

Enterprise and Business Committee

APP16

Inquiry into Apprenticeships

Evidence from Care Council for Wales

Apprenticeships in Health and Social Care and Children's Care Learning and Development

Submission for the Enterprise and Business Committee for the Inquiry into Apprenticeships in Wales.

Background - Care Council for Wales

The Care Council for Wales (Care Council) is the regulatory body for the workforce in social work and social care. The Care Council has the statutory remit to register and regulate the social workers and social care managers and workers and regulates their education and training. It also has the remit for workforce development and planning.

The Care Council's primary responsibilities focus on improving public protection through:

- promoting high standards of conduct and practice in the workforce; and
- promoting high standards of training.

The Care Council is a modern regulatory body, set within the context of devolution and one which tackles public protection in a different way, with accountability to service users and carers. The Care Council membership has already made a reality of the full involvement of lay people, carers and the users of services in its governance and throughout all aspects of its work.

The membership of the Council, its Committees and its regional social care partnerships has provided the Care Council with a mechanism to work in partnership with the sector. This enables us to link with the public, independent and third sector. Our role in delivering the Sector Skills Council (SSC) remit for Wales has required us to have good employer engagement and information which we access at national and regional level. This approach has meant that standards, qualifications and practice guidance have been developed in partnership with the sector.

The Care Council works at a national, regional and local level with partners providing information and ensuring that the sector is aware of our actions and work with us in the initiatives we take forward. The Care Council has a key role to support the delivery of **'Sustainable Social Services: a framework for Action'**¹ in leading and driving the step

¹ Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action, Welsh Government, February 2011

change for confident competent practitioners, moving beyond minimum standards to a continuing professional education and learning model.

Introduction

We fully support and endorse the apprenticeship scheme, policy and processes within Wales. The system is widely used by our sector for both recruitment, but specifically for the development training and retention of staff within a growth sector in Wales.

The social care sector in Wales supports 150,000 young, old, and disabled people every year to achieve their potential and help make them safe

The net expenditure on social services and social care is about £1.4 billion, with services being delivered by just under 70,000 people. There are around 1,800 regulated care settings. Whilst most social care in Wales is provided by private and independent organisations it is, on the whole, funded through the public purse and aims to meet public needs. The Early Years and Childcare workforce, which number around 19,000 provides the services in over 4,472 registered childcare day care settings and in over 76,769 childcare places.

The most recent Sector Skills assessment suggests that the workforce in the sector has continued to grow in a similar manner to previous years. The Social care element of the footprint in Wales has remained steady at 70,000, and the Early Years and Childcare workforce numbers around 19,000.

Although the sector workforce remains predominantly female, there is some evidence of a growth in male and minority ethnic workers.

The sector not only employs 7.2% of the total workforce in Wales but also enables the rest of the economy and local communities to function as family members can take up alternative paid employment and contribute to regeneration.

The most recent Sector Qualification and Learning strategy based on wide consultation with the sector has identified a range of learning needs which the Apprenticeship Frameworks can help to address; such as employability; basic/essential skills; extended communication skills; citizen centered approaches including respect and dignity; continuous professional development and higher level professional and leadership skills.

As a Sector Skills Council we are working with employers practitioners and service users to ensure the qualifications are modern and effective and there is access to high quality learning and development.

Details of our evidence.

1. Some statistics on apprenticeships in our sector in Wales

We have been working hard over the past two years to encourage more employers in our sector to use apprenticeships. We have printed and distributed information leaflets, attended

conferences, events and employers networks reaching over 750 people to raise awareness of apprenticeships and to support both the recruitment of new staff and the development of existing staff.

1.1 Number of Apprenticeships

In 2009-10 (the last year we have available data from LLWR) there were 19,570 learning activities being undertaken through work based learning for our sector. This included skills build (youth and adult), Modern Skills Diplomas for adults and the various components required for frameworks including technical certificates, essential skills/key skills and the NVQ component counted individually.

	Health and Social Care	Children’s Care Learning and Development
Apprenticeships in Skills for Care and Development learning areas 2010 (Work Based Learning)	3450 4290 technical certificates ² 7355 NVQs	2560 2560 technical certificates 3600 NVQs
Manager’s level ‘apprenticeships’ through work based learning (MSD or flexible funding routes)	670	440

1.2 Average Profile of Apprentices.

Because our sector does use more apprenticeships to support workforce development than it does to recruit staff we do not have a typical apprenticeship profile. Information we do have gives the following picture;

Gender: The vast majority of apprentices in our sector follows the demography of the workforce and are female, although the numbers of male apprentices is rising very slowly it was 13.4% in 2009-10

Age: Our oldest Apprentice in 2011 was born in 1946 (65 years old) and our youngest in 1994 (17 years old). Of these a total of 1980 activities were undertaken by people under the age of 19; 4795 were people between 19 and 24; 12,595 were completed by people between 25 and 60 years old and 160 people over 60 years old. Our average age is around 38, which is significantly higher than in other sectors.

The profile of our apprenticeships has remained fairly steady since 2005, when we first started collecting data; however it is likely that this will change given the changes in school leavers and labour market figures current available.

² Some technical certificates were used as part of 14-19 work based learning programmes

With fewer young people leaving school and seeking employment in Wales we have had reports from some employers that they are having difficulty in recruiting apprentices. From our experience we believe that schools do not always have up to date information on apprenticeships and do not support this opportunity sufficiently to young people. See comments below on Careers Service.

1.3 Health and Social Care

In 2011 we had 460 employers providing apprenticeships in Health and Social Care in Wales, this was a 15% rise in the number of employers using frameworks in 2010. There was a rise of 11.5% in the total number of apprenticeships completed. Data on apprenticeships has been done up to this point through a UK contract for both Health and Social Care and Children's Care Learning and Development.

We are keen to move to a position where the data for Wales is more easily accessed and specifically information on care (not combined health and care) and child care.

1.4 Early Years and Childcare

There were at least 1,973 employers of EY&C workers in Wales³ in 2012. As in 2010, none of those surveyed could be categorised as being anything but small (fewer than 50 employees) or micro-businesses (10 employees or fewer)⁴. Of these around 400 use apprenticeships to recruit new staff or train existing staff.

Recruitment problems across the sector continue to ease with fewer employers saying that it is difficult to find the staff that they need. In 2011, 35% said that they found it difficult to recruit compared with 44% in 2012 and 69% in 2005. Again, the general labour market conditions in Wales (unemployment has risen from 7.9% in 2005 to 9% at the end of 2011⁵) are likely to have an effect on how easy it is for employers to recruit the workers they need.

However, almost half of employers still said that it was not easy to recruit, and a significant number of employers reported difficulty in recruiting young people (16-18 year olds) to apprenticeship programmes.

Apprenticeships offer the chance to work and train at the same time and for many EY&C employers are an ideal way to recruit. There was mixed awareness of childcare apprenticeships amongst EY&C employers with 66% of full daycare employers aware of them, as opposed to just 30% of 'out of school' employers. Although we have no previous figures for this we believe this is a significant rise from last year. 37% of sessional care employers were aware of Childcare Apprenticeships in Wales and we are working to make

³ Based on CSSIW registrations alone. There are likely to be additional settings that are unregistered because they operate for fewer than 2.5 hours per day or that are operated by schools. Figures exclude childminders as, even where two childminders work together, it is usually as a partnership rather than in an employer-employee relationship.

⁴ There may be a number of organisations that operate multiple childcare settings that could have more employees in total.

⁵ ONS LFS Headline Indicators. NomisWeb 2012

sure information about apprenticeships reaches all part of the sector, through existing networks, working with schools and careers services.

Since the numbers of young people staying at school post 16 has risen substantially, we do have reports from employers that they are finding it difficult to recruit young people especially 16-18 year olds to apprenticeship frameworks. This particularly affects the early years and child care workforce who historically have taken 16 year olds onto frameworks.

We have no empirical evidence to offer regarding the questions relating to employers having difficulty in recruiting young people, however we do have anecdotal reports that this is prevalent particularly in some areas of Wales (specifically Wrexham, Cardiff and Neath). We will be working with local and regional partners to try to raising the value and profile both of work in the sector and apprenticeships.

2. Completion Rates.

Our completion rates have risen considerably since 2005 when we had a completion rate of around 15% to 2010 when the completion rates were in the high 70% around or above the national all sector average. Whilst this may be good news, there remain some questions raised by some employers of the quality of the training being provided. We believe it is not sufficient for Estyn inspections to be based around the very generic inspection criteria currently used, but more sector specific testing of quality needs to be undertaken. We are setting up a quality forum with partners to explore how we can develop more effective quality assurance systems in response to the proposals in the Social Services (Wales) Bill on regulation of social care training.

3. Employer Involvement

Our apprenticeship frameworks are developed in close consultation with employers and learning providers in the sector and our last major development concluded in Autumn 2010. We are about to embark on a further full revision for completion by August 2012. We believe that the sector frameworks do meet the needs of employers and learners and provide an excellent opportunity for employers to recruit staff and contribute to retention by developing their existing staff. There has been an increase in the number of employers and the numbers of frameworks offered in our sector (see section 2 above).

4. Public Sector Apprenticeships.

All Health Boards in Wales are involved (Cardiff and the Vale using most of the frameworks, but the other 6 health boards using only a small number) and 8 of the 22 local authorities (with Monmouth and Anglesey using the most frameworks, 6 other local authorities use a very small number (from 1-3)).

It is clear that there is some opportunity for local authorities to increase the uptake of apprenticeships in our sector (and other sectors) and we would welcome this development and the opportunity for Welsh Government to encourage this through some means. Our partners in England have been much more successful in doing this and in fact some local authorities make taking apprenticeships a requirement for firms who contract with local authorities to provide care service through the commissioning process and contract compliance system.

5. Support to Apprenticeships from Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus

The evidence we have from our employers is such that we do not believe these organisations are as aware of apprenticeships in our sector as they should be. The use of the Careers Wales Apprenticeship Matching Service would benefit from strengthening staff knowledge and understanding and in the information and support available to employers in particular. We are working through the Social Care Regional partnerships to provide support to careers services with information on the sector and through the Care Ambassador scheme. There is an opportunity next financial year to recruit people as Care Ambassadors who have come through the Apprenticeship route and can demonstrate what they have achieved.

6. Welsh Government Policy on Apprenticeships.

We welcome the policy on apprenticeships in Wales on the whole. The access to all ages is an enlightened policy objective, although for our sector the restrictions placed on learning providers through contract targets for younger participants isn't helpful. Learning providers do seem to be able to put many of their older people targets to our sector which we appreciate.

We welcome the way the SASW has been developed and implemented; learning from the many hitches experienced in England. Although the continued delay in issuing the final standards and implementing the 2009 Apprenticeship, Learning and Skills Act has not been helpful and having a clear and swift resolution to this would be welcomed, e.g. we await some clarification on the development of a Professional Framework to support workers in our sector to achieve a level 5 qualification while meeting the standards of the regulatory body.

7. The Role of Learning Providers

While the introduction of the draft Specification for Apprenticeship Standards, Wales in 2010 and the anticipated final version of these made clear that learning providers should not be recruiting apprentices directly but should be working in partnership with employers; this practice persists and is problematic for some employers.

The introduction of the traineeship system provides an entry route to apprenticeships, but it also means that learning providers have the existing relationship with these individuals and will try to influence employers to recruit these individuals rather than take on their own apprentice.

Many employers report difficulty in accessing learning providers support for their own apprentices, even when trying to involve learning providers from the start of their recruitment processes: challenges offered are lack of apprenticeship places on the contracts, timings are not flexible enough in some cases to meet the employer's timescales for new staff. This has also delayed the uptake of the Young Recruits programme in our sector.

In Autumn 2010 we completed a survey of all employers who had used apprenticeships in our sector in the previous 3 years. Over 70% of those employers who responded, were not aware that they had used apprenticeships; they thought they were offered 'free training' by the learning providers. Learning Providers are adamant that they fully discuss the apprenticeship scheme with employers, for some reason there is a mismatch in communication and we are working to develop an information booklet from employers in our sector about how to recruit apprentices, what to expect from learning providers, how to increase employer involvement in the process of selection of the components of the competence based qualifications to improve the learning from their apprentice and the business development needs of their businesses. It would be helpful to encourage or require through the apprenticeship learning contract with learning providers greater partnership working with employers in the recruitment and retention of apprentices.

An additional issue is that with the exception of Gwynedd and Mon, we have had reports from employers that accessing apprenticeships that can be supported / offered through the medium of Welsh is difficult. Given our sector's need to recruit, retain and train Welsh speaking staff to ensure the option of language choice is available in service this is an issue we would welcome support to address.