

Press Release

National Apprenticeship Service launches

New research highlights the importance of Apprenticeships for the East Midlands

Date of issue 27 April 2009

Press release number em-27NASlaunchEast Midlands-may2009.doc

The vital contribution apprentices make to the economy is being marked today by the launch of the new National Apprenticeship Service (NAS).

The service will be responsible for the end to end delivery of Apprenticeships across England, aiming to grow the availability of Apprenticeship places. The NAS, which is responsible for the funding of Apprenticeship places, will reinforce the Government's commitment to ensuring that every suitably qualified young person has the right to an Apprenticeship by 2013. Its main focus will be to make it as easy as possible for employers to take on apprentices, streamlining the application process, and offering support and advice at every step for both the employer and learner.

There are a huge range of choices, with 180 Apprenticeships across 80 different industries and the types available are constantly being increased and updated – ensuring that Apprenticeships remain at the heart of today's economy and relevant for the economy of the future. A new online matching service has already been helping employers advertise vacancies and prospective apprentices to apply for Apprenticeships. To date more than 10,000 employers and almost 54,000 candidates have registered for this service and there are currently over 4,000 live vacancies available.

To mark the launch, new research is being published which highlights the importance of Apprenticeships to individuals, businesses and the economy.

More than three quarters (77 per cent) of apprentices surveyed in the East Midlands, believe that without their Apprenticeship they would not be earning their current salary. The majority (95 per cent) believe that taking an Apprenticeship has provided a number of benefits including better job prospects, higher salaries, improved confidence, better social skills and a stronger sense of direction.

In addition, over nine tenths of apprentices (94 per cent) – more than the national average of apprentices who completed their course believe it has significantly benefited their career and life options. Most of those surveyed (89 per cent) found employment immediately after their Apprenticeship ended; very often through the employer they completed their Apprenticeship with.

Business research published by the Apprenticeships Task Force in 2005 demonstrates that Apprenticeships improve business performance by making contributions to competitiveness,

To find out more about Apprenticeships, visit apprenticeships.org.uk or call 08000 150 600

profitability, productivity and quality. The report draws on research from the Institute of Employment Research and displays the positive findings amongst employers.

Lord Young, Skills and Apprenticeship Minister and Sarah McCarthy-Fry, Schools Minister celebrated the launch by meeting with apprentices from a range of sectors to hear what their Apprenticeship means to them.

Skills and Apprenticeship Minister, Lord Young said:

“The launch of the National Apprenticeship Service is testament to the Government’s commitment to ensuring the future of our nation’s skills. Apprenticeship numbers have more than trebled over the past ten years and the new service will play an integral part in meeting our Apprenticeship targets.”

Schools Minister, Sarah McCarthy-Fry said:

“An Apprenticeship offers a great deal to individuals, giving them an opportunity to gain practical skills, a well-regarded qualification and invaluable on-the-job experience while being paid.”

Simon Waugh, Chief Executive of the National Apprenticeship Service has always been a strong advocate of Apprenticeships:

“Apprentices make things happen. Research and detailed case studies have consistently demonstrated they are vital to businesses and the economy, helping increase productivity and competitiveness. The NAS will build on this success by ensuring businesses are more informed of these benefits and can take advantage of them by offering Apprenticeship places.”

“In the current climate Apprenticeships offer the best of both worlds; giving employers access to a pool of talent that can be shaped to improve business performance and providing people with a great start in their chosen career.”

David Khan, 22, from Ainsley Estate, Nottinghamshire, used his Apprenticeship to turn his life around. During his Apprenticeship, David put new systems and procedures into place at Argos that have increased profits and quality.

David says: “I developed a monitoring system for our deliveries that helps delivery assistants put away stock in a more efficient way. This had a significant impact for the company as it maintained our wage budgets and increased profitability for the company.”

Since completing his Apprenticeship, David has been promoted to Stock Manager at Argos, which he attributes to his experience as an apprentice.

It’s not only apprentices who benefit – in a recent survey commissioned by the LSC of 500 employers who employ apprentices, 72 per cent of businesses based in the East Midlands said apprentices helped to generate higher overall productivity. Two-thirds of employers surveyed believe their apprentices help them to be more competitive in their businesses (70 per cent).

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Notes to editors

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National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)

The NAS was announced in January 2008 and officially launched in April 2009. Reporting to the Departments for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the service will drive forward the Government's ambition for Apprenticeships. The service aims to bring about a significant growth in the number of employers offering Apprenticeships.

The NAS will assume total responsibility for the delivery of Apprenticeships that includes: Employer Services; Learner Services; and a web-based vacancy matching system. 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 will act to overcome barriers to the growth of the programme and assume responsibility for promoting Apprenticeships and their value to employers, learners and the country as a whole.

Apprentice research

The survey of apprentices was carried out by BMG throughout January 2009 and commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council. BMG spoke to a total of 3,808 apprentices. Of these, 3,215 had completed their Apprenticeships. An additional 593 apprentices who did not complete all their framework elements were also interviewed.

Key Research Findings

- Over 9 out of 10 apprentices are in work or education on completing their Apprenticeship, comparing favourably with the national unemployment rate;
- Of those apprentices currently unemployed, just under two thirds (63 per cent) believe their Apprenticeship will directly help them find work;
- Apprentices' earning power has increased significantly and over three quarters (76 per cent) of apprentices believe that without their Apprenticeship they wouldn't be earning their current salary;
- Apprenticeships are a great route to further education – two thirds (60 per cent) of apprentices who completed an Advanced Apprenticeship showed an interest in pursuing a degree level equivalent course;
- An overwhelming majority (89 per cent) of apprentices would recommend an Apprenticeship to other people in similar circumstances to themselves.

Employer research

The employer survey was carried out by Populus and commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council. Populus interviewed a sample of 500 respondents who were responsible for Apprenticeship programme recruitment in their companies by telephone between 5th January and 29th January 2009.