

**To review progress since the 2012 report of the Enterprise and Business Committee:** [Apprenticeships in Wales](#) (PDF 403KB)

Covered within other responses

**Including looking at the role of key players: the Regional Skills Partnerships; the Wales Employment and Skills Board (WESB); and Sector Skills Councils**

The RSP has been actively involved in promoting the benefits of apprenticeships with employers and young people and are in the process collating survey results which will provide useful information about perceptions of apprenticeships. This intelligence can then be used to devise strategies to overcome any barriers identified.

SSCs activity in Wales is limited. Engagement with providers and employers is a challenge their current resourcing makes difficult to overcome.

**To scrutinise the accessibility of independent careers advice on Apprenticeships and other vocational options?**

In general Careers Advisers are poorly informed on apprenticeships as a post 16 progression pathway. Providers have held briefing sessions but there are still common misconceptions about issues such as employment status of apprentices.

**Particularly for young people, either in school, from Careers Wales, online or from other sources?**

When surveyed young people are frequently not aware of the opportunities apprenticeships present. Information is available but it is clear from the responses of young people that this is not always accessed or understood.

**Is the Careers Wales' Apprenticeship Matching Service fit for purpose?**

Unfortunately feedback from employers regarding their experience of using this service is less than favourable. Many employers find it challenging to navigate the system and rely on providers to post vacancies for them. Most importantly however is the perception of employers that it is less effective than more traditional means of advertising at finding the most appropriate person for the post. A commonly held view is that AMS is frequently used as a means of evidencing job search activity.

**How can better parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes be achieved?**

There is still a perception amongst some that an apprenticeship is not for young people who are academically able. There has been some good evaluation of the value of apprenticeships and the earning power they have however the disparity still exists.

One of the stereotypes that needs to be overcome is that apprenticeships are craft based. Existing apprenticeships for so called professional trades such as accountants could be promoted and additional pathways such as nursing developed.

Young people, who would have previously only chosen to study A levels post 16 need to be convinced that an apprenticeship will qualify them to the same level and provide equal opportunities for progression within similar timescales.

### **To investigate the main barriers to taking up Apprenticeships?**

A concentrated campaign to raise awareness within year ten and eleven pupils is needed to increase awareness.

Despite the apprenticeship minimum wage and national insurance reduction, the reality is that few employers are recruiting. The cost effectiveness of apprenticeships is not appreciated and many smaller employers would benefit from an incentivised succession planning programme.

Employers are often nervous about recruiting young people with no knowledge or experience due to the demand on their existing workforce to train and mentor apprentices. The Pathway to Apprenticeship programme was in theory the answer to this. Could an intensive summer school be the alternative?

The cost of public transport is often a barrier for entry level employees, as is accessibility of some employer's work places by public transport.

### **How accessible are Apprenticeships for people with disabilities (all ages)?**

*As a provider no concerns have ever been expressed about accessibility.*

### **How can people from the lowest income families be supported to take-up Apprenticeships?**

A general campaign to raise awareness of opportunities would reach this group and increase their engagement alongside that of others.

Further training for Careers Advisors and teaching professionals would help raise awareness.

Grants to support travel or an extension of benefits such as child benefit to the age of 19 and so have equal status with families who have children in full time education could be an incentive. Similarly single parents could be offered the same reduction in council tax for the duration of the apprenticeship.

### **What good practice exists and what more can be done to address gender stereotyping?**

Best practice needs to be publicised. There are several examples of female apprentices progressing successfully in engineering and construction and story boards of these successes can be obtained from providers.

Further training for Careers Advisors and teaching professionals would help raise awareness.

### **To scrutinise the development of higher level Apprenticeships, with the support of further and higher education institutions?**

Clarity is needed over degree apprenticeships and how these will be funded. The development of higher level apprenticeships is seen by all parties as crucial in meeting the future skills needs for economic progression.

The level of funding needs to be published and guidance on the provider's ability to deliver agreed.

There is currently an angst within HE institutions over the income loss that may be a result of increased availability of Higher Apprenticeships

**How effective is progression between other work-based learning and Apprenticeships and between Levels 2, 3, 4 and above Apprenticeships?**

Hard to say globally. WBL consortia maintain records at provider level and anecdotally progression between level 2 & 3 is good but it plateaus at level 4 and above as the opportunities to perform competence related tasks may not yet be available.

An incentivised approach for employers and apprentice would boost this and benchmarks could be set for providers.

**How can employer engagement with Apprenticeships be improved?**

Sharing of good practice. Opportunity to influence framework development. Incentivisation.