

Apprentice

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Apprenticeship News

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Learning+Skills Council

Good for business

Introducing Apprentice

The largest national campaign aimed at employers ever undertaken by the Learning and Skills Council gets underway next month as it seeks to secure more high quality places for young people entering apprenticeships.

A major drive involving a mix of television advertising, direct marketing, events and public relations is designed to generate 33,000 responses and between 16,000 and 23,000 starts.

Employers are the main target of the campaign, with an initial emphasis on organisations with workforces of 100 or more people. This will be complemented by marketing at a local level aimed at smaller businesses as well as awareness raising activities aimed at young people and parents.

Around 65 per cent of apprenticeships are currently delivered within four sectors – manufacturing, engineering, retail and construction. Marketing activity will focus on increasing penetration in these areas.

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There will also be a specific drive to raise demand among growth sectors that offer the best viable potential for places.

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Ivan Lewis, Minister for Skills

Ivan Lewis, Minister for Skills, said: "There is a pressing need to get more employers involved offering high quality and relevant apprenticeships for young people.

"This campaign is about making employers aware of the bottom line benefits that apprentices can bring to their businesses and helping them to understand that these young people can be trained specifically to supply the skills they need to improve performance."

> Marketing Plans

LSC marketing activity kicks off in May with a national television advertisement that will be followed up later in the year. A targeted direct marketing campaign aimed at employers, including the FTSE 250 companies, will also begin in May.

Apprentice is the newsletter from the Learning and Skills Council designed to keep partners and employers up to date with the latest apprenticeship developments.

Each month we will feature news on initiatives and progress as more companies offer places for young people taking the apprenticeship route into a new career. We will carry views and comments, examine issues and run regular case studies through which businesses and individuals can have their say.

This first issue of the newsletter looks at the progress being made against the Government's apprenticeship targets, announces a major marketing initiative aimed at businesses throughout England.

If you would like more information about apprenticeships or have comments and suggestions for this newsletter, please contact Carla Patchett on **02476 823809** or e-mail carla.patchett@lsc.gov.uk

A popular choice

The number of young people choosing apprenticeships through which to embark on their careers is now at its highest level since they were introduced by Government 10 years ago.

And with more than 65,000 entering apprenticeships in the last quarter, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is confident of meeting its target of attracting 28 per cent of people aged between 16 and 21 into apprenticeships in the year ending 2005. This will be a total of 175,000 young people.

The LSC, which is responsible for funding, planning and marketing apprenticeships, has already exceeded its target this year to achieve an average number of young people on work-based learning of 271,000 16-24 year olds. Latest figures stand at just under 276,000.

Spending on apprenticeships will reach around £650 million in the current academic year – about 70 per cent of the LSC's total £900 million spend on work-based learning. That total spend is likely to rise to more than £1 billion in the coming academic year.

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> More employers needed

The increasing popularity of apprenticeships as an option for young people has highlighted the need to attract more employers offering high quality places for apprentices.

"We are pleased that so many employers are already involved but we do need more," said Stephen Gardner, the LSC's Director of Work-Based Learning.

"Employers, large and small, must be made aware of the value of apprenticeships and the benefits

of having young people they can mould to meet the needs of their businesses. We are embarking on a major marketing campaign to get more employers on board."

Latest LSC marketing goals are to generate 33,000 responses and between 16,000 and 23,000 starts.

Awareness of apprenticeships among employers, when prompted, is now running at 78 per cent. Marketing activities are designed to raise that figure to 83 per cent this year and 88 per cent the next.

The facts

- > Apprenticeships were introduced 10 years ago.
- > More than 220,000 young people are currently enrolled in apprenticeships in England. Of those, 100,000 are doing Advanced Apprenticeships.
- > Apprenticeships typically take between one and three years to complete.
- > There are more than 160 types of apprenticeship offered in over 80 sectors of industry and commerce including agriculture, business administration, construction, engineering, health and care, printing and retail.
- > The Learning and Skills Council currently deals with thousands of employers offering apprenticeship places. These include international names such as: Hilton Hotels Group, De Vere Group, Ministry of Defence, BMW, BAE Systems, Westminster Health Care, London Underground, EDS, Carillion Construction, British Gas, BP, Orange and Asda.

Awards 2004

The Learning and Skills Council has received a tremendous response to the Modern

Apprenticeship Awards 2004 with more than 1,000 entries from young people and employers.

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Carol Vordeman

This year's awards, which will be presented at a ceremony in London hosted by TV personality and author, Carol Vordeman, fall into three categories:

Employer Awards: These three awards, covering small medium and large companies, will go to employers who have shown a commitment to Modern Apprenticeships and supported their employees to complete a apprenticeship.

Young Learner Awards: These awards will recognise the contributions of young people in the workplace where they have exceeded expectations and resulted in measurable benefits to their organisation.

Personal Achievement Awards: These will go to two learners, one in the 16-18 age group and one in the 19-24 group, who have successfully overcome barriers to achieve and have exceeded expectations.

Judges, drawn from employers, partners and employer bodies, the Department for Education and Skills and the Learning and Skills Council, will consider short-listed applicants between May 5 and 7 and decide on the winners and two runners up in each category.

As well as the prestige and publicity attached, individual winners will receive prizes with a value of up to £1,500, which will be presented at an awards event attended by 450 invited guests at the Hilton Park Lane Hotel on 24 June.

Bryan Sanderson, Chairman of the Learning and Skills Council, said: "I am delighted that our world class apprenticeship system is being showcased and achievements in Modern Apprenticeships celebrated in this prestigious award ceremony.

"The LSC, as the unifying force for skills development in England, wants to recognise the vital contribution these committed apprentices and their employers make to improve productivity and competitiveness on both a national and international level. Modern Apprenticeships are a shining example of how the LSC acts as a catalyst between business and education to match delivery with need."

In the news

Growing recognition of the value of apprenticeships in raising workforce skills and company competitiveness has been reflected in increased national media coverage.

Within the last few weeks, articles and features aimed at employers and young people leaving school have appeared in national newspapers including The Times, Daily Telegraph, Guardian, Daily Mirror and Mail on Sunday.

Stephen Gardner, Director of Work-Based Learning at the Learning and Skills Council, responded through the Mail on Sunday's Job Clinic column to a question from an automotive

sector employer about the best way to take on and train young people.

"I suggest that you consider apprenticeships – both for young people you intend to hire and for existing staff up to the age of 25," he said. "They offer the chance to assess a young person's aptitude and motivation. In turn, employers will be able to mould the apprenticeship to meet the specific needs of their business."

Interviewed by The Times, Ivan Lewis, Minister for Skills touched upon extending the apprenticeship programme beyond its current age range of 16-24. "We have to be honest about this," he said. "People will

increasingly have a sequence of jobs in which they up-skill, re-skill and retrain. Adult apprenticeships will play an important part."

Meanwhile, a feature in Metro pointed out that apprenticeships are now as likely to be in the service sector as in manufacturing and engineering.

"Professions such as hospitality, business administration, customer service, retail and hairdressing are overtaking traditional options in popularity...apprenticeships provide practical experience and life skills and give alternative training to those who aren't keen on formal education. Best of all, they let you earn while you learn."

Honing a competitive edge

The Royal Mail has recognised the value of taking on apprentices as it moulds a highly skilled and motivated workforce to meet the challenges facing the postal industry.

Employing more than 200,000 people in the UK, the company currently delivers more than 80 million letters and parcels each day, provides delivery and logistics services across Europe and oversees 16,500 retail outlets.

Workforce training is a high priority in ensuring that everyone has the right skills to do the job. It is viewed as being crucial to maintaining a competitive edge and an essential ingredient to job satisfaction, employee retention and productivity.

Royal Mail is encouraging customer service teams to make use of apprentices, with the result that more than 300 are now training as they work at call centres throughout the country.

"Apprenticeships add value to Royal Mail by contributing to a workforce with highly developed

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Vicki Clement, one of 300 apprentices working with Royal Mail customer service teams across the country

skills and confidence," says Sally Timmins, a Royal Mail Training Manager.

"They work because they follow a logical and precise path, delivering continuous professional and personal development to our staff.

"The qualifications our workforce gain encourages career progression within Royal Mail, as well as being

universally recognised. In turn, apprenticeships provide us with a professional edge – important both to our existing customers and when we are competing for new business."

Royal Mail has apprentices at call centres in Salford, Plymouth, Colchester, Doxford near Sunderland, Dearne near Barnsley and Stoke on Trent.

Apprentice Contacts

- > If you would like to learn more about apprenticeships visit:
www.realworkrealpay.info
- > for more information on the apprenticeship awards visit:
www.maawards.co.uk
- > or call the Learning and Skills Council helpdesk on:
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