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# Apprenticeships



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## Apprenticeships

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**Introduction**  
**Coco Khan***Hands-on learning and changing career paths*

**T**o many, university was once the only route to a professional career. But with the cost of a degree at its highest ever, how can young people get the training they need?

Apprenticeships offer a solution, allowing students to learn on the job while being paid, and last year more than 375,000 people enrolled. The government's apprenticeship programme, launched in 2015, aims to create 3m apprenticeships by 2020, but is unlikely to hit this target. The number of starts has dropped significantly, pointing the finger at the complexity of the apprenticeship business levy.

We take a look at employers and apprentices who have undertaken training programmes, as well as unusual apprenticeships, and hear from apprentices at companies such as Barclays and the BBC. We'll discuss how the diversity gap is being addressed and take a look at how funding works. Plus, we'll examine how the public sector is embracing apprenticeships, and hear from a leading advertising CEO on why she's proud to champion them. Whatever the sector, career paths as we know them are changing - and the rise of apprenticeships will form part of that.

*'Apprenticeships allow students to train and learn on the job while being paid, and last year more than 375,000 people enrolled'*

# Apprenticeship levy

## Saviour or hindrance?

Two years since being introduced, how well is the initiative working?

**Seb Murray**

**A**pprenticeships are an absolute boon for employers. They are a way to plug skills gaps, attract and retain talent, and bring fresh thinking into your firm. Little wonder, then, that more than half of companies polled by the Institute of Student Employers said they recruited apprentices last year, and apprentice and school-leaver recruitment was 50% higher than in 2017, a much faster rate than the growth in graduate hiring.

BT, for example, tripled annual apprentice recruitment between 2016/17 and 2017/18, from 350 to 1,100 apprentices. Ann Potterton, BT's head of apprenticeships, says there are several advantages to taking on young blood. "We get ambitious, driven, positive,

enthusiastic people who value the opportunity. They pay that back in many different ways."

One example is through their loyalty - BT retains 85% of its apprentices. Half of those are promoted at least once within three years, says Potterton. "We have CEOs [of individual business units] who started as apprentices."

Claire Paul, the BBC's director of leadership and new talent, sees apprenticeships as a way to bring crucial digital technology skills into the public service broadcaster. "Young apprentices have an enormous amount of innate digital talent and experience that is on a different scale to someone who is 40-50, for example - they grew up in a digital world," she says. "When I joined the BBC 30 years ago, if you weren't a university graduate, there was not a door to get in. That's incredibly - and refreshingly - different in today's world."

For apprentices themselves, there are abundant opportunities - without the debt associated with a traditional university route. Marjana Uddin, 20, does not regret cancelling her university place to

# Burning ambition fuels career switch to gas industry!

Think of an apprentice and a fresh-faced school leaver springs to mind. But for gas network Cadent, apprentices are also encouraged from those looking for a career change or a completely different career direction.

Ranked the UK's best company for apprentices to work for by job hunters' website TheJobCrowd, Cadent delivers gas to 11 million customers via a 132,000-kilometre network of pipes.

It takes an army of engineers to keep the gas flowing. Cadent recruits some 50 apprentices a year and runs a well-respected graduate scheme and engineering training programmes.

**David Walters was 32 when he joined Cadent as an apprentice First Call Officer. As the first engineer on the scene of a gas emergency, his role is to make the situation safe.**

David began a degree in theatre studies but soon found university wasn't for him. After working as a technician, installing satellite TV systems, he wanted a job with prospects.

"I had a good job but it wasn't leading anywhere. It was great finding a company like Cadent that was willing to put a bit of trust in me and valued my previous experiences," he says.

The two-and-a-half year apprenticeship combines classroom and workshop learning with practical, on-the-job experience.

"The apprenticeship was amazing. Unlike university, you've got a job at the end of the course and you earn while you learn," David explains.

"I liked the fact that you applied what you'd learnt in the classroom in real life. My manager and colleagues have been really supportive and I was able to use skills I'd learnt through my previous job."

David qualified in October with a Distinction.

"By re-training, I've tripled the wages of my previous job and the job satisfaction is amazing. We're known as the fourth emergency service. At the end of the day you know you've kept people safe.

"Cadent have already started developing me and I'm looking forward to a career with the company," he adds.



For more information on apprenticeships with Cadent go to: [Cadentgas.com/careers](https://www.cadentgas.com/careers) and follow us on Facebook @cadentcareers

**Cadent**  
Your Gas Network

▼ Marjana Uddin cancelled her place at university to become an apprentice paralegal

PHOTOGRAPH: BBC

become an apprentice paralegal at the BBC in 2016. After two years on the scheme in London, she started on the broadcaster's solicitor degree apprenticeship, which pays her salary, plus university fees.

She'll finish the six-year scheme in 2024 with a bachelor's degree in law and will take the solicitors qualifying examination (SQE). Uddin says she's satisfied with the workplace training she's received. "I have exposure to legal drafting, research and quite high-profile cases and deals."

For instance, she worked on the production agreement for The Misadventures of Romesh Ranganathan, a BBC TV series. "You get so much more exposure [than university students]," says Uddin. "You really have the upper hand."

Yet, the number of apprenticeship starts in 2017/18 plunged by a quarter year-on-year to 375,800. Business blames the complexity and rigidity of the apprenticeship levy. Introduced in 2017, the levy makes employers with a pay bill of more than £3m each year set aside 0.5% of their payroll for training.

Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, says employers need greater scope to spend levy cash on training tailored to bespoke needs. Apprenticeships are based

**'BT retains 85% of its apprentices - we have CEOs who started at the company at this level'**

Ann Potterton  
BT

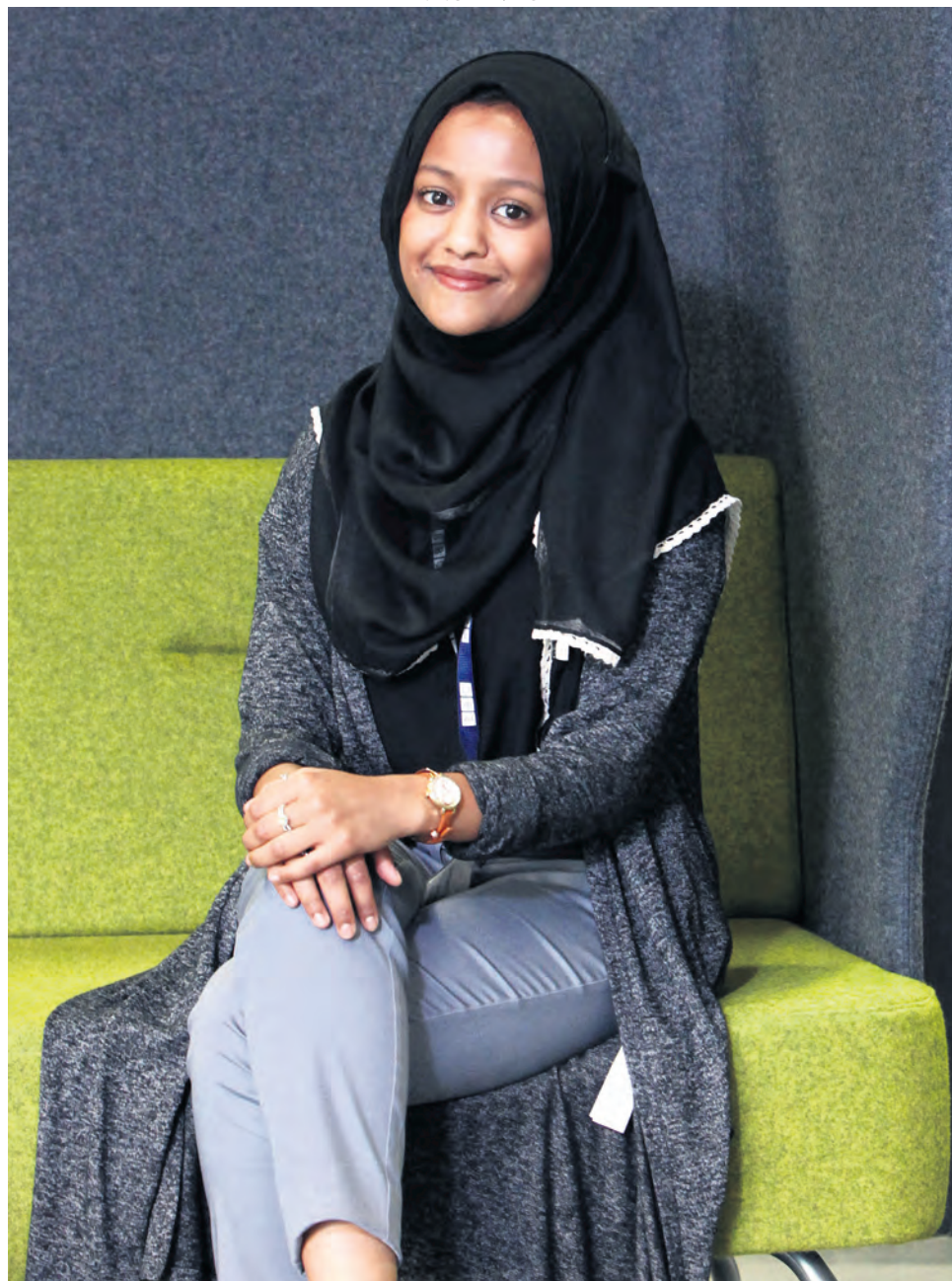
on standards created by employer groups, but Dawe says the approval process for new frameworks is much slower than it should be.

The levy was billed as a way to create 3m apprenticeships by 2020 and improve the UK's poor productivity record. But employers warn the target looks unlikely to be met.

To increase uptake, the government has rolled out substantial reforms. Big employers can [from April] invest up to 25% of their levy funds to support apprentices in their supply chain. And the amount small firms spend on apprenticeships will be halved to 5%, with the government paying the remaining 95%.

Edwin Morgan, the Institute of Directors' policy director, says the changes are likely to help tackle the levy's problems, but there should be a drive to raise awareness of the reforms to help increase apprenticeship starts. Employers in England spent fewer than 10% of their levy funds in the scheme's first year. Unspent money is lost after 24 months.

As awareness grows, Neil Carberry, CEO of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, is confident that a swelling number of employers will start to reap the benefits of apprenticeships. "They are really very effective at bringing skills into a business and launching great careers."



### Key facts about apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are the best of both worlds: they combine hands-on workplace training with academic schooling, setting you up for a successful career.

Apprenticeships are available in virtually every sector you can think of: from business and engineering to healthcare, law, media and more. "Apprenticeships are on fire right now," says Stephen Isherwood, chief executive at the Institute of Student Employers. "There is so much variety to choose from, and new programmes are constantly being created."

Supermarket chain Aldi, for example, employs more than 800 apprentices in the UK each year across the company, including in stores and at distribution centres.

Employers offer apprenticeships at four different levels, for more than 1,500 different job roles in 170 industries, usually lasting for between one and five years. Intermediate apprenticeships are considered equivalent to five GCSE passes. Advanced apprenticeships are comparable to two A-levels. Higher apprenticeships are equivalent to a foundation, or more advanced degree.

Degree apprenticeships lead to a bachelor's or master's degree. They are run by both training providers

and employers that pay a salary and the apprentice's tuition fees.

Kate Self, 20, is a BT TV and digital media degree apprentice, based at London's BT Tower. She says: "I've got broadcast experience, I've got to see different bits of the business, and I've built my confidence, without getting into university debt."

The current minimum wage rate for an apprentice under 19, or in their first year - regardless of age - is £3.70 per hour. Those 19 or over who have finished the first year are entitled to the national minimum wage, which from April 2019 is £6.15 for those aged 18-20, £7.70 if you're 21-24, or £8.21 per hour for those 25 and above.

The best apprenticeships, however, typically pay annual salaries of between £17,000-£20,000, but competition is extremely fierce. Intermediate apprenticeships usually have no entry requirements, but higher level programmes generally require academic qualifications and/or some work experience.

Richard Thornton, communications director at Aldi UK, advises applicants to be hard-working, motivated and genuine if they want to be successful: "Let your personality shine through."

### Comment Sue Frogley



*'It's important our workforce reflects who we're advertising to'*

I am always very transparent about the reason we started thinking about an apprenticeship scheme: we were prompted by the government levy. The levy is an additional tax put on employers of a certain size, but they can avoid paying it if they invest the money into training apprenticeships. That's what began the journey.

But [as a business] we also had a need to address our diversity issue in the workforce, and we hoped these new recruits could help. The industry has a lot of men, and is in need of more black, Asian and minority (BAME) employees as well as a greater age difference. Advertising can attract a certain type - well educated, middle England-raised - but that's not our only target audience in advertising. It's really important that our workforce reflects the kind of people that we're advertising to.

We took 11 apprentices in the first cohort. We call them our "pioneers". We didn't want them to be called apprentices because it didn't send the right message. All of our pioneers are guaranteed a job by the end of the 18-month scheme.

The first group were effectively selected by pot luck because we were still learning as a business how to run such a scheme. By 2018, we increased it to 20, as we'd worked out where to find prospective talent. We introduced new assessment criteria and scrapped CVs. After all, a CV is a summary of experience, but at that age it's unlikely to have much. We wanted to judge them on potential, not experience. We also partnered up with an organisation called WhiteHat, an apprentice scheme support provider. That's when it really took off. This year, I've got 40 coming in.

Employers thinking about an apprenticeship scheme should understand that they often lack confidence. They've not been to university and they haven't worked much (if at all). We set up a special training programme for our new recruits. That's been a learning curve for us, too. At first, we offered 50 hours training in the first two months, but that was overwhelming. Now they do 50 hours over the whole year, alongside experiences and industry visits to key partners such as Google and Facebook. We also train them on how to behave in a professional environment and give them "outside the box" thinking tasks; so we give them a real business challenge that we're facing and they have a go at coming up with a solution.

And they certainly rise to the challenge. We have one apprentice working in our new business team. He was in a pitch helping with the administration of the process. Everybody was brainstorming ideas when this young man spoke up and delivered two fantastic pitch-winning ideas. Just by being in the room, he made such an impact. That was a lovely moment and there have been many.

Setting up a scheme isn't easy and we had to push for it within our organisation. Some of my leadership team said: "I'd rather have a grad because I won't have to teach them how to work in an office." But we pushed the diversity point and, although I didn't mandate it, I certainly championed it.

We often have breakfast with the apprentices, who are bursting with energy. It wasn't long until the senior team started to see their value. As an employer, you get payback from the investment and you get huge loyalty. Our pioneers love the company and we think - though it's not proven yet - that they will stay longer. And, most importantly, they bring something truly very different to the organisation.

Sue Frogley is UK chief executive of Publicis Media

*'We train apprentices on how to behave in a professional environment and give them "outside the box" thinking tasks'*

# Funding

## 'I didn't want to leave home and have no money at university'

At a time when universities have permission to increase tuition fees every year, getting paid to learn a skill appeals to many young people

Liz Lightfoot

Apprentices don't pay a penny for their training and get paid while they learn, which means that, unlike university students, they have no debts to repay when they finish studying.

So if you become an apprentice, who pays for your courses? Skilled workers are of such importance to the economy that the government and employers fund them, helped by the apprenticeship levy - a tax on large employers who pay 0.5% of their pay bill if it is over £3m a year into a central training fund.

Each apprenticeship comes with a price tag - an agreed maximum amount that can be claimed from the fund for the education and training part of it, depending on how long it takes and the level of skill involved. A business administrator apprenticeship, for example, lasts 18 months and comes with £5,000 towards training costs. A three-year apprenticeship in event rigging attracts £9,000. There's nothing to stop employers providing extra training on top, and some do.

Levy-paying companies can claim money back towards their training costs from the fund. Non-levy paying companies and organisations get most of it paid, but must contribute 10%, soon to fall to 5%.

None of this need worry apprentices, as it is all worked out before the jobs are advertised. As an apprentice, a fifth of your time will be spent on education, either at a college, university or training organisation. Some big firms even put on their own courses.

You won't miss out in the pay packet, however, because employers must pay their apprentices for the time they spend in study. Minimum apprenticeship wages are fixed by the government. For the first year, it's £3.70 an hour, going up to £3.90 in April. It rises in the second and subsequent years based on age - £4.20 (£4.35 in April) an hour for under 18s; £5.90 (£6.15 in April) for 18-20 year olds, and £7.38 (£7.70 from April) for 21- to 24-year-olds, and £7.83 (£8.21 from April) for those 25 and over.

Most young apprentices live with their families, and the money is

*'Apprenticeships are great because you are learning and getting paid, and that's a big motivation'*

Jamie Clarke  
Apprentice plasterer

enough for some independence and a social life, they say. Apprentice Jamie Clarke, 22, who is training to be a plasterer making ornate cornices and centrepieces, gets £300 a week in his third year as a fibrous plasterer apprentice with Thomas & Wilson.

"I live with my parents and I'm given £20 a week by the company towards travel expenses, which helps," he says. He spends one day a week at West London College on both the practical and theoretical side of the craft. "If anyone is thinking of doing an apprenticeship, it's the right thing to do because you are learning as well as getting paid, and that's a big motivation. Plus, you don't have any debts at the end of it," he says.

In fact, some employers pay above the minimum rate, especially in high-cost areas such as London. Some help apprentices out with expenses, and companies such as the international logistics firm Kuehne + Nagel pay a bonus for each year successfully completed. After the first year, British Airways, for example, pays its apprentices £7.38 an hour, rising to £7.70 in April, regardless of their ages, with an additional rate for those who are 25 and over.

The pay needs to be competitive in order to attract good candidates, says David Warnes, the managing director who leads apprenticeships at West London College. "When we negotiate with employers, we ask them to think about the high cost of living in London and we encourage them to pay the London living wage of £10.55 an hour, though not all do," he says. Of the 500 apprentices the college supports, nine out of 10 will be offered and accept full-time jobs with their employer.

International freight forwarding apprentice Jay Williams, 19, joined Kuehne + Nagel on a two-year apprenticeship when he was 18. "I didn't want to leave home and have no money at university," he says. "Kuehne + Nagel offered a starting salary above the national minimum wage and a great bonus after completing each year," he adds. "I am currently living at home, therefore the money I earn from the apprenticeship programme is more than enough for me," he says.



## Diversity

# The steady rise in promoting equality

With new business initiatives being introduced to boost diversity, the future looks brighter for BAME groups

Seb Murray

In theory, apprenticeships could help make Britain a fairer society. They could provide an alternative route for young people to gain an education and progress through society without being saddled with huge student debt. Where almost half of young people in England go on to higher education, the competition for coveted professional jobs grows

fiercer, so it is perhaps unsurprising that those with social advantages tend to prevail. In 2018, privately educated young people secured 57% of graduate scheme places, despite private schools only serving 7% of the country.

Yet, even within the world of apprenticeships, inequality persists. Research shows minority ethnic individuals are less likely to be successful in their apprenticeship applications than their white counterparts. And although there were six times as many apprenticeship starts among people from minority ethnic groups in 2016/17 compared with 2002/03, increasing from 8,900 to 55,300, it still falls short of being representative (BAME apprentices make up 11% of the total apprenticeship starts).



► After the first year, British Airways pays its apprentices £7.38 an hour

PHOTOGRAPH:  
BRITISH AIRWAYS



It's why, in 2017, the government established the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network (ADCN), to encourage more people from underrepresented groups to consider apprenticeships. Ethics aside, there is a pressing business case for this: research has shown that companies with high levels of gender or ethnic diversity are more likely to have financial returns above their national industry average. Claire Findlay, head of technology apprenticeship programme at Barclays, says: "To serve a diverse customer base, our workforce has to be able to relate to it."

Some progress has been made. In 2016/17, people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, for example, accounted for 50,500 of all apprenticeship starts, an increase of 10,000 starts from 2011/12. "[But] we can't take our foot off the pedal," says Helen Grant, ADCN's chair. "Many communities don't view apprenticeships as a viable alternative to traditional academic routes," says Grant, explaining that minority groups potentially lack access to networks that could help them succeed.

"We have to get the message out about how fantastic apprenticeships can be," she adds. For example, according to the Department for

▲ *The number of apprenticeship starts among people from minority ethnic groups rose from 8,900 in 2002 to 55,300 in 2016/17*

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

**'In order to serve a diverse customer base, our workforce has to be able to relate to it'**

**Claire Findlay**  
Barclays

## Equality challenges

# 88%

*The percentage of apprenticeship starts with a white background in 2017/18*

# 42,000

*The number of starts by apprentices with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in 2017/18*

Source: Department for Education

Education (DfE), 83% of apprentices say the training has boosted their career prospects.

Apprenticeship providers are also taking action. Around a quarter of BAE Systems' apprentices were female in 2018, up from around 5% a decade ago. The company wants to reach 30% by 2020, but Richard Hamer, education and early careers director, says: "There are powerful societal factors that give the perception that engineering is for men only; not women."

So, in 2005, BAE Systems created the Schools Roadshow. Supported by the Royal Air Force (RAF) and Royal Navy, in 2017 the roadshow promoted Stem careers to more than 130,000 children at 420 UK schools, using interactive games. "We need to start early to change hearts and minds," says Hamer.

Abigail Stansfield, 19, an advanced engineering apprentice at BAE Systems, says: "I've learned so much, getting my hands dirty in all areas of engineering, including machining, electrical and toolmaking. I am very well prepared for the future."

One challenge for firms embracing less obvious forms of diversity is disclosure. Many employees don't reveal their personal information. So it can be extremely difficult to measure progress.

To promote openness and careers, and support its LGBT community, the RAF established the LGBT+ Freedom Network. Group captain Stephen Dharamraj says: "People think the armed forces is a macho world. They don't want to disclose who they really are. That's absolutely fine. We don't force them. But we want them to feel fully comfortable in being themselves."

This is a goal of Barclays, too. In 2016, the bank created Able to Enable, a programme that has supported 25 people with physical or mental disabilities through a paid, 13-week internship. A dozen of those were hired by the bank.

The programme gave Michael Animashaun, 29, who has schizophrenia, the confidence to begin a Barclays higher apprenticeship in London last year. "I felt enthusiastic and ready to bring my whole self to Barclays," he says.

Some 8% of the bank's apprentices identify as having a disability, 19% identify as being from a black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) background, and 46% are female. Clearly, employers are embracing diversity in all its forms, and initiatives such as those from Barclays, BAE and the RAF seem likely to produce positive results.

► *Attracting more female workers is becoming a priority for many businesses*

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

## Comment Julie Newton



# Closing the gap between men and women in STEM careers



**A**pprentices are the future of our business, and it is important that we attract applications from a wide range of backgrounds. United Utilities provides water and wastewater services to everyone across the north-west of England, one of the regions with the greatest concentrations of deprived areas.

Our workforce needs to be representative of the customers we serve. A diverse workforce also brings new ideas and ways of thinking to the business.

Our apprenticeship programme was established in 2010, which recruits around 35 people each year into programmes at various academic levels, from GCSE level to degree level. We provide training in our own training centre and have recently achieved a "good" Ofsted rating.

Attracting more women is a priority and a challenge for us, as historically many young women may have seen Stem (science, technology, engineering and maths) careers as predominantly male occupations. Approximately 22% of the energy and utilities sector's employees are women, compared with 47% of the overall UK workforce.

Around 23% of our apprentices currently are female, a figure we would like to improve. That's why we work hard to inspire young people to pick Stem career paths, regardless of their gender or background.

For example, we work with children from local schools with high proportions of students who are eligible for free school meals, a traditional measure of poverty. Mentored by employees, the kids tackle a business challenge in teams, and then present their solutions to our senior managers, such as on the TV programme *Dragons' Den*. Some of the ideas the children come up with are phenomenal and they help our business.

At the start of the 2018 programme, 15% of the 60 school children who took part said they would consider a Stem career. After completing the programme, that proportion rose to 47%.

As part of our youth programme, we also go into job centres in the north-west to find young people who are not in education, employment or training. We offer them skills training over eight weeks to make them more employable, such as CV-writing and team-building exercises at a local army camp. Approximately 72 of the 90 youngsters to come through the programme over the past four years have secured employment. So we're very proud to say we're making a huge difference.

*Julie Newton is organisation development manager at United Utilities*

*'Attracting more women is a priority and a challenge for us, as historically women saw Stem careers as predominantly male'*



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Apprentice



# Stem education

## Defeating age-old misconceptions

Just 11% of Stem apprentices are women. But 'taking away the fear factor' could help raise the profile of Stem careers

**Richard Doughty**

**H**ow to encourage more young people, particularly female students, to study science, technology, engineering and maths (Stem) subjects and go on to apprenticeships is an ever-growing problem.

UK businesses are desperate to fill thousands of vacant Stem-related jobs, a situation exacerbated by the increasing "Brexit" effect on the number of skilled workers from other EU countries. According to research from Stem Learning, the university-based and government-backed national organisation set up to provide Stem education and careers support, the UK industry is spending £1.5bn per annum on closing a shortfall last year estimated to be around 173,000 skilled workers.

"Employer involvement is key," says chief executive Yvonne Baker, "and not just in providing careers information and talks, but also in helping teachers show young people the ways in which Stem subjects contribute to the world today and how they can be part of that. That's why we help schools and employers work together sustainably - creating partnerships that last."

Stem Learning sets up collaborations with mainstream schools and finds businesses that want to support and then fund them. It runs a national scheme to reverse steadily falling numbers of less academic GCSE pupils taking up Stem subjects and then apprenticeships.

"We need to focus on students missing out on opportunities they don't know exist," says Rachael Green, lead teacher for a group of four secondary schools in the north-east of England taking part in the scheme. "Pupils don't see Stem subjects as relevant if they are not going to take A-levels."

The schools have already notched up 340 hours of training last year for at least a dozen secondary teachers on how to give careers and application advice. Training continues until July this year.

The earlier that children (particularly girls, who still lag well behind boys in taking up Stem subjects at secondary school) are shown the fun side of engineering, the more likely it is to spark their long-term interest. It's a view shared by the University of Warwick, a

leading supporter of Stem subjects across the education sector, which sponsors two successful university technical colleges (UTCs) and its own WMG (Warwick Manufacturing Group) faculty that champions and supports young engineers, scientists and technologists through "research, education and knowledge transfer". Last year, it held an engineering day for all the family, including hands-on activities involving reassembling engines, a bicycle-powered smoothie maker, 3D printing, and brain-controlled Scalextric races.

In fact, Warwick is a major backer of two UTCs in Coventry and Solihull, dedicated to teaching Stem subjects to students aged 14-19. The WMG academies in Coventry (graded "good" by Ofsted) and Solihull are supported by key manufacturers, including Aston Martin and Jaguar Land Rover. One of the Coventry UTC's key academic results last year was 15% of all leavers going on to take to degree apprenticeships at universities across the UK.

Meanwhile, further education (FE) colleges remain undaunted by the hardest of tasks: convincing cohorts of often underachieving 16- to 18-year-olds that they can study subjects they consider are only for higher academic achievers. Barking

**'Part of our remit is to convince underachieving students that they can do science or coding'**

**Errol Seaman**  
BDC

and Dagenham College (BDC) has one of only four specialist FE Stem provision centres nationally.

"Part of our remit is to convince them subliminally that, yes, they can do engineering, science, coding. We take them out of the classroom, deliver the subjects differently and facilitate learning in other college subjects," says Errol Seaman, Stem development lead at BDC.

"For instance, a sports teacher had students studying anatomy and physiology who could not differentiate between ligaments and tendons in muscles. We got them to dissect chicken legs. We also use gamification and introduce teamwork and competition. It's hands-on learning."

In fact, the college is seeing its biggest growth in Stem apprenticeships. "We're bucking the trend," says principal Yvonne Kelly. "We're making Stem subjects real and taking away the fear factor."

Encouraging more female students to take up Stem subjects



and apprenticeships is another huge challenge for colleges and universities - just 11% of Stem apprentices are women. There are simple things colleges and universities can do to make a change. Farnborough College of Technology, for example, has videoed female students talking about their day-to-day courses during the annual National Women in Engineering day (this year on 23 June), focusing on the subject rather than delivery method. The college also features its female apprentices on the front of its apprenticeship brochure.

Often it is a case of merely removing misconceptions about what engineering and other Stem sectors are like to work in. Images of oily rags and sweaty bodies under cars are a far cry from the clean environment now common in most Stem orientated businesses.

Awards such as DevelopHER, an annual not-for-profit initiative recognising women working in East Anglia's technology sector, play a key role in raising the profile of Stem career opportunities for women.

There is still a very long way to go, but campaigning organisation Wise (women in Stem workforce) shows that significant progress is being made: 44,000 more women were working in core Stem occupations in 2018 compared with the previous year, pushing the total to more than 900,000 for the first time. Wise has a target of 1m by 2020.

▲ *The University of Warwick aims to attract female attention by showing apprentices the fun side of engineering*  
PHOTOGRAPH: WMG ACADEMY

### Top tips for apprentices

#### Research your target sector

Visit workplaces you are interested in and attend company open days. You only get a feel for a workplace once you've tried it - many applicants pick a placement thinking they'll enjoy it and then find they don't, so it's a great way of identifying the right career. Read online reviews of what it's like working for certain employers on [glassdoor.co.uk](http://glassdoor.co.uk) - it carries thousands of reviews of different companies. You can also visit [findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch/](http://findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch/).

#### Follow your passion

If you are interested in a certain sector, make sure you follow it up. Check out as many job options as you can to find the right fit for yourself.

#### Find out employers' level of support

What qualifications and skills will you gain? Are they transferrable if you want to change disciplines? Find out if the employer is committed to allowing you time off from work to attend college or university and to finish assignments. Will you be able to move around departments? Are apprentices paid a fair wage and will it gradually increase to reflect your growing experience?

#### Have a strong work ethic

Show you are work-ready by proving you have done your research on the employer and have gained work experience. You'll start off being set minor tasks and then be encouraged with greater responsibilities when your colleagues start to trust your skills.

#### Think outside the box

Boost your confidence - and chances - at interviews by taking in a portfolio of your work experience and achievements. It will show your dedication.



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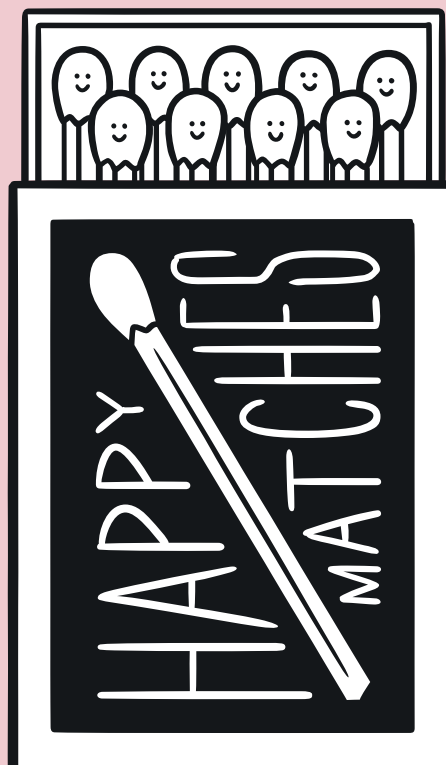
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# Degree levels

## Studying for the best of both worlds

Described as a 'magic card', higher or degree apprenticeships offer students a mix of hands-on and academic experience

Neil Merrick

**L**eaving full-time education at 18 is not always the best move, especially for those seeking a high-powered career.

But for young people such as Nadia Johnson and Jessica Wong, software engineer apprentices at French electrical systems firm Thales, it meant a guaranteed job without missing out on university.

Having joined a pilot course at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) in 2015 while starting work at the company's Stockport office, they are on the verge of graduating with degree apprenticeships in digital and technology solutions.

The two students generally spend one day per week at MMU and the remainder at work. Wong, who considered a full-time degree while at sixth form college, says: "For me, it was a no-brainer being able to study for four years without any student debt."

For Johnson, a major attraction is putting into practice what she learns at university. "It's good to get an academic approach and see how that corresponds to industry," she says.

Since 2015, the number of degree apprenticeships (equivalent to a bachelor's or master's degree) has grown considerably. This year, MMU has more than 1,000 student apprentices from a total of 218 employers taking degree or master's qualifications.

Liz Gorb, the university's director of apprenticeships, describes them as "a magic card" that lead to a degree with ongoing work experience. "For school leavers, it means they can hit the ground running," she says.

Depending on the course, student apprentices may attend university one day a week or in blocks of a few weeks. They mostly study alongside apprentices from other companies, though Asda and McDonald's run

**'People now look at apprenticeships as an alternative route, rather than a lesser route'**

Claire Findlay  
Barclays

courses at MMU solely for their staff.

Government figures show 5,780 people began a degree apprenticeship (equivalent to level 6) in 2017/18, while 650 began a master's apprenticeship (level 7).

Not all level 6 or 7 apprenticeships are equivalent to a degree or master's degree, as employers stipulate what is required in their sector when they set apprenticeship standards. About three quarters of the 73 standards approved at level 6 or 7 lead to a HE-type qualification.

Barclays, which last year launched the first master's apprenticeship in leadership for banking, also sends apprentices to MMU. Claire Findlay, head of Barclays' apprenticeship programmes, says people without a traditional degree can access more career paths. "Parents and teachers are now looking at apprenticeships as an alternative route, rather than a lesser route," she adds.

For employees over 25, a degree apprenticeship can help with a career change. Adam Cramp thought he had missed out on university when he left school at 17 without A-levels. Now 28, he studies at Buckinghamshire New University while working as an apprentice nurse at Broadmoor Hospital.

Cramp is one of 14 nurses employed by West London NHS Trust who started a degree apprenticeship last April. The qualification takes three years, the same as a bachelor's degree, but allows students to earn a wage and, he says, gain twice as much hands-on experience.

Along with other apprentices, Adam spends six or seven weeks in classes before returning to the hospital. "It can be quite challenging, but I love it," he says. "You go from studying to jumping back into work, but there is nothing I would rather do."

Bucks New University has been offering degree apprenticeships in nursing and other subjects for around a year. Karen Buckwell-Nutt, dean of the school of nursing and allied health, says they appeal to adults seeking a new challenge. "The proposition of leaving a paid job and taking on a student loan of £9,250 can be really daunting."

Some training providers team up with universities to offer degree apprenticeships. Avado, a specialist in digital learning, is recruiting for a master's apprenticeship in data analytics at the University of Buckingham later this year.

Phil Hullah, deputy chair of Avado, says people can gain a flagship qualification along with wider business skills. "Higher level data scientists can be very narrow and very deep," he says. "We want to broaden people so that they're business ready."

▼ Donna Hagan-Grenfell went back to studying almost 30 years after leaving school at 17

PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL LECKIE



## Experience

### 'I now use different techniques to engage with colleagues'

The opportunity to gain a master's apprenticeship helps boost the careers of long-time professionals

Neil Merrick

**H**aving left school at 17 without any A-levels, Donna Hagan-Grenfell never expected to be studying for a master's degree nearly 30 years later.

But when her employer, Barclays, invited her to become one of its first staff to gain a master's apprenticeship in leadership, she jumped at the opportunity. "It's brilliant because I'm learning again," she says. "I love the brain stretch that it gives you. I'm thinking in a way that I've never been taught to think before."

The apprenticeship, equivalent to an MSc in business and strategic leadership, was launched by Barclays last year in conjunction with Cranfield School of Management and is the first of its kind in banking.

Hagan-Grenfell, 45, is a community banking director and one of 30 employees taking the qualification, covering areas such as organisational behaviour and strategy. She spends three days at Cranfield every three months for "study blocks" linked to each of the six modules within the apprenticeship.

Most of the time she is left alone to research topics and write assignments, either in her own time or study time provided by Barclays, which gives her at least half a day off each week. Her husband and two young children are also supportive. "It's intense in a positive way," she says. "You have to be very structured."

Three branch managers who report to Hagan-Grenfell are working towards degree apprenticeships, while a fourth has already gained one. It was after seeing the way their understanding of leadership grew that she recognised the value of taking the master's apprenticeship, which takes around two and a half years.

She is already taking a different approach to business planning, with more emphasis on research and leadership models. "There is a focus on leadership development," she explains. "I traditionally went with what felt right. Now I use different techniques to engage with colleagues."

After leaving school with GCSEs and AS levels, Hagan-Grenfell worked in hotels and an estate agency before taking her first job in financial services with Santander. To some extent, she regretted missing out on further or higher education.

Having joined Barclays 13 years ago, she travels between branches in the east of England. Looking ahead, she recognises she will eventually hold a qualification that could open doors for her career in the future.

For now, though, she remains relaxed about what lies ahead. "Whatever happens, I will be a better leader at the end of the day," she says.



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Apprenticeships

# Unusual courses

## New ways of shaking up the system

The UK is seeing a flurry of new apprenticeships for those whose interests lie outside of the box

David Benady

**R**epairing vintage cars, learning about metal recycling or studying for advanced accountancy exams are some of the new apprenticeships on offer under the government's new training regime.

A drive to widen the appeal of apprenticeships has led to the creation of hundreds of new courses. There are still plenty of traditional apprenticeships on offer such as engineering, building and hairdressing. On top of these has come a flood of newly created apprenticeships designed for a changing world.

Fancy learning the art of paper making or how to be a live event rigger setting up the lighting and sound systems at gigs? How about a career in nuclear health monitoring or installing smart meters? Training is available on the job for these and many other careers.

Today's apprenticeships also encompass professions such as nursing, teaching and senior management, which were once accessible only through advanced study. New degree-level apprenticeships have become

*"There's so much I've learnt from the course that I'm putting into practice at work"*

Liam Murray  
Apprentice recycler



available in many areas. Learning while earning means trainees can avoid getting saddled with hefty student debts while still getting a shot at a professional career.

For instance, a three-year level 7 accountancy apprenticeship, equivalent to a master's degree, can lead to chartered accountant status.

Under a shake-up in the way apprenticeships are created, employers band together and work with training providers to design the courses their industries need. They then seek approval from the Institute for Apprenticeships.

Some 400 apprenticeships have been launched over the past two years under this system. Many are reworked versions of existing apprenticeships. But some are completely new.

The UK's brewers have worked together to create an 18-month brewing apprenticeship offering level 4 training, equivalent to just below degree level. Brigid Simmonds, chief executive of the British Beer and Pub Association, which helped design the course, says large and small brewers worked together for a year to create the apprenticeship. The process was chaired by brewer Brewhouse & Kitchen with contributions from training provider HIT.

With some 2,000 breweries in the UK, there is strong demand for qualified brewers. Simmonds believes there will be up to 150 apprentices taking the course at any one time. Apprentices learn on the job at a brewery and take time out for training. Those studying with HIT attend six two-day residential workshops run by breweries at the University of Nottingham, which has an international centre for brewing science.

Apprentices can expect to progress to a master brewer's role. Simmonds says: "This is a serious and challenging degree, as brewing is a technical process, so candidates will have an interest in science. It is the quality of the product that drives the uniqueness of British beer and its reputation around the world - we are unique in offering draft ale. Brewing is a serious business and it requires real expertise."

Another freshly-minted apprenticeship is in metal recycling, which was created by the British Metals Recycling Association and some of the industry's biggest and most respected companies.

Liam Murray, 25, one of the first wave of apprentices on this new course, was already working at recycling firm Sackers when managers approached him to take the 18-month, level 1 apprenticeship. He has taken the opportunity to expand his knowledge of recycling,

► Hundreds of new courses, including organ making, have been introduced in a bid to widen the appeal of apprenticeships  
PHOTOGRAPH: ALAMY



learn more about the health and safety aspects of the job and to get a qualification in English and maths. "There's so much from the course that I'm putting into practice at work," he says. "I go up to Nuneaton in Warwickshire to study twice a month. Sackers pays me to go and stay in hotels." He takes two courses at Met Academy in Nuneaton, one for waste and metal recycling and the other for maths and English.

"The apprenticeship has made me look at other things that I could do, such as studying more health and safety courses to get more qualified. I'm also learning about general waste recycling. That's interesting and I might eventually move into the waste side of things," he says.

With dozens of fresh apprenticeships coming on stream, today's candidates can choose careers in burgeoning areas of industry where demand is expected to soar in the future.

**N**ot everyone is cut out for a conventional career. And there is no better route into an off-beat profession than on-the-job training through an apprenticeship. From repairing church organs and designing sails for racing yachts to bespoke saddle making and golf greenkeeping, apprenticeships can open doors to some seriously niche and unexpected careers.

Tom Sherreard is a former professional golfer who wanted to keep up his association with

the game, so he decided to take an apprenticeship in golf greenkeeping.

"I love the outdoors. I've been playing golf since I was about five and I don't know anything else, to be honest," he says. He took the newly-created level 2 apprenticeship in golf greenkeeping while working at the London Golf Club in Kent. He took on-the-job training at nearby Hadlow College.

"I'd have a guy from Hadlow College come once a month to check my progress and make sure I was doing what I had to. It was a two-year course, but I went through it in 14 months. At the end, you do a written exam and a practical exam and if you pass all of those then you are away.

"I am a level 2 qualified greenkeeper, I've got my certificate at home on the wall," he says. The job involves general maintenance, setting up the golf course for play and includes everything from cutting the grass, raking bunkers, cutting fairways, ensuring the health of the grass and putting holes in.

With more than 2,500 golf courses in Britain, job opportunities aren't particularly difficult to come by.

*"I love the outdoors. I've been playing golf since I was five and I don't know anything else, to be honest"*

Tom Sherreard  
Apprentice greenkeeper

Sail making is another niche area. Solo Sails Sailmakers in Penzance has employed three apprentice sailmakers over the years. The company's owner, Andrew Wood, says the trainees learn about the entire process, from designing sails to cutting them out and putting them together. They learn how to use a computer-controlled cutting machine. But he struggles to find candidates for the apprenticeship. "It's an unusual skill to go for. People think there might not be much future in sail making," he says. Sailing has the reputation as an exclusive sport only for the rich, he says, which may put people off.

For those who fancy spending time at church, there is a good career to be had in organ building. This involves building and restoring pipe organs, which feature in hundreds of churches, cathedrals and public auditoriums. Organ builders also repair, maintain and tune existing organs. The Institute of British Organ Building has worked with the industry to create a new three-year, level 3 apprenticeship standard for the profession. Most organ building apprenticeships are run by employers and the newly-designed standard is yet to get off the ground. It involves working with materials such as wood, leather, tin and lead. Health and safety is a concern, as work is often done at height and there are issues with exposure to loud noises.

For more information, visit [instituteforapprenticeships.org](http://instituteforapprenticeships.org)

## Experience

# 'By the end of my three years I'll be able to put a coat together from scratch'

Apprenticeships aren't just for plumbers or engineers any more - courses such as tailoring are a breath of fresh air

David Benady

Few of us get the chance to have our clothes made to measure, but in London's Savile Row, bespoke tailoring is thriving. The traditional skills involved in cutting and tailoring bespoke jackets, coats and trousers take years to learn. Masters of the trade must pass these skills down to the next generation.

Zee Mészáros, 31, is an apprentice coat maker at Savile Row's Gieves and Hawkes, which was founded in 1771 and is one of the world's oldest bespoke clothiers. Mészáros started her training in August 2018, working with veteran coat maker Andrew Gomez, who supervises and guides her work. The apprenticeship will last between three to four years.

After coming to London from her native Hungary six years ago, she took a bespoke tailoring course at Newham College, then jumped at an opportunity of an apprenticeship. "When I was younger I wanted to be a fashion designer, then someone

*'At Newham College I realised bespoke tailoring is what I want to do for the rest of my life'*

Zee Mészáros  
Apprentice tailor

said if I like making and want to gain a bit more knowledge, why don't I go to Newham College? There, I realised that bespoke tailoring is what I want to do and can do it for the rest of my life," she says.

Bespoke tailoring involves two steps: a cutter measures up the client, discusses what they are looking for, creates the designs and hands over the process to a tailor. This will either be a coat maker who marks up, cuts and stitches jackets, waistcoats and coats, or a trouser maker.

"My master shows me everything from the beginning to the finish, so by the end of my three years I will be able to put a coat together from scratch," she says. "It's physical work, you are on your feet for eight hours, bending over a table, concentrating on making little even stitches and measuring."

Mészáros will start a level 5 higher apprenticeship in tailoring - equivalent to a foundation degree - once she is up to speed. She hopes to continue working at the company after qualifying. "It's just a really good environment. I love it," she says. "It's an art form," she explains. "You are making something by hand. We've got some returning clients who like to meet the coat maker and the trouser maker and say thank you to them and to the cutters. There's an extremely good relationship with the clients and the cutters, everyone is very well looked after."

▼ Zee Mészáros will become a tailor at the end of her apprenticeship

PHOTOGRAPH: CAMILLA GREENWELL



## Experience

# 'I'll set up my own business one day and go out in my van'

For horse-loving Brits, farriery is an increasingly popular choice among apprentices

David Benady

Farriery, the craft of shoeing horses, may seem a novel choice for a life's work. But it is an immensely popular apprenticeship that attracts hundreds of applications. The British are a nation of animal lovers and the chance of working with horses in the open air has a powerful pull. With nearly half a million horse-owning households in the UK, many children have grown up riding horses, and it is a popular hobby.

"It's extremely competitive," says Alex Bradbury, who started his four-year farriery apprenticeship in June 2015 with Huw Dyer, an

established farrier in Northallerton, North Yorkshire.

Bradbury struggled to pursue his dream and get taken on as an apprentice farrier after finishing his A-levels. "I sent out a hundred letters with stamp-addressed envelopes inside and only got one reply," he says. That reply was a rejection. But he followed up the letters with phone calls, and was eventually taken on by Dyer. "It's what I wanted to do when I was little," he says. He grew up around horses and learned to ride as a child. He used to watch the farrier at work. "I did all the sciences at A-levels then was meant to go to university. But I decided I would do what I wanted, so I did my pre-farrier course and got my job with Dyer."

Farriers need to be registered with the Farriers Registration Council and apprentices must take a pre-farrier course. The job involves preparing horses' hooves, fitting shoes and working with a hot forge to make the

horse shoes out of metal. Hooves are like human fingernails and hair, they grow and need paring back to make them suitable for metal shoeing. The farrier also identifies common ailments of the hoof and adapts shoes for horses that suffer from them. But it can be a dangerous job working underneath a horse.

"I've had quite a lot of kicks," says Bradbury. "I've been kicked in the face - I went blind in one eye for about two hours, it wasn't too bad, I went to hospital and they glued my eye back together and they sent me on my way."

Having an understanding of the psychology of horses is vital. "You are quite often in a box with a horse you don't know, with no one else there for an hour at a time. You have got to be able to pick up on signs if something is not right with them," he says. "You just have to accept that you don't have any control over what some horses do - if they want their foot back they have their foot back."

Farriers are required to wear protective clothing such as steel toe boots in case a horse stamps on their foot. They also wear safety goggles while working at the forge to protect against sparks. And they often wear a leather apron or chaps (half trousers) to protect their legs against friction





▲ Alex Bradbury says the challenging nature of farriery hasn't stopped him from pursuing his dream

PHOTOGRAPH: JOANNE CRAWFORD

***'I've been kicked - I went blind in one eye. They glued it back together and sent me on my way'***

**Alex Bradbury**  
Apprentice farrier

from horses' legs. All employers of apprentices are required to have insurance cover and professional farriers need their own insurance.

Bradbury spends three weeks every six months studying at Myerscough College in Preston, where he learns theory and studies the veterinary side of the job as well as learning how to make different variants of shoes.

When he qualifies in May, he plans to set up his own business, going out in a van and working for private stables or race horse owners. Most farriers are self-employed.

While most farriers are traditionally men - it was a trade traditionally passed down from fathers - a growing number of women are showing an interest in the profession.

"It's a job that's hard on your back - you are bending over in a skiing position all day," Bradbury says. "But I absolutely love it," he adds. "However, I don't think you can do it until you are 65 unless you take on apprentices." He says many farriers retire in their early 50s.

"I'll set up my own business one day and go out in my van on my own. I might do a few days a week with Dyer at the beginning until I get on my feet and feel more confident."



## Courses update

**New apprenticeship schemes are being launched at a remarkable rate under a government shake-up.** Apprenticeship "standards" - as the courses are known - replace the old "frameworks". They are developed by groups of employers and approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships.

**A dozen standards are gaining approval every week** and the total has just hit 400. More than 250 more are close to approval and there are plans for some 800 schemes in total. These cover an array of disciplines from traditional building and hairdressing apprenticeships to specialised areas, degree level courses and MBAs.

**One third of the schemes approved had not had any starts** in the first quarter of 2018/19. A similar number had yet to find providers of the "end-point assessments" - the final test apprentices must pass to qualify.

**Take-up of apprenticeships has declined steeply** under the new system. Between August 2017 and June 2018, more than 375,000 people started on apprenticeships compared with 472,500 in 2016/17 - a 28% fall.

**To boost interest, the government has recently launched a £2.5m advertising campaign** by agency M&C Saatchi, using the line "fire it up". This is being screened on TV, with ads also appearing on social media in order to get as much recognition as possible.

## Comment Nichola Hay



*'Young people now have a fantastic alternative available to them'*

**A**rguably the most positive aspect of six years of reforms to the apprenticeship programme has been the introduction of the new sector standards that have opened up a new raft of opportunities on which people of all ages can build a career.

The timing of the introduction of these standards has been a positive development, too, because of the debate surrounding whether all university degrees with the accompanying student debt offer good value for money and grad level jobs at the end of them. Young people now have a fantastic alternative available in the form of high-quality apprenticeships offering a job, good pay and potentially another route to a degree-level qualification.

Although the picture is improving, many schools, teachers and parents still haven't taken this on board and many pupils are still having to search for apprenticeship opportunities themselves. The law now requires all secondary schools in England to invite employers and apprenticeship training providers in to speak to pupils about what is available locally, but the government's own research shows that a significant number of them are choosing to ignore it. Skills minister Anne Milton has made it very clear that she will intervene if examples of non-compliance are brought to her attention.

And quite right, too, because as this special report shows, many employers now see apprenticeships as the best route to develop young talent in sectors of the economy that are not traditionally associated with them. Professions such as law, finance, teaching and nursing are increasingly embracing the programme, recognising the return on investment that training on the job brings as well as reducing staff turnover. With significant productivity increases also a benefit for employers who offer apprenticeships, it is hard to identify any downside, and the programme offers one solution to businesses facing staff shortages as a consequence of Brexit.

At Outsource Training and Development, we are responding to changing skills needs in the transport, aviation and logistics industries by supporting the apprenticeship programmes of employers. We are working with some of these companies to offer a new apprenticeship for an international freight forwarding specialist. Apprentices on this standard learn skills such as using the UK trade tariff tool, created by the government to help businesses to find the codes that are assigned to exported and imported goods. They also learn how to calculate VAT, duty and excise.

Where a standard is new, employers should take care over their choice of training provider if they contract out the training. Firstly, a government-approved provider will be listed on the official register of apprenticeship training providers. Secondly, standards are more demanding than the old apprenticeship frameworks in terms of the training and assessment required, and it is important to check that the chosen provider has made a successful transition to delivering on the standard. Other forms of due diligence by the employer should be reading a provider's most recent Ofsted inspection report.

Training under the standards is paid for by the apprenticeship levy on large employers, which since its introduction in April 2017 has raised £4.3bn. In fact, the levy funds the whole programme and the large employers are entitled to access the funding first before smaller employers can use it to offset the cost of their programmes. The latest figures show, however, that the pot is now being exhausted by the levy payers and this is why the Association of Employment and Learning Providers is calling for a separate £1bn annual budget to enable SMEs to offer more apprenticeships to take full advantage of these exciting and varied standards.

*Nichola Hay is director of Outsource Training & Development Ltd and AELP board director*

# Teaching

## Schools to 'grow their own' teachers

The new initiative is set to be a popular choice among aspiring teachers

Liz Lightfoot

Apprenticeships have teaching and learning at their heart and yet schools have been slow to embrace them. All that is about to change, however, with the launch of new ways for them to "grow their own" teachers and fund training for staff, from classroom assistants to office workers and caretakers.

Hughenden Primary School, a small 180-pupil school in Buckinghamshire, is leading the way with a new level 3 qualification for teaching assistants. Meanwhile, the Advance Trust of four special schools in Worcestershire has worked with the University of Worcester to devise apprenticeships that lead to qualified teacher status. Some schools are using business apprenticeships for their office staff and others are exploring ways to provide apprenticeships for caretakers.

"For us, it's a win-win situation," says Alison Young, the Advance Trust's business director. "We pay the employers levy and we get it back through apprenticeships that provide professional development for our staff. It enables us to invest in people who know our ethos and are committed to working in special schools as a career," she says.

Most schools are apprenticeship levy payers through their trusts, and local authorities can claim money back from the fund for apprenticeship training. As employers, they can work with universities, colleges or other approved trainers to devise schemes that meet their needs. The creators of apprenticeships are called "trailblazers", and their apprenticeships qualify for funding from the levy fund, once approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships.

Advance Trust has three apprentice teachers this year and will have another two next year. "Courses are expensive and the £9,000 from the levy goes to the university and funds the external assessments so our apprentices do not have to pay fees. They continue to be employed and take a salary, and at the end of the year they are qualified teachers. As unqualified teachers or teaching assistants, they reach the salary bar quickly but as qualified teachers they unlock a whole new salary scale," she adds.

It's a long ambition realised for unqualified drama teacher Laura Brough, 26, who has been trying to find a way to qualify without

losing her income. Since graduating five years ago with a degree in community drama, Brough has worked as an unqualified teacher for Advance Trust at Kingfisher School for children with social, emotional and mental health needs.

"I couldn't afford to give up a salary. That's why I was so excited to learn about this new route," says Brough, who spends every other Friday and three separate weeks at the University of Worcester and is presently completing a 10-week placement at a primary school.

Brough says she had previously been disappointed after she was interviewed and accepted on a route into qualified teacher status and then had to turn it down because she found out it was unsalaried. "Now I'll get the PGCE post-graduate teaching qualification as part of the apprenticeship. It has also given me the opportunity to experience different schools and age groups with three mentors to help me - the headteacher at Kingfisher School, the class teacher at the primary school where I am doing my placement and my mentor at the University of Worcester," she says.

The TA apprenticeship at Hughenden School lasts 18 months and provides £5,000 of funding from the levy. The current qualifications for supporting teaching and learning were being phased out and the school wanted alternatives, explains Jenny Brinkworth, the office manager who led the trailblazing group of employers. "When you work in a school it's important to keep looking forward and giving people the opportunity to improve their skill set," she says.

"The exciting thing is that the teaching assistant apprenticeship standard has been written by people who work in schools. It has the school stamp on it," she adds.

Further north, schools in the Ebor Academy Trust around York, North Yorkshire, have 12 TA apprentices and plan to recruit more. "It's a great opportunity to develop a really important group of staff that is sometimes in danger of being forgotten," says Alison Taylor, the trust's HR director. "What excites me about our apprenticeship is that it is not just a one-off - someone going on a course and coming back into school - but an on-going programme teaching fundamentals and then deeper levels of learning across the full range of their jobs," she adds.

Apprenticeships were included as a postgraduate training choice on the Ucas website but last year not many providers of teacher training were advertising places because they were not ready, says Simon Adams, director of the education and recruitment consultancy Teaching Apprenticeship Programme (Tap).

For the trainee, the experience is



fairly similar to the "school direct" way of qualifying by learning on the job, but it is likely to become more popular because the word "apprentice" is clearly understood as a paid route into a profession, he adds.

"Many schools are paying the apprenticeship levy, so it makes sense for them to be able to use the fund to train apprentices and grow their own teachers," he adds.

Hannah Burke, 24, will qualify as a teacher this year after five years as a teaching assistant. "When I left sixth form I was adamant that full-time university was not for me. I knew I wanted to work with children with special needs, and I started as a teaching assistant and soon realised I wanted to be a teacher," says Burke, who works for Advance Trust at the Vale of Evesham special school.

"I did a part-time university degree in early childhood education but I couldn't afford to take a year off to get qualified teacher status. Teaching apprenticeships are a brilliant way to qualify while still being employed," she says.

"Another good thing is the opportunity to work at different types of schools. Working in a special school gives me the experience to be able to deal with children at mainstream schools who may have additional needs," she says.

"I was nowhere near the top of the scale for teaching assistant pay and now I earn a higher salary as an unqualified teacher, and from September I will be on the newly qualified teacher salary," she adds.

▲ Apprentices get the chance to work at different types of schools

PHOTOGRAPH: STOCKSY

### Apprenticeship roles in teaching

**Level:** Teacher  
**Role:** To educate students according to guidelines.

**Duration:** A year to complete QTS and the apprenticeship end-point assessment.

**Qualifications required:** Grade 4 in GCSE English and maths, a university degree and professional skills tests in numeracy and literacy.  
**Money for training:** Schools can claim up to £9,000 towards training by an approved provider.

**Salary:** £21,641 inner London and £20,441 outside of London. But schools can pay up to £31,644, the maximum for inner London, or £27,216 for outside of London.

**Level:** Teaching assistant  
**Role:** Supporting the class teacher.

**Duration:** Typically 18 months.

**Qualifications required:** Typically GCSE grades 9-4.  
**Money for training:** £5,000.  
**Salary:** Typically £13,000-£19,000 full-time.

**Level:** Higher education lecturer  
**Role:** Higher education professional working in universities, colleges or the private sector.

**Duration:** 18 months.  
**Qualifications required:** Typically a postgraduate degree-level (level 7) qualification in an area of disciplinary specialism.  
**Money for training:** £9,000.  
**Salary:** Set by employer.

*"The apprenticeship has been written by people who work in school - so it has the school stamp on it"*

Jenny Brinkworth  
Hughenden School

# Experience

## 'It's not about the status, it's about training on the job and getting better at it'

Two teaching assistant apprentices explain why they chose to learn on the job

Interviews by **Liz Lightfoot**

**I**f you want to train as a teaching assistant, the new apprenticeship may be for you, and it doesn't matter whether you left school at 16 or have a university degree.

Apprentices must be sponsored by their schools - that can claim up to £5,000 a year for the training - and usually have passed five GCSEs including maths and English GCSE at grades A\*-C in the old grading system or 9-4 in the new one. Employers can, however, accept other relevant qualifications.

Designed by schools, approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and externally assessed, the teaching assistant apprenticeship usually takes 18 months to complete and demonstrates the mastery of a wide range of skills needed to support children in the classroom.

It can open the way to a career as a higher level teaching assistant or be a stepping stone towards a teaching qualification. Apprentices spend 20% of their time on off-

the-job training and learn about working in different sorts of schools. The courses cover understanding of how pupils learn and develop, methods of assessment, curriculum, safeguarding, the use of technology and strategies to engage and enthuse children in their learning.

Apprenticeships can either be offered to existing staff or used to help recruit new classroom assistants. Here, two apprentices, who were already working for schools in the Ebor Academy Trust in York, North Yorkshire, when they were offered the apprenticeships, explain what the training means for their careers.

**Tracy Ruddle**  
Apprentice teaching assistant

"I came here as a teaching assistant two years ago from a very different profession - I was working as a paediatric nurse - and I'm finding it really useful to learn the theory behind what we are doing and see what children are learning at different ages, because my role is mainly with the older children in year 6. We have input from highly qualified subject specialist teachers about how to get the best out of children. We are all linked with other schools for enrichment programmes, and I chose literacy as my focus. I am

▼ *Kate Rowbotham had no previous TA qualifications before starting the apprenticeship*

PHOTOGRAPH: JOANNE CRAWFORD



able to visit another school and work with the literacy lead there, observe what they do and feed it back here and share what we are doing with them and what plans we have for their future.

"Some people ask why I am doing an apprenticeship when I already have a degree. Actually, this is completely different because it is linked to the career I have chosen. I want to go to work and do a really good job and this is giving me the skills and knowledge to be able to do that. It's not about the status, it's about training on the job and getting better at it, for the benefit of the children."

**'We train with TAs from other schools - so we get different perspectives on how each other works'**

**Kate Rowbotham**  
Apprentice TA

**Kate Rowbotham**  
Apprentice teaching assistant

"I came to Camblesforth school straight after university as an administrator in the office, and then I was asked to go into the classroom to support as a teaching assistant. I loved being in the classroom with the children and have been doing it ever since. I had been working as a teaching assistant (TA) for around three years when the headteacher mentioned the apprenticeship and I was very keen to do it. I didn't have any previous qualification for being a TA and I wanted to raise my knowledge and become the best I could be. What I really like about the apprenticeship is that you learn while your work - we have training days and then come back and put it straight into practice. What's exciting it that we get to collaborate with other schools across the academy, too.

"We have a training session once a month with other TAs from the academy trust. I find it incredibly useful because we all work in different settings, so we get different perspectives on how each other works. There's a TA who works in a secondary school; it's really great to learn about his experiences. And there's a lady from a special school, and it's very helpful and interesting to learn how she supports the children in her school.

"I am learning a lot about different ways of teaching, and we get sessions with lots of different specialists. On our last training day, we had a maths specialist speak to us about how to teach the maths mastery programme and before that we had a speech and language specialist. It's helping me become a more rounded TA and giving me the knowledge and confidence to be able to go into any class in the school.

"Between the training sessions, we get homework and tasks working on themes such as knowledge and behaviour and we are expected to carry out research. I'm finding it very useful to learn the theory behind what we are doing and also all the practical help we get with ways of teaching the different subjects to get the best out of the children."

**'I want to go to work and do a good job, and this is giving me the skills and knowledge to do that'**

**Tracy Ruddle**  
Apprentice TA



► *Tracy Ruddle was a paediatric nurse before she decided to become a TA*

PHOTOGRAPH: JOANNE CRAWFORD

# Leila joins the next generation of ‘leaders and influencers’ with an NUH Apprenticeship

Since 2017, close to 400 new Apprentices have taken their first step at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (NUH).

Over 15,000 are employed at NUH in a variety of roles. The Apprenticeship route offers new starters the chance to learn alongside hands-on practical experience, as well as offering existing staff a development pathway.

Leila Howard, 18, is employed as a Healthcare Assistant at the Queen’s Medical Centre in Nottingham. She recently completed a one-year Apprenticeship at NUH, and has been reflecting on her experience, which saw her win the Apprentice of the Year accolade at the 2018 NUHonours Awards – NUH’s internal staff award ceremony.

Leila said: “I decided to join the Apprenticeship scheme as I liked the idea of hands-on learning, while still earning. Although I was studying Health and Social Care in college, I had always wanted to become a nursery nurse - but when I saw the opportunity to join NUH, I jumped at it!

“Juggling practical work alongside studying to be a Healthcare Assistant was a lot to take in to start with, but you soon get into the swing of things. Initially I started off working on weekday shifts alongside attending college and having study days, but the more you get into the role and working with different teams, the easier it becomes.

“I particularly enjoyed working alongside staff that had been doing the role for a while, as they could show me best practice.

“I think Healthcare Assistant training has made me strong minded and taught me to an understanding of how to handle people from different backgrounds and areas – both staff and patients. It makes you determined to deliver best patient care. You get to meet so many people as a Healthcare Assistant and Apprentice.”

Michelle Place, Apprentice Lead at NUH, said: “We are extremely proud of all of our Apprentices at NUH and congratulations to Leila on winning the NUHonours Apprentice of the Year award! It is so important to highlight the investment that NUH is making in Apprentices and these awards raise the profile of all of our Apprentices and the hard work and commitment they make.

“Leila is a great example of how an Apprenticeship can take you places. There’s so much on offer – from business management to plumbing and heating. We know our Apprenticeship offering attracts exceptional candidates, who really are the next generation of leaders and influencers.”

**Start your Apprenticeship journey at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust.**

Leila said: “I would recommend the NUH Healthcare Assistant Apprenticeship to anyone. What I have learned during my time has been invaluable. Working closely with colleagues has allowed me to pick up things quickly and the mix of studying and practical skills has been great. I now have a Care Certificate which I can take anywhere, alongside practical skills and knowledge.”



Leila pictured on Ward D10 at Queen’s Medical Centre.



Leila (centre) pictured with Tracy Taylor, NUH Chief Executive (left) and Eric Morton, NUH Chair (right) at the 2018 NUHonours Awards.



Visit [www.nuh.nhs.uk/apprenticeships](http://www.nuh.nhs.uk/apprenticeships) to start your NUH Apprenticeship journey.



# Healthcare

## 'People often don't realise that the NHS offers apprenticeships'

Health and social care professions are traditionally known to be reached through a standard university route - until now

**Debbie Andalo**

**T**he first degree-level apprenticeships in physiotherapy and occupational therapy are due to be launched in April, offering an alternative earn-while-you-learn route to professional qualification. And this autumn the first apprentices are expected to start the new degree-level qualification in social work.

These new professional apprenticeships are creating alternative career paths in health and social care and are also addressing the continuing workforce recruitment and retention problems. They fit alongside a growing and diverse portfolio of other new lower-level apprenticeships. The NHS alone has 350 different job roles - 120 of which have an apprenticeship route, 30 are degree-level.

"Parents, pupils and teachers often tell me they didn't realise that the NHS offered apprenticeships; and it's still perceived that those we do offer are only in trades," says Lucy Hunte, national programme manager at Health Education England, the government agency for workforce planning and training. "The apprenticeships we offer are growing all the time - horticulture, child care and hospitality - but the biggest change has been in clinical roles."

Apprenticeships have always been core to the health and social care workforce, as the sectors have traditionally looked to grow their own staff. But the recent apprenticeship reforms - giving employers the lead in deciding the future employee skills they need - have been transformative, according to Suzanne Ratcliffe, head of learning and development at Care UK, one of the largest care providers for older

people in the UK. Some 6% of its workforce are on apprenticeship programmes - going up from 380 to 511 in the past year.

"In the past, training providers would offer a standard care service module. Now we have a greater say on what qualifications are being delivered in the sector - they are much more relevant," she says. "Maintenance apprentices, for example, now learn about facilities management, and business administration now has modules in customer service."

New hybrid roles are also emerging, such as the healthcare assistant practitioner who can work across health and social care. And more than 100 of the first cohort of apprentice nursing associates - a new bridging role between healthcare support worker and nurse - have just qualified and registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. The move was described as a "landmark moment" by its chief executive Andrea Sutcliffe; another 1,800 are due to register in the coming months. Dr Toni Schwarz is deputy dean of the faculty of health and wellbeing at Sheffield Hallam University, which launches its physiotherapy and occupational therapy degree apprenticeships in April. She says: "This is about widening participation - it gives us access to people who perhaps wouldn't have come through the traditional university route. It's about employees being supported by their employer."

Since April 2017, NHS and other public sector employers with more than 250 staff in England are expected to have at least 2.3% of their workforce starting an apprenticeship every year, according to a government target. Leeds teaching hospitals NHS trust has already exceeded that number. Last year, apprentices accounted for 3.4% of its workforce and since 2015 it has increased its apprenticeships by 51% each year. This year, it's planning to introduce 700 more apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships boost workforce diversity and offer new education and training opportunities to people who may have missed out first-time around, says its manager for education, learning and organisational development Aislinn O'Hara: "We have worked hard to make working in the NHS accessible to as many people as possible."

"In the past, people may have seen apprenticeships only for those with low skills and no qualifications. Some of those perceptions have stayed in people's minds, but apprenticeships can be for everybody - the majority here are between 24 to 35 and our oldest is 63."

▼ *Dan Clay hopes to become one of the UK's first apprentice physiotherapists*

PHOTOGRAPH: JOANNE CRAWFORD



## Experience 'Apprenticeships have really broadened my skills'

Many apprentices are confident in the workplace but keen on gaining academic knowledge to progress further

**Debbie Andalo**

**A**pprenticeships are helping Dan Clay fulfil his ambition to become a physiotherapist. He is halfway through completing a two-year assistant practitioner apprenticeship - a new generic role in the physiotherapy and occupational therapy team, where he supports older people to live independently at home. Once complete, Clay hopes to take the next step up the ladder and become one of the UK's first

apprentice physiotherapists. He says: "I feel passionate about physiotherapy - I can see the impact that it has on people's lives. But when you have a mortgage and bills to pay it's difficult to go down the traditional degree route."

Clay, 27, became a support worker for adults with learning difficulties when he left school, admitting that university wasn't for him: "I didn't have enough Ucas points but I also felt it wasn't for me."

He went on to train as an NHS

*'If you are put through training to progress and are getting paid, you are more likely to stay'*

**Dan Clay**  
Apprentice practitioner

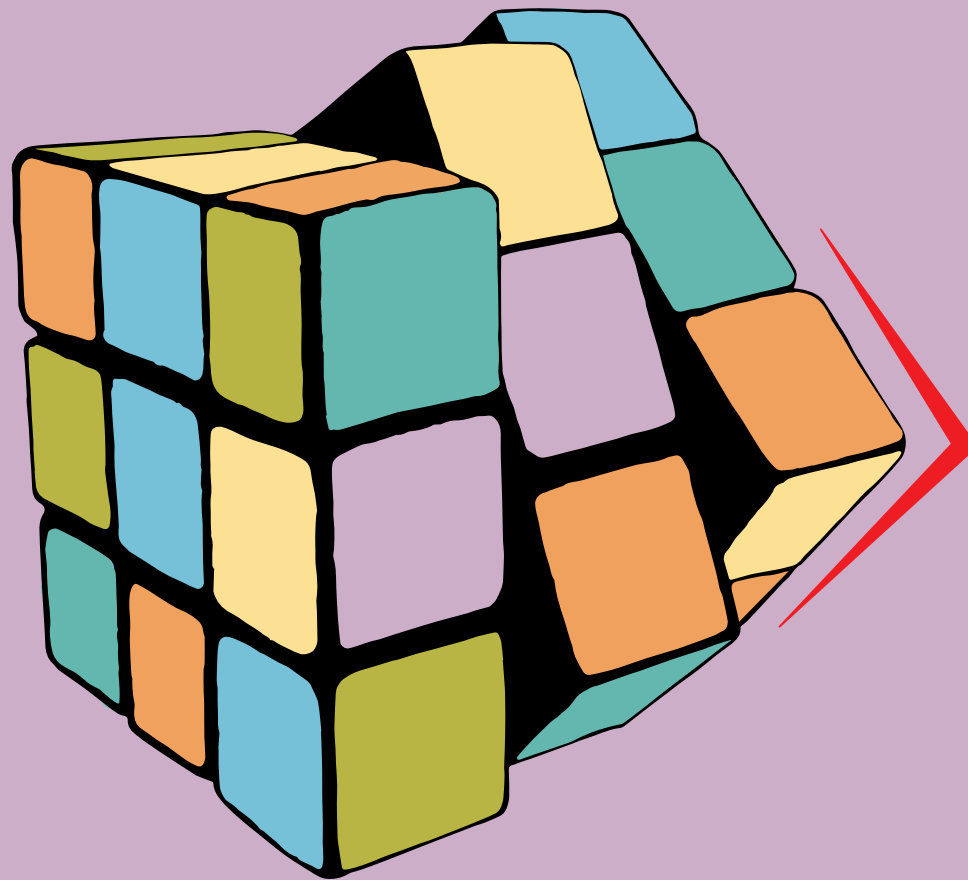
therapy assistant - working alongside physiotherapists in the community - and then progressed to become a technical instructor in a therapy team at Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS foundation trust.

Now Clay works there as a therapy assistant practitioner in a multi-professional team including physiotherapists and occupational therapists. He supports people who are medically fit to be discharged home from hospital and is part of the crisis response team helping to keep older people at home who are at risk of being admitted to hospital. Clay says: "Apprenticeships have helped me a lot - they have broadened my skills and I am able to apply what I learn day to day at work."

"I think with apprenticeships you have people who already know how to do their jobs very well but want to go through training to progress further in their career. They have the experience but just need the academic side, which they can gain through the apprenticeship. It's about recognising that experience has value. It's also better for recruitment and retention - if you are put through training to progress, and you are getting paid, you are much more likely to stay."

*'In the past, people may have seen apprenticeships for those with low skills and no qualifications'*

**Aislinn O'Hara**  
Leeds NHS trust



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▼ *Healthcare apprentices are often very hands-on*

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

**Comment**

**Brian Webster-Henderson**



*'Flexible routes into healthcare help to widen participation'*

**A** career in healthcare offers an exciting and rewarding opportunity for people who want to make a real difference in the lives of others. Healthcare programmes lead to high employment rates and diverse career prospects, including advanced roles in clinical practice, education, leadership and research.

Apprenticeships are one of the routes that are open to people thinking about taking this step. Since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017, employers are required to set aside money for education, and the NHS has access to around £200m annually to fund apprenticeships. These apprentices are employed and earn while they learn so they do not pay tuition fees and are not eligible for student loans. This means that apprentices need to find an employer to fund their apprenticeship.

Apprentices are primarily based at a home hub and undertake a combination of education and employment in this setting. They also take part in off-the-job learning, which includes classes at universities and learning in practice settings outside their normal employer. This is necessary to provide a range of experiences and practice settings to develop a comprehensive skills base and to meet regulatory requirements for professional practice.

During their studies, apprentices may encounter students undertaking traditional degree programmes. Both types of learner have much to gain from this contact, especially as many apprentices have previously been employed as healthcare workers and have extensive experience of care for patients and service users.

Universities have a proud record of working with employers to develop a range of learning options, including work-based learning programmes and apprenticeships, and so it is natural that they have worked closely with employers to develop apprenticeship standards and programmes. There are now standards for at least eight healthcare disciplines at undergraduate level, leading to registration in professions such as nursing, midwifery, occupational therapy, podiatry, and prosthetics and orthotics.

The higher education sector welcomes the development of flexible routes into healthcare, which help to widen participation and enable access to degree-level education for people from diverse backgrounds. This is particularly the case for existing healthcare workers wanting to progress their careers and enter a registered profession.

However, despite the benefits, there are some limitations and drawbacks to the apprenticeship route. Apprenticeships usually take longer than university-based degree programmes, so are not a quick route either for individuals or for employers seeking to grow their registered workforce. Apprenticeships also have costs to employers over and above the levy-funded education, such as backfill costs while apprentices are undertaking off-the-job learning. Finally, with healthcare education being both resource intensive and costly, it is important that funding should not fall below the cost of provision in order that universities are able to provide quality apprenticeship education. Nevertheless, universities are developing creative ways to make apprenticeships feasible for employers, such as teaching in time blocks.

Apprenticeships provide another route for anyone considering a healthcare career, so it's a good idea to find out more about which learning option best suits you.

*Brian Webster-Henderson is chair of the Council of Deans of Health*

*'Off-the-job training is necessary, as it provides a range of experiences and practice settings in order to develop skills'*



**Experience**  
**'They don't really care if you are 60 or 16 - if you have the skills they want they will take you on and train you'**

No matter your age, healthcare apprenticeships welcome everyone who wishes to enhance their career

**Debbie Andalo**

**A**ge has been no barrier to Jed Bates' ambition to become one of the first nursing associates - a brand-new bridging role between healthcare assistant and registered nurse.

The 61-year-old has just qualified after completing the two-year apprenticeship and now plans to continue down the same route to degree-level and become a qualified nurse. "I never thought I'd ever go to university. I left school at 16 and have been working all my life. I was quite happy with the way my life was going and there was no way that I could afford the £9,000 tuition fees. But with the apprenticeship, all that gets paid for."

Bates, who works in the emergency department of Peterborough city hospital, says: "I was definitely the 'grandfather' on the course. But I think the NHS is at the forefront of the apprenticeship

drive; they don't care if you are 60 or 16 - if you have the skills they want they will take you on and train you and keep you, and that's the best way forward."

He was attracted to the new role when he began working as a healthcare assistant after leaving his

**'I had to retrain my brain to be academic - but I got a lot of useful guidance in how to do things'**

**Jed Bates**  
*Apprentice nurse*



job as a paramedic clinician. He says: "At the time, I was looking to slow down. I'd only been working at my new job for a few months when this new role was announced. It sounded interesting and I could see that there was a need for this link between healthcare assistant and nurse. I was quite content in my current job but I realised that I wanted to do more. As a nursing associate, I can do around 60% of a registered nurse job, which means the nurses are then freed up to care for more complex patients."

Bates enjoyed the apprenticeship because he could immediately see the value of what he learned. "You practise on Monday then do it on Tuesday. All the time you are applying what you learn and how you behave with people." But he admits it was tough going back to writing essays. "I'd not done anything academic for more than 40 years, so it was quite challenging to write 3,000 or 5,000 words - I had to retrain my brain. But I got a lot of guidance in how to do it and my mentor at work would tell me: "Think about doing it like this."

He reveals, however, that in the early days there was some tension between the apprentices and those students following the traditional nursing degree path. "We used to mix on placements," he says. "I think at the beginning there was a lot of dissatisfaction from the degree nurses and students because they had to pay for their training and we didn't; but once we sat down and talked to them they could see the need for the role. Today, the role is more accepted - people can see the value of what we do. We've improved patient care - patients say they have noticed the difference, and there's been an increase in plaudits and a reduction in complaints."

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“

*Completing my apprenticeship has given me great confidence and I have learnt to push myself further”*

“

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“

*Doing this apprenticeship has allowed me to turn my passion into a career”*

“

*Who wouldn't want to get paid for something they enjoy?”*

“

*The hands on nature of an apprenticeship means that you do a lot more than you would just sitting in a classroom”*

# Public sector

## Catching up with the private sector

Public sector apprenticeships are on a steady rise after the government introduced a 2.3% recruitment target

Sean Hargrave

It can be easy to think that apprenticeships are limited to private companies but, in reality, the public sector is one of the biggest sources of roles that allow people to earn while they learn.

In fact, the government is so keen to demonstrate it practises what it preaches on apprentices that it has set a target for nearly all public bodies with more than 250 employees. By 2021, they must ensure 2.3% of staff are apprentices. When it was last measured in the spring of 2018, the average had risen to 1.9% from 1.4% in the previous year.

The armed forces are way out ahead as the main recruiter of apprentices with the civil service; local government and the NHS are making significant contributions, too.

Skills and apprenticeships minister, Anne Milton, believes the figures show the public sector is catching up with the private sector who were “quicker off the blocks” when apprenticeships were reorganised in 2017 after the apprenticeship levy. It requires companies with a wage bill above £3m per year to pay 0.5% of the total to a levy that funds their apprenticeship training.

Milton believes that while an apprenticeship in both the private and public sectors are beneficial, the latter has the edge when it comes to supporting local communities.

“The main message behind every apprenticeship is you earn while you learn and that university isn’t for everyone,” she says.

“It’s a similar message that not everyone has to move away from home to a big city because that’s where the jobs with training are.



Public sector apprenticeships tend to spread out more across the country and the skills they teach people tend to be in demand more widely across the country. It means people don’t have to leave home to get a job with training and prospects, and that’s certainly very positive in supporting local communities.”

It was partly for this reason of wanting to make a local impact that attracted Dylan Kelleher to his apprenticeship with Rhondda Cynon Taf county borough council. Now 21, he has already completed a level 3 apprenticeship in construction and the built environment and is in the final year of a level 4 course that will earn him an HNC qualification.

Making a difference in his locality was one half of the decision. The other was that a public sector apprenticeship was guaranteed to offer a variety of roles that private practice would struggle to emulate.

“No other employer would allow me to work and study in so many different fields within civil engineering,” he says.

“If you go into private practice, you are likely going to have to stay in the area your company specialises in. There’s also the benefit that there is likely to be a job at the end of the process in the public sector. In the private sector, you don’t know what shape the business will be in and whether you’ll be offered a job at the end of it.”

Although the public sector is not always associated with higher pay than private companies, Adil Sandhu reveals it can be the case with apprentices. He is on the verge of finishing a level 3 apprenticeship in business administration at London’s Homerton university hospital NHS foundation trust. After studying for the equivalent of GCSEs in India, he returned to the UK and was keen on securing an NHS apprenticeship for two very clear reasons: pay and experience.

“Nearly all the apprenticeships I saw were offering the minimum apprenticeship wage of £3.70 per hour, which is tough to live on,” he says.

“The NHS, though, offers pay that is closer to the wages of a trained member of staff. I also wanted to work in a busy outpatients department because there is no place where you can learn so much and work with so many different people from such diverse backgrounds. I think it’s given me an advantage over anyone learning business administration in the private sector.”

This variety in experience in a relatively short period of time is a common theme of public sector apprenticeships that also stand out for allowing people to earn while they learn closer to home than some of the opportunities offered in the private sector.



▲ Dylan Kelleher chose a public sector apprenticeship due to the large variety of roles on offer

PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE HALL

### Advice from a public sector professional

**Public sector apprenticeships offer a wide variety of roles and top-level training. And it goes without saying that they are highly competitive.** Dominic Millington, apprentice division team leader at Leeds City College, regularly advises on how to best match career aspirations with apprenticeship opportunities. He points out that many public sector positions are likely to be advertised in batches by each organisation and the best advice is not to apply for everything. Thinking about where an applicant sees their career going and then finding the best fit is far better than a scattergun approach. He advises applicants to:

#### Research the training

Make sure you research the quality of the training you’ll be undertaking. Public sector apprenticeships have a good reputation here, but Millington’s top tip is still to research before deciding which positions to apply for. He says: “If possible, applicants should find out the training provider of the apprenticeship they are interested in and speak to them about how they deliver courses and what their expectations are for qualified apprentices. The more you find out the better.”

#### Consider living costs

It goes without saying that apprenticeships offer pay at the lower end of the scale while people are learning. Hence, the cost of travel is a major consideration that could potentially point applicants towards public sector roles because they are widespread throughout the country. If you are considering a role farther afield, it is important to weigh up the commute time and cost involved. The first step here is to find out whether your local area is one of the many that offers free or heavily discounted travel passes for apprenticeships.

#### Find out about the disability policy

Any applicant with a disability should bear in mind that many apprenticeships are advertised as “disability confident”. It means the public body or company offering the role has taken a series of steps to ensure they can tap into and retain people with a wide range of abilities. Visit [disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk](http://disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk) to find out more about the disability confident scheme. Many companies will have also signed up to offer interviews to disabled applicants who meet the minimum requirements for a role – so there’s plenty of help available.

*‘The skills they [the public sector] teach people tend to be in demand more widely across the country’*

Anne Milton MP  
Skills minister

# Nominate someone exceptional

Phoebe Loveridge, an engineering surveyor with the Submarine Delivery Agency, HMNB Devonport, was named IET Apprentice of the Year in 2018. During her apprenticeship Phoebe stood out from the start – she readily volunteered for STEM events in local schools, working with children during a six week STEM event to encourage women into engineering. Phoebe completed her apprenticeship five months early, with offers for all three roles she had applied for.

Help us shine a light on exceptional individuals, like Phoebe, by nominating them for an IET Achievement Medal, or IET Apprentice or Technician of the Year Award.

[theiet.org/achievement](http://theiet.org/achievement) Nominations close 17 May 2019

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# Testing and exams

## 'It's like MasterChef'

From end-point assessments to cost - everything you need to know about how to pass an apprenticeship

**David Benady**

**Y**ou've got 75 minutes to debone a meat carcass and present it to a standard that any butcher would be proud of. Succeed and you'll receive your butchery apprenticeship level 2 certificate. Fail and you'll need to train some more and repeat the experience to qualify. "It's a bit like MasterChef," says Terry Fennell, chief executive of FDQ, which carries out final exams for apprentices in the food sector, testing butchers, bakers and fishmongers. Along with a practical test, there is typically a 90-minute multiple choice paper and a 45-minute interview where candidates display their understanding of their industry. "It's a pretty intensive day of examinations," says Fennell.

"Sometimes it takes place with the employer in the workplace, either externally at college or at the butcher's shop. It's an important exam so we have to make sure the environment is conducive to the purposes, so there must be no disruption, no ability to cheat and no one else is allowed in the room."

To gain an apprenticeship certificate in any of the 400-plus standards created under the government's new regime, apprentices sit a series of exams at the end of the course, rather than being judged on continuous assessments as with the old system. The final tests - known as end-point assessment or EPA - check whether apprentices have learned the skills, knowledge and behaviour outlined in their course.

End-point assessments are one of the biggest changes ushered in by the government's apprenticeship shake-up. They are designed to offer apprentices a certificate they can use to find work across their industry.

Final tests are tailored to each apprenticeship. A master's in business administration might require a 10,000-word dissertation

▼ Final tests are tailored to each individual apprenticeship

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES



followed by a PowerPoint presentation and an interview. A plumbing and heating technician would complete a multiple choice exam, a practical skills test and an interview. They'll receive a certificate qualifying them as a plumbing and domestic heating engineer.

Preparing for an EPA is like getting ready for any exam - it requires practice, revision and calm

*'Final exams day is pretty intensive. It takes place with the employer in the workplace'*

**Terry Fennell**  
FDQ

nerves. Training organisations must make sure apprentices get plenty of experience completing a range of assessments. Above all, the apprentice needs confidence that they have achieved an adequate level of knowledge and experience to pass the tests. Employers and training providers decide when an apprentice is ready to be put forward for an EPA. Once registered for the test, they have 12 weeks to prepare for it.

Those who don't pass - it could be up to a third of the candidates - can retake the specific tests that they failed after further training and experience.

Assessments are conducted by an independent body unrelated to the employer or training college. Some 216 organisations have so far been accredited to conduct the assessments from small organisations to giants such as City & Guilds and Pearson.

Costs for every apprenticeship are agreed with the Institute for Apprenticeships - for instance a butchery level 2 apprenticeship costs an employer £9,000 in training and examination fees. The cost of the EPA should be less than one fifth of this, under £1,800. Other EPAs will be more expensive, depending on the cost of the apprenticeship. Given that there could be 500,000 EPAs running each year, the government is at a stroke creating a market that could be worth billions of pounds annually. Running the assessments will be a huge business.



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**About the opportunity**

On a structured apprenticeship programme in either Human Resources, Technology, Data Analytics or Trading Operations, you'll apply what you've learned in the real business world and begin developing your career in a world-leading multinational organisation. All the while, you'll be helping us meet the dual challenge of a growing demand for energy with fewer emissions.

The programme will offer you exposure to different parts of our business and you'll be supported by your apprenticeship training provider and our early careers programme team. You can expect regular feedback on your progress to date and next steps, not to mention long-term career options and development.

**About you**

We welcome people from a range of academic subject backgrounds as long as they have the right competencies and motivations.

We'll look for the ability to work on your own initiative as well as collaborating in a team. On top of that, you'll need a keen eye for detail and good communication, planning and numeracy skills.

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# Expect more with a King's College Hospital Apprenticeship



## Progressive. Forward-thinking. Inclusive. Responsive.

When you take on an apprenticeship with King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, you will be at the heart of our mission to deliver the best patient care to our local communities, with cutting-edge treatments delivered by highly skilled teams. Choose from a range of apprenticeships – in either clinical or non-clinical roles – all of which allow you to make a real contribution.

Whether you are a school or college leaver, returning to work after an extended break, or simply seeking a new career challenge, apprenticeships provide a valuable opportunity to embark on a fascinating career path, develop practical skills, achieve a qualification and forge contacts that will take your future potential to a new level. As one of the UK's most respected teaching hospitals, there is no better place in which to take on this life-enhancing challenge.

## Earn while you learn

All of our apprenticeship programmes offer the chance to acquire new skills and study flexibly (up to degree level, depending on your role) – all while in paid employment. Apprenticeships combine hands-on experience with the time and support to acquire recognised qualifications. You will gain practical, transferable work skills that open doors to permanent opportunities, either within King's or elsewhere. At every step, you'll have the support of an experienced mentor.

With more than 50% of apprentices taking up permanent employment at King's after they have completed their programmes, you may well be embarking on a very distinct chapter of your career. This is a chance to make a real contribution to a visionary healthcare Trust that is committed to doing something exceptional for its local communities.

## Building strength and capability within local communities

Making a difference to our communities depends on having a workforce that reflects the diverse people who come through our doors every year. No one is better placed to understand the needs of a community than those who are a part of it. As a result, we are keen to

support individuals from the local community into work and to access opportunities.

Apprentices have been an integral part of the workforce at King's College Hospital for many years. Since the inception of the Government Apprenticeships programme, which began in 2017, King's has created places for 160 internal and external candidates across programmes including Health & Social Care, IT Infrastructure, Business Administration and Leadership and Management (internal only). Our Apprentices are working towards becoming Dental Nurses, IT Technicians, Healthcare Science Practitioners and Nursing Associates. Programmes are available in a huge array of fields across our five hospital sites (Denmark Hill, Princess Royal University in Farnborough, Orpington, Beckenham Beacon and Queen Mary Sidcup).

## Apprenticeships for internal candidates

Existing staff have the same access to apprenticeship opportunities, with 126 currently on our programmes. **John Alika, a Healthcare Assistant** at our Denmark Hill site, didn't want to give up his occupation in order to study – so he found the flexibility of his apprenticeship very convenient. *"I can work and learn at the same time and same place, and I did not have to sacrifice my job for my studies – I can learn whilst earning. I am given enough time to complete my assignments and my assessor supports me in areas where I need assistance. With this programme I can balance my work, studies and social life".* John is using his apprenticeship as a springboard to the next stage of his career, saying: *"At the end of my qualification programme, I hope to apply to university to train as an Adult Nurse."*

## Apprenticeships for external candidates

With a broad spectrum of programmes currently available in the fields of Health and Social Care, Healthcare Science, Clinical Healthcare Support and Business & Administration, we have an opportunity to match every career goal.

**Student Midwife Sara Tegas** began her journey in March 2014 with a level 2 Health & Social Care Intermediate Apprenticeship. After completing her

programme – and being nominated for 'Apprentice of the Year' in the Health and Social Care category – she took up a permanent role and various development opportunities within King's – enabling her to secure a permanent NHS position, where she is now working towards her long-term ambition of becoming a midwife. She says: *"My experience at King's College Hospital has been amazing. I need to credit the Apprenticeships Team for giving me such an incredible opportunity. My mentor not only supported and assessed me during my year as an apprentice, she has continued to support me during the following years."*

## Who can apply?

To check your eligibility for apprenticeship schemes, please refer to the Education & Skills Funding Agency guidelines.

<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/>

## Get ready to make a difference

Our apprenticeship programmes vary in length, and some may have specific application requirements – so check online before you apply for your chosen programme.

If you are shortlisted, you will have access to an Apprenticeship Information Session ahead of interview. During this session, we address key points such as interview tips and techniques and the Trust values, ensuring you are best placed to enter the correct programme for your long-term career goals and your current skills.

Once you have entered your chosen apprenticeship programme, you will be a valued member of the team. You'll benefit from working alongside highly-skilled colleagues from a variety of disciplines, who will share their expertise with you. You'll gain on-the-job skills, and have access to high-quality training. Crucially, you will also be supported by a nominated supervisor and line manager who will ensure you get the most out of your apprenticeship with King's College Hospital.

To apply, please go to

<http://jobs.kch.nhs.uk/>