

Enterprise and Business Committee

The Enterprise and Business Committee is undertaking an inquiry into Apprenticeships in Wales. The terms of reference for the inquiry are:

- is the current apprenticeship system providing effective support to the Welsh economy?
- is the current apprenticeship system meeting the current and future skills needs of employers in Wales? If not, what needs to be improved?
- with increased priority on apprenticeships for 16-24 year olds, are apprenticeships an attractive option for young people?
- do the systems for establishing Apprenticeship Standards and Frameworks and recruiting apprentices work effectively?

Key issues

Issues that the Committee may wish to consider as part of these terms of reference include:

- how effective is employer involvement in the apprenticeship system in Wales? Has this changed as a result of the current economic circumstances? Are employers able to find sufficient numbers of young people with the skills and aptitudes that they require? Do relationships between employers and training providers work effectively? Are apprenticeships still limited to certain sectors?
- do social enterprises make effective use of apprentices?
- has the number of apprentices employed by local authorities, and the public sector generally, increased or decreased? Should the public sector be recruiting more apprentices?
- the Welsh Government is encouraging Community Benefits clauses in public sector contracts which can be used to promote the employment of trainees and apprenticeships. Is this an effective mechanism for increasing the numbers of apprentices?
- what is the average profile of an apprentice, for example age, gender, employment sector? Is this profile changing and, if yes, what are the reasons for this? The National Training Federation for Wales reports that the average age for an apprentice is 26. What are the reasons for this? Are apprenticeships generally successful from the perspective of the apprentice? Have apprenticeship completion rates changed in recent years? In practice, are apprentices guaranteed a job at the end of the apprenticeship?
- do Careers Wales and Jobcentre Plus provide effective support for people wanting to find apprenticeships? Does the new Apprenticeship Matching Service, run by Careers Wales, work effectively?
- why do young people decide to be apprentices? What factors influence their decision?

- are apprenticeships an attractive option for young people of all abilities or are apprenticeships seen as a second best option compared with higher education? Are attitudes changing and if yes, what are the reasons for this?
- are apprenticeships fully understood by those who have most influence on the choices of young people for example parents/carers, careers teachers in schools, teachers generally? Is there too much complexity and choice of programme?
- how effective is Welsh Government policy on apprenticeships? How does its policy of apprenticeships fit into its wider economic and skills strategies?
- education and training, including apprenticeships are devolved matters, but employment law is not. Do young people have sufficient rights and access to apprenticeship training? If not, how could the situation be improved?
- are the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) promoting and supporting apprenticeships effectively? How does the capacity of SSCs affect their performance in this area?
- is European funding being used to support apprenticeships effectively?
- are there examples of good practice apprenticeship systems in other countries that Wales can learn from?

Business type: Committee Inquiry

Considered by: Enterprise and Business Committee

Consultation process

If you wish to contribute evidence, please send an electronic copy of your submission to enterprise.committee@wales.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can submit your evidence by post to:

Siân Phipps
 Committee Clerk
 Enterprise and Business Committee
 National Assembly for Wales
 Cardiff Bay CF99 1NA

The Committee welcomes responses from both individuals and organisations. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please provide a brief description of the role of your organisation.

The Committee welcomes contributions in English or Welsh and will consider responses to the inquiry and hold oral evidence sessions in due course.

Submissions should arrive by Friday 6 April 2012. It may not be possible to take into account responses received after this date. Please note, the deadline has been extended to 17 April 2012.

Disclosure of Information

It is normal practice for the National Assembly to publish evidence provided to a Committee. Consequently your response may appear in a report or in supplementary evidence to a report. The National Assembly will not publish information which it considers to be personal data.

In the event of a request for information submitted under UK legislation, it may be necessary to disclose the information that you provide. This may include information which has previously been removed by the National Assembly for publication purposes.

If you are providing any information, other than personal data, which you feel is not suitable for public disclosure, it is up to you to stipulate which parts should not be published and to provide a reasoned argument to support this. The National Assembly will take this into account when publishing information or responding to requests for information.