are very valuable. High proportions of Apprentices report that their Apprenticeship has conferred practical benefits including better job prospects and skills, progression opportunities, better literacy and numeracy, and increased earnings potential. Personal benefits, perceived by many, include greater confidence, greater enthusiasm towards learning, more sense of direction, and better social skills.
- 9 out of 10 Apprentices went into employment immediately following their Apprenticeship. Current employment is regarded as satisfying by 89% and three-quarters (76%) want to pursue their current occupation in the long term. 42% of Apprentices who are currently employed have already had a promotion or job upgrade.
- The wage levels of Apprentices who are now in employment are considerably higher than before their Apprenticeships. The average increase is of around £4,500, an increase of around 45% on the pre-Apprenticeship wage.
- Around a third of Apprentices who completed their Apprenticeship have already undertaken further learning and significant proportions want or intend to learn in future. Particularly, the proportions of Level 2 Apprentices who want to progress to Advanced Apprenticeship and of Advanced Apprentices who want to progress to a degree or other higher level qualification are significant at around 4 in 10 in each case.

- Overall, therefore, the benefits of Apprenticeship are substantial and encompass positive attitudinal changes, gains in skills and qualifications, a high employment level, and increased wages.

There are few downsides. These might include:

The Key Skills element of the Apprenticeship framework, which has historically been unpopular with some Apprentices, continues to be less well-regarded than the other framework qualifications – but is more positively regarded by those who most need these skills, that is, by those who had fewest qualifications prior to Apprenticeship.

Although the average employment rate was high, at 96%, immediately following Apprenticeship, it has since declined to 84% and 9% of completed Apprentices are now unemployed. Clearly, those who have completed Apprenticeship are not immune from the effects of recession. However, the ‘Apprenticeship’ unemployment rate compares favourably with the general rate. Estimates (NOMIS) for mid-2008 show a general unemployment rate of 14% for 16-24 year olds and this rate may well have risen since. Though completion of Apprenticeship does not bestow immunity from unemployment, it may offer some protection.

Apprenticeship has only a modest ability to generate self-employment. Only 3% of completed Apprentices are now self-employed (mainly in construction). However, none of these Apprentices are more than 4 or 5 years out of their Apprenticeship. In many sectors, greater experience, progression to higher qualifications, and/or financial capital are required to make the move into self-employment, attributes which these Apprentices have not yet had time to acquire.

For Apprentices who complete their Apprenticeship, Apprenticeship is a success. This is true both attitudinally and practically.

In terms of perceptions, most Apprentices report a positive Apprenticeship experience. They value the qualifications they received, and report that Apprenticeship has given them more confidence, higher levels of work-related and social skills, more clarity about their future, and greater commitment to learning. When they are employed following Apprenticeship they have high levels of job satisfaction and Apprentices who complete mainly have positive views on future study and training.

In terms of practical outcomes, all successful Apprentices are by definition, equipped with an NVQ, a Technical Certificate, and certification of their abilities in Key Skills. A high proportion, 90%, obtain employment or self-employment immediately after their Apprenticeship. That proportion, though it declines, remains high, at 84%, even after some time has elapsed and 88% remain in a ‘positive destination’ when return to Further or Higher Education is included. Over four out of ten achieve an upgrade of their job or a promotion on completion of their Apprenticeship or shortly afterwards. The wages of Apprentices rise following completion by an average of over 40%. Over a third undertake further study or training towards a qualification in the years which immediately follow their Apprenticeship.



## 14 Further education after completion Apprenticeship in FE

Although there have been huge changes in higher education over the last twenty years, there are still many people who feel that it is 'not for them'. The image that many people have in their minds is of young people going away to university to study for a degree in some academic subject. This is often not a choice that they want to make or sometimes it is not a choice that is open to them, for financial or family reasons. The sad thing is that many people who have the capacity to benefit from higher education currently do not participate in it. That is why there are further changes in the provision of higher education opportunities that will enable more people to follow education and training programmes that are part time, flexible and work-based.

All of the available analysis shows that expansion of employment opportunities in the future will require skills and knowledge that is represented by higher level qualifications. These can be designed, like Foundation degrees, around the particular knowledge and employability skills needs of a wide range of sectors. Much of the programme can be delivered through workplace learning in collaboration with employers.

It is about raising the aspirations of many employers and persuading them to see that education and training is vital to both the people they employ and their business or service. This really is about investing in people. Too many employers in the UK still do not create the conditions within the workplace for learning and development to happen. As a result many people feel under-valued and under-employed.

It is also about raising employee aspiration and demand for education and training at the right sort of levels to secure their future careers and to equip them to face the challenges ahead following the current recession. This is not just a matter of economics; it is also a matter of social justice in terms of equality.

HE has changed and it is not just about full-time degree courses. It is a term used for any study that leads to qualifications at Level 4 and above, and there are lots of different options, many of them designed for working people. Learners can study full-time, part-time, at work, by distance learning, in college, or at home.

Good HE options for working people include:

### **Foundation degrees**

Foundation degrees (Fds) are work-based learning qualifications developed by partnerships of employers, providers and universities, a degree in their own right, and equivalent to the first two years of a full-time degree. They can provide access to the final year of an Honours degree. They combine academic and work-based learning, and can be studied full or part time. The part-time option is ideal for working people. Fds can be studied online and by distance learning.

Established in 2003 by DfES, foundation degree forward (fdf) was funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to develop innovative approaches to the creation of Foundation degrees. In particular there was concern that adaptation or conversion of existing courses would not lead to the kind of employer-supported programmes that the qualification was designed to generate. In addition, the integration of high quality work-based learning, its accreditation and assessment, were deemed to be inconsistent on the basis of QAA Foundation Degree Reviews of 2003 and 2005. The work of fdf in this first phase of development focused very clearly on establishing employer engagement in Foundation degree development.

In 2006 HEFCE broadened the fdf remit beyond the Foundation degree qualification to embrace an emphasis upon establishing and sustaining employer demand for appropriate higher education provision in general. Accordingly, the organisation dropped the use of its full title and underpinned its 'brand' with the strap line Innovating Workforce Development. Clearly, Foundation degrees have remained an important focus for our activities but this has been driven by employer demand and the flexibility of the qualification in meeting the needs of those who need to combine work and study. The organisation has supported Foundation degree development, therefore, that is targeted upon adult employees, part-time modes and apprenticeship progression routes.

Since 2006, however, it has been seen the Foundation degree as only one vehicle for workforce development at higher education levels. For instance, fdf have developed an accreditation service for employers in partnership with 35 universities that stimulates enhancement and accreditation of employer-driven workplace training - the Employer Based Training Accreditation service (EBTA). In just two years EBTA has generated more than 50 new employer partnerships leading to over 6000 employees having accreditation opportunities for modular provision in the workplace. Fdf has also developed comprehensive web-based information, advice and guidance materials for work-based learners and their advisors that outlines positively all of the qualifications options that are available (for example Diploma of Higher Education, Higher National Certificate/Diploma, Foundation degree, Bachelors degree and postgraduate qualifications).

### **Part-time or distance learning degree courses**

Universities offer a range of degree courses on a part-time or modular basis but studying in this way may add two to three years to the length of the course. However, if the qualification is work-based and draws on your work experience it may take a shorter time. Degree courses are also available by distance learning, which means that studying can be done at home or at work. The biggest provider of distance learning degrees is the Open University (OU), and union members can get a 10 per cent discount for some courses.

### **Higher National Diplomas and Certificates**

Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and Higher National Certificates (HNCs) can be taken full or part time in a range of vocational subjects. The emphasis is on the development of



knowledge and skills needed for the workplace. Like Foundation degrees, if relevant modules have been taken, it is possible to 'top up' these qualifications to a degree.

### **Postgraduate qualifications**

These are usually taken by learners who already have a degree but some adult learners may be able to enter with relevant work experience. Courses may be taught or research based and may lead to a range of qualifications including Masters degrees, PhDs and postgraduate certificates or diplomas.

### **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

Learners can study for a range of HE short courses, many of which carry a certificate or can count towards a qualification or to maintaining professional registration. These cover a wide range of subjects and can be studied at college or by distance learning. Short courses are often available in the evening or as residential courses at weekends or can be completed online and at home or work.

There is a lot of choice, and it could be done without having to stop working.

Employers can also get involved in developing Foundation degrees to ensure that they provide real progression routes for employees and meet business needs and sector requirements. Foundation degree courses are intended to be designed with employer involvement.

As part of its wider skills strategy, government has encouraged the higher education sector to:

- be more flexible and offer more options to workplace learners
- give more encouragement to people who do not come from backgrounds/communities that normally access HE
- improve the vocational routes into HE
- encourage employers to work in partnership to encourage staff into higher education.

So universities may now be working very differently from the way your employer expects. Employers and your union may have partnerships and agreements with particular providers, both locally and nationally.

## 15 Unions role in HE

Unions can provide the following support, which then can be offered to the employer as something they may be willing to match with contributions in kind:

- Help learners to build confidence to study at HE level (there are ideas in the unionlearn toolkit Supporting Union Learners into Higher Learning).
- Build HE into learning agreements.
- Develop partnership agreements with local HE providers to develop bespoke programmes, to improve access to existing courses and to negotiate discounts.
- Generate large-scale demand for bespoke programmes to make course development cost effective for providers.
- Work with Aimhigher partnerships and Lifelong Learning Networks (LLNs) to promote higher-level opportunities.
- Develop resources for project workers and reps to help them to promote HE opportunities.
- Provide access to good-quality information and advice about HE and career progression.
- Develop progression maps and case studies to show the way to learners and employers, including progression from apprenticeships.
- Show members how HE can help with promotion.
- Make it affordable by providing grants or bursaries (and looking for sources of local, regional and sectoral funding that will support this).
- Publicise the discount offered to unions by the OU.
- Develop workplace learning clubs to build confidence, share experiences and support progress.
- Publicise and broker taster courses.
- Broker CPD courses at HE level.

It may be that the union has found ways to provide these things at a regional level or as part of specific projects and partnerships.

Although every learner has their own motivation for undertaking HE study, there are some common benefits of achieving an HE qualification.

- Increased employability: the recent Government report on skills, Prosperity for all in the Global Economy – world class skills (the Leitch review), repeats the message that skills are the key determinant of employment. It found that nearly 90 per cent of those with higher education qualifications are in work compared to less than 50 per cent of those



with no qualifications. It also found that the chances of finding work for those with no qualifications have fallen over the past 10 years.

- Job mobility: HE qualification not only helps people to move up the career ladder in their current field of employment, it also helps them to change careers. This is becoming more important as the pace of economic change increases and people work longer.
- Financial reward: there are financial advantages to having an HE qualification – on average those with a higher level qualification earn up to 50 per cent more over their working life than those without one.
- Personal benefits: taking an HE course can involve meeting and getting to know new people; this could mean new friendships and new work contacts. HE learners are also likely to face new challenges and as a result will learn new skills and develop different points of view. They could also have the opportunity to visit new places and some courses offer the opportunity to gain work experience. In addition the sense of achievement that comes from succeeding will boost learners' confidence and self-esteem.

## **16 The benefits of HE for employers**

Having staff who are higher-level learners can help employers to meet the challenges facing businesses, such as increased competition, shifting markets, technological and organisational change, and financial crises. It is well known that the UK economy is suffering from intermediate and higher-level skills gaps, and that a high proportion of jobs in the future will need higher-level skills.

Successful organisations have strong strategic management, anticipate change by training or buying-in skills, enlarge their range of products and services, become more customer focused, adapting to changing markets, and modernise processes. HE can equip employees with the generic and specific skills and knowledge they need to contribute fully to the survival and success of their organisations.

Employers will value skill development and specialist knowledge. If employers are to be convinced that it is worth supporting employees to become HE learners, they will want to know what the business or organisational benefits will be and what impact this will have on everyday practice.

### **16.1 HE workplace providers**

#### **Universities and colleges of higher education**

These provide the majority of HE courses across the country. They offer a very wide range of subjects and qualifications and are focused on teaching HE qualifications to a broad range of learners. Most of these courses and qualifications are non-vocational but all will offer a small number of work-related degrees, including Foundation degrees.

### **Further education colleges**

FE colleges offer some HE level courses, particularly for learners who want the opportunity to study locally on a part-time basis. Many further education colleges offer HNC/D and Foundation degrees, both of which are work-related qualifications. You may also find professional qualifications on offer at a local college.

### **Single subject higher education institutions**

These include agricultural colleges, medical schools, colleges of art and design and drama schools. These types of institutions offer a narrower range of courses within a particular subject area.

They are the best choice if a learner is interested in a career in that sector of employment. Specialist management schools are slightly different in that they offer specialist qualifications, which can be used in many different sectors of employment.

### **The Open University (OU)**

The OU offers HE courses to learners across the UK through distance learning. The OU has around 150,000 learners taking degree courses, including Foundation degrees, nearly all studying part time and around 70 per cent in full-time employment. The OU also has a Business School, which offers a range of management qualifications and short CPD and taster courses.

### **Work-based learning and training providers**

These are organisations that specialise in providing work-related training. Some are also now developing programmes where Foundation degrees and other higher level qualifications are on offer. Private training providers offer a range of work-related and professional qualifications in a number of job-related areas. Usually a private training provider has a learning centre that focuses on particular areas of training, for example IT, customer service or beauty therapy. Some of the qualifications on offer will be at a professional level.

### **Issues**

- Transition from Apprenticeship to HE can be difficult, particular with the written requirements
- Lack of funding for NVQ level 4
- Complex funding arrangements of programmes spanning FE and HE
- Employers and Apprentices resistant to paying fees
- Sustainability of programs is vulnerable to recruitment constraints and personnel change
- Apprentices are not accredited within the UCAS Tariff. The UCAS Tariff is the system for allocating points to qualifications used for entry to higher education. It allows students to use a range of different qualifications to help secure a place on an undergraduate course. In July 2010, UCAS announced plans to review the Tariff. This



review will take between 18 months and two years, and will therefore have no impact on applications to HE during 2010 and 2011.

- Providers not always flexible enough, e.g. in tailoring delivery to company shift patterns
- Continual policy development and changes to professional requirements further complicate the development of progression routes.

Getting people into HE is vital for the UK economy. Seventy per cent of the people that will be in the workforce in 2020 are already working, so the Government wants to support those already in work to develop higher level skills and knowledge. HE is not just for the privileged few or just for young people. It is for anyone who wants to progress in their learning or open new possibilities at any stage in life.

Unions have a unique role to play in understanding the learning needs of members and working with employers, universities and colleges to meet them.

Overall, Apprentice progression to higher learning appears to be small in scale, little known, patchy in application and poorly supported national policy. There is lack of national leadership and drive in the field of Apprenticeship progression, which falls between FE and HE remits.

Progression to HNC/HND, Foundation Degrees, Honours Degrees, professional qualifications, NVQs at levels 4 and 5, accredited international employer programmes etc. must all be valued, considered and supported on the basis of what is the best interests of Apprentices and their employers. Progression to higher learning may also occur some time after completion of the Apprenticeship and require individualised and flexible approaches.

The inexorable rise of professional and managerial occupations makes a strong case for maximising such progression opportunities. The growing importance of associate professional/technician occupations, requiring a mix of higher technical skills and first-line management skills, is particularly relevant in this context.

Links to professional accreditation are potentially effective way of stimulating progression. Such accreditation provides an incentive for employers and employees alike, builds on higher level qualifications and encourages CPD. Where such accreditation is highly valued as a 'licence to practise' - be it voluntary or statutory - there is very strong demand for progression, as evidenced in the accountancy route.

A range of progression models has emerged. The most successful in terms of systematic progression are models which integrate the FE and HE components, with enhancements where necessary of the Apprenticeship framework to support the higher learning. Higher Apprenticeship is a promising model because it is and officially recognised and 'branded' progression programme with big-name backers. However, funding issues, lack of national profile and prejudice against vocational learning are impeding its development. The complexity of funding programmes spanning further and higher education needs to be addressed by government.

The incorporation of all Apprenticeship frameworks into the UCAS Tariff should provide a significant boost to the standing of Apprenticeships, and their acceptance as HE entry 'qualifications'.

Young people emerging from education system with new Advanced or Progression Diplomas could provide a fillip to Apprenticeship progression by raising the quality and aspirations of Apprentices. The planned development and expansion of Apprenticeships should also fuel demand for progression opportunities to higher level learning, particularly if this is actively championed by the National Apprenticeship Service.

## **17 Unions and government working together**

Rt Hon Dr Vince Cable Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills and President of the Board of Trade urges companies to increase apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships include jobs in construction, business support and catering.

The government is hoping UK firms will create 100,000 more apprentices by 2014, as Apprenticeship Week begins.

Business Secretary Vince Cable said investment in training new generations of skilled workers would be key to sustainable economic growth.

As part of that commitment the government is to make £1.4bn available for apprenticeships in 2011-12.

He said businesses and young people should see apprenticeships as "a first-class way to start a career".

### **Manufacturing plea**

Mr Cable said firms should follow the example of British Airways, British Gas, BT, Superdrug, Jaguar Land Rover and Proctor and Gamble, in offering apprenticeships.

"Some of the most prestigious companies in England - large and small, public and private - employ apprentices and benefit from doing so," he said.

Meanwhile, Britain's biggest trade union, Unite, has called on the government to make more funding available to make manufacturing apprenticeships more attractive.

Unite general secretary Len McCluskey said: "The government needs to make sure that funding is available to schools and careers services to show that there is nothing wrong with manufacturing."

### **Issues**

There are not enough large sized employers offering Apprentice opportunities in the UK.

Quality of Apprenticeships is improving and driving standards up but pockets of bad practice still exist.



The Apprenticeship programme is still heavily segregated by sex and ethnicity in some areas and sectors, reflecting the overall job market. More female apprentices are employed in low paid sectors.

Growth in Advanced and Higher (level 3+) Apprenticeships has been slower than in entry level 2 Apprenticeships, lowering the academic mean of the overall programme.

There is a need to encourage more Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) based Apprenticeships.

### **Positives**

The size of the Apprenticeship programme continues to grow strongly based on employer and individual demand.

All Apprentices now have an employer and receive a wage.

It is an all age programme and covers many industries and job roles.

Employer and Learner satisfaction with their experience is improving.

SASE brings in a new standard for Apprenticeships in England.

Online matching service makes application and recruitment easy.

Long history of Apprenticeships in England, literally for hundreds of years.

Recent successive governments support for reinvigorating the programme.

A managed programme with big government investment (£1billion in 2010).

An expanding programme taking more Apprenticeships.

Modern, online application, matching and support tools.

A programme for all ages (16+) and increasingly at all academic levels.

Even in difficult times like these, Apprenticeships are a vital way of improving the skills of staff and generating a committed and valuable workforce. When times are tough, competition for contracts is even tougher. That's when a well-trained, extra pair of hands could make a real difference to business chances of success.

Apprentices can also help you ready the businesses for when the economy comes out of recession. By offering a flexible resource that can help business grow, apprentices can also give to business a competitive advantage to exploit new business growth opportunities.

## 18 Conclusions and suggestions

The roles and responsibilities within the delivery of an apprenticeship framework are very complex for those not directly involved in the delivery of the apprenticeship programme and also sometimes complicated for those who are directly involved. The relationship between those who pay (the state) and those that deliver can be tough with the state via NAS/ SASE and other regulatory bodies really only interested in elements of the quality of the delivery and value for money. The employers engaged in the apprentice programmes do not always understand the complex relationships and can still support the apprenticeship programme without knowing all of the background planning (this is sometimes referred to by institutions as hiding the wiring) but some employers are more interested in the whole process and they see the funding and delivery as over bureaucratic.

Employers are really the key to success but don't always feel that their needs are fully understood and that although the apprenticeships are supported by industry bodies these bodies such as SSCs are not always in tune with the industry.

The strength being developed by all of the key stakeholders is to deliver the best quality apprenticeship to new entrants to the workplace or sector and this joint vision to enhance what young workers and the business community need is the real strength of the partnership approach.

The weakness can be that there is not a real genuine understanding of the roles of individual partners and the 'rebranding' of organisations and change of remit can be confusing to those involved who are not just committed to apprenticeships. During the interview process employers had varying degrees of knowledge about funding, frameworks and how to recruit an apprentice this would identify that although apprenticeships in the UK are on the increase a fully rounded understanding is not filtering through to every partner.

The legislation surrounding apprenticeships is complicated and roles and responsibilities for the delivery and governance cross over with all of the key partners ensuring that they manage the parts that they are most responsible for. Also the legislation and those responsible for its implementation is changing with new bodies set up to make the process easier. Trade unions have a strong role to play in the workplace element of an apprentice's journey with support directly given and support, advice and guidance on how the workplace functions. From the research we have done we have found that there is an higher take up of the apprenticeship programme in organisations that recognise a trade union and that these apprentice have a a more supported experience. Industrial law is around terms and conditions and health and safety and unions have supported many young workers to improve their terms and conditions.

The key element that we think is not covered by legislation or governance is giving the apprentice a voice. This has been outlined this principle within the report and is something that if integrated into a fledgling programme could help the overall success by bring the apprentice to be a key stakeholder in the programme success.



Overall from the interview the main partners are happy with the development of the apprentice programme in the UK. Some elements seem over complex but employers are happy with how the programme is run would like to have some freedom around vocational frameworks. The apprentices interviewed are very happy with the programme feel invested in and stakeholders in their own future and the organisations future.

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