

The value of Apprenticeships highlighted in UK's first Apprenticeship Week

The Learning and Skills Council reveals benefits of Apprenticeships to young people and employers in the East of England.

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Young people across the East of England will now find it easier to source the right Apprenticeship for them, thanks to a practical online Directory of Apprenticeships just published by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

The directory is a comprehensive and invaluable guide to what Apprenticeships are available to young people across the East of England and where they are offered. It is being launched during the LSC's first ever Apprenticeship Week designed to raise awareness of the benefits of apprentices to young people and employers.

Research released this week highlights that employing apprentices has a hugely beneficial impact on overall business performance, from increased competitiveness and productivity to improved staff retention and motivation. The independent survey of organisations that employ apprentices commissioned on behalf of the LSC found that:

- 76% of employers say that Apprenticeships provide higher overall productivity;
- 83% of employers rely on their Apprenticeship programme to provide the skilled workers they need for the future;
- 77% believe Apprenticeships make them more competitive;

- and 88% say Apprenticeships lead to a more motivated and satisfied workforce.

Nick Foster, Regional Director of Learning, Planning & Performance for the LSC, said:

“The business benefits from employing apprentices are vast and wide-ranging.

Apprenticeships are an excellent way to improve the bottom line, stay competitive and help build the workforce employers need for future success. We are calling for more employers to open their doors to apprentices and start reaping the rewards – Apprenticeship Week is a great opportunity for organisations to find out more.”

Apprenticeship Week forms part of an ongoing campaign to increase the number of employers offering Apprenticeships and young people undertaking them, and has included running the prestigious Apprenticeship Awards. These annual awards seek to celebrate the success of apprentices who have made a real difference to their future and to the organisation they work for, and to recognise the work of employers who are successfully tackling skills shortages to build their future workforce through Apprenticeships.

A recent series of roadshows in 80 schools across the East of England also proved successful in setting out the learning, training and employment options – including Apprenticeships – that are open to young people at the age of 16.

Nick Foster said: “There are currently 16,337 young people on an Apprenticeship in the East of England and we want to encourage more young people to consider doing an Apprenticeship which will provide them with good training, career prospects and a good wage. The Directory of Apprenticeships should be one of the first points of call for young people wanting to explore the opportunities Apprenticeships present.”

The Directory of Apprenticeships is available online at:

www.apprenticeships.org.uk/list/apprenticeshipsdirectory

Hard copies of the directory are available via Connexions or by calling 01727 733506.

Employers and young people interested in finding out more about Apprenticeships should log onto <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk>.

Picture caption: The LSC roadshow team visited schools with hard-hitting and encouraging messages about how achieving a minimum set of qualifications can open the door to better jobs, training and money.

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Notes to editors:

Learning and Skills Council

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

Visit www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands or call 0800 011 30 30 for more information.

Apprenticeships

- There are currently 16,337 young people on an Apprenticeship in the East of England:
 - Bedfordshire & Luton: 1,306
 - Cambridgeshire: 2,618
 - Essex: 4,306
 - Hertfordshire: 2,659
 - Norfolk: 2,562
 - Suffolk: 2,886

- They can choose from over 200 career paths in 80 different sectors of industry and commerce.
- Anyone aged 16 and above is eligible to complete an Apprenticeship.

- Apprenticeships provide individuals with a mixture of on and off-the-job training whilst being paid. For employers, Apprenticeships offer the opportunity to improve their businesses bottom line through the tailored, relevant training of highly motivated individuals.
- There are two levels of Apprenticeships:
 - 'Apprenticeships', equivalent to GCSE level, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 2; key skills and in some cases a technical certificate
 - 'Advanced Apprenticeships', equivalent to A-levels, incorporate a National Vocational Qualification to Level 3, key skills and a technical certificate

Research

Independent research conducted by Populus on behalf of the LSC, of 204 respondents based in England who were responsible for Apprenticeship recruitment in their companies. Telephone interviews were conducted between 7 January and 6 February 2008.