



Petitions Committee

Response from National Training Federation Wales (NTfW) to the petition submitted by Cerith Rhys Jones:

Your Ref: P-04-441

We are only able to respond to 2 of the 3 key points contained within the petition.

- 1. Create a scheme to support 30,000 apprenticeships and to expand the Young Recruits programme;**
- 2. Develop a modern, high-value, in-work training programme to increase young peoples employability;**

NTfW is a Federation of organisations that deliver Work Based Learning Programmes in Wales commissioned by DfES via an open tendering exercise polished on the European Journal.

There are 112 member organisations of the Federation from the Public, Independent and Third Sector.

1. Create a scheme to support 30,000 apprentices and to expand the Young Recruits programme.

We believe that we have a scheme already in place that annually supports over 30,000 apprentices in Wales. This scheme has recently received a significant increase in investment in the 2013/14 budget allocation of £20 million with an additional commitment of £20 million for the 2014/15 budget allocation. This additional investment was part of the agreement reached with Labour and Plaid Cymru in the recent budget negotiations.

Since the Apprenticeship Act 2009 became adopted in Wales in 2011 all apprentices have to be on a contract of employment on the same terms and conditions of employment and the employer has to pay the apprenticeship wage as a minimum. NTfW fully support this commitment and our members deliver the approved Framework that relates directly to the Apprentices job role within the respective company.

To support employers that decided to take on an Apprentice over and above their normal pattern of Apprentice recruitment there is a direct support programme called the Young Recruits Programme (YRP) this programme provides a £100.00 per week wage reimbursement the employer has to comply with the Apprenticeship Act 2009 our members have to deliver the approved Framework and administer the wage reimbursement to the employer.

This programme has published numbers from a budgeting perspective but as a responsive Network we know that the budget can be increased in this priority area based on demand and a reduction made in non priority areas to address any shortfall.

Since the introduction of the YRP we have no evidence to demonstrate that demand has not been met.

Both of these programmes are directly linked to employment and in many cases they are a progression pathway from Jobs Growth Wales and Traineeship programmes both of which we will cover off in our response to Point 2.

We would question how closely aligned is the understanding of the supply of , and demand for, employment opportunities linked to the wider Pre 16 and Post 16 agenda.

With an ever increasing importance for all careers advice and guidance to be aware of the National Strategic Skills Audit for Wales. We would hope for a much better alignment of skills requirements of the economy in Wales linked into preparing individuals for the world of work.

2. Develop a modern, high –value, in-work training programme to increase young peoples employability.

We are now into the second year of the Jobs Growth Wales initiative this programme specifically creates an opportunity for young people to gain employability experience creating a platform for individuals to launch their careers directly with employers by creating a 6 month window of supported employment with an aspiration to progress onto a sustainable job.

We also have the Traineeship programme which is targeted more at the 16-19 age cohorts and this programme can also provide the foundation phase for progression onto Apprenticeship programmes.

We recognise the points made in the petition and given the finite resources available and the finite amount of opportunities that Employers in Wales are able to create and sustain we believe we have the balance right.

We are always seeking to secure a more stable commissioning of these resources and welcome any opportunity to expand high value programmes where there is identified demand based on evidence.

We have to remember that an Apprenticeship programme is an employed status programme and must be directly linked to a real job with a high expectation that the job will be maintained on completion of the Framework.

NTfW members are a quality assured Network who are committed to a flexible approach to the services that we are commissioned to provide including the development of new programmes in partnership with DfES.

Arwyn Watkins

CEO



Developing the Network to Deliver Excellence in Vocational Skills

Datblygu'r Rhwydwaith i Gyflawni Rhagoriaeth mewn Sgiliau Galwedigaethol