

National Apprenticeship Service launches

New research highlights the importance of Apprenticeships for the North West

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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 and 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 currently 180 Apprenticeships across 80 different industries and these 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.

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

In a recent survey commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) of the employers who employ apprentices in the North West, 89 per cent of businesses said apprentices helped to generate higher overall productivity. Seven tenths of employers surveyed believe their apprentices help them to be more competitive in their businesses (70 per cent).

New research also shows that more than three quarters (76 per cent) of apprentices in the North West, believe that without their Apprenticeship they would not be earning their current salary. The majority (93 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.

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

In addition, nine tenths of apprentices (90 per cent) who completed their Apprenticeship believe it has significantly benefited their career and life options.

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.”

ENDS

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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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Photo caption

'The Future is in their hands' - A selection of apprentices in industries ranging from construction to catering, beauty to business services, gathered today to launch the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). They were joined by Minister for Apprenticeships Lord Young, NAS CEO Simon Waugh, and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools and Learners, Sarah McCarthy-Fry.

Notes to editors

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.