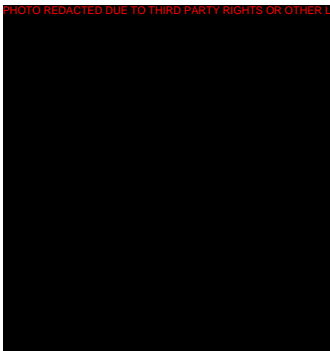




Time of change

Radical reforms to Apprenticeships



Bryan Sanderson

More people will get the chance to learn new skills at work under radical reforms to Apprenticeships announced today (May 10) by Education and Skills Secretary, Charles Clarke, and the Chancellor of the

Exchequer, Gordon Brown. A new family of Apprenticeships leading to qualifications are being introduced to include, for the first time, young people aged 14 and adults over the age of 25. This will build on the 10 year old Modern Apprenticeship programme, from which over 1 million people have benefited.

Speaking at the launch of the new Apprenticeships at Selfridges in London, Mr Clarke urged more firms to offer places and said the reforms would provide a major boost to company productivity and give employers a much bigger

say in how Apprenticeships are developed.

A major Learning and Skills Council marketing campaign to promote Apprenticeships also began today and will include national television and newspaper advertising, internet promotion, direct mail and public relations activities aimed at employers.

Demand from young people wishing to enter Apprenticeships currently outstrips supply and the LSC campaign is designed to demonstrate the business benefits of taking

on apprentices, with a target of creating up to 23,000 new Apprenticeship places in 2004-05.

Bryan Sanderson, Chairman of the Learning and Skills Council, said:

"A recent survey by the Learning and Skills Council showed that 44 per cent of organisations which reported skills shortages said they lost business as a result. There is no excuse for a poorly trained workforce.

"Apprenticeships provide businesses with the solution they need to thrive in the 21st Century."

Meet the Apprenticeship family

A new family of Apprenticeships that can lead to formal qualifications are being introduced as part of the Government's vision to raise the status and quality of vocational education and training.

They represent a broader and simpler structure to replace the Modern Apprenticeship programme which, a decade after its launch, now involves more than 255,000 people

undergoing training in 150 different skills areas.

The family group is made up of Young Apprenticeships for 14 to 16 year-olds, offering a Key Stage 4 route for pupils with good ability. They are expected to pursue industry specific qualifications with employers and training providers.

This will enable them to progress to

Apprenticeships, offering Level 2 qualifications which cover an NVQ, Key Skills and Technical Certificate. Advanced Apprenticeships will offer Level 3 qualifications and can lead to progression to Level 4 Foundation Degrees.

Entry to Employment (E2E) is viewed as being an important vocational route into an Apprenticeship and the Learning and Skills Council

is also planning to pilot special arrangements for adults over the age of 24 to achieve an Apprenticeship qualification.

"We hope the new programme will help raise the esteem of Apprenticeships and provide a credible, alternative route to staying on at school to do A Levels," said Stephen Gardner, the LSC's Director of Workbased Learning.

From good to great

The largest marketing campaign of its kind ever undertaken by the Learning and Skills Council was launched today by the Education Secretary and the Chancellor in a drive to raise the esteem of Apprenticeships and their benefits to business.

The Good to Great campaign, which seeks to generate more than 33,000 employer responses and up to 23,000 Apprenticeship places during 2004-05, was given a kick start at an event in London to coincide with the screening and publication of national television and press advertising.

sectors – manufacturing, retail, business administration and construction.

But the campaign will also look to redress the 70/30 imbalance of young men to young women entering Apprenticeships and to encourage

“We have much else planned and the TV advertisement is just the start of the campaign,” said Nicky Brunner, the LSC’s Head of National Marketing. “Our direct marketing plans should generate the greatest response.

“We are aiming to send out a series of

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Snapshots from the new TV advertising campaign

It introduced the new Apprenticeships brand to build on that of Modern Apprenticeships and was given further impetus by the delivery of letters from the Chancellor, Gordon Brown and the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Charles Clarke, to the country’s 1000 largest employers.

The campaign aims to demonstrate that while training is good for companies, Apprenticeships, leading to formal qualifications, are great for business – helping develop and retain specific workforce skills that can improve competitiveness and profitability.

Its primary aim is to encourage more companies in more sectors to offer Apprenticeship places. Demand for Apprenticeships currently outstrips the supply of places available to young people. Under the Modern Apprenticeship programme, 65 per cent of places were offered in just four

more ethnic involvement through an 18 month programme of advertising, internet activities, public relations and direct mailing.

The national television advertisement features a town centre with the camera taking the viewer from one business to another, all demonstrating a common theme – an experienced worker passing on knowledge and skills to a young apprentice.

It will run initially for five weeks but may be aired for a second time this autumn. Viewers with interactive television will be able to respond immediately by pressing the red button on their remote controls.

While the TV advert will provide the most immediate high profile promotion of Apprenticeships to employers, it is viewed by the Learning and Skills Council as being only a small component of a huge programme of activity.

letters, targeting different sectors and with relevance to large employers and to companies we believe offer the best potential.

“Advertisements will be placed in the national press and carefully selected regional or local publications and will again follow the Good to Great theme. Although the whole thrust of what we are doing is aimed at employers, we are bound to get a response from parents and young people who might be interested in Apprenticeships.

“Our online marketing plans include targeting recruitment and Human Resources sites to feature Apprenticeship links and web banners on their sites.

“A new website, www.apprenticeships.org.uk, will feature information for employers and others interested in Apprenticeships.”

Fulfilling the promise

A new system has been put in place by the Learning and Skills Council to ensure that employers whose interest in Apprenticeships is raised by the national marketing campaign are dealt with efficiently and effectively.

A national contact centre has been established to handle all enquiries through a single telephone number **08000 150 400** and a new website www.apprenticeships.org.uk has been created through which companies can find out more about Apprenticeships.

Businesses which get in touch with the national contact centre will be sent an information pack within 24 hours and their details will be passed on electronically to a regional co-ordinator.

Co-ordinators will forward details to brokers or learning organisations on receipt of the information and interested companies will be contacted so that a visit to discuss their

requirements can be arranged within seven days. National and local learning organisations have been asked to sign a specific service level agreement.

All details of leads and progress will be fed into a newly created national database to ensure that every enquiry is followed up.

Val Cumberland, Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications for the East of England, is one of the recently appointed regional co-ordinators. "We are expecting in the region of 3,000 leads to come out of the national campaign and it's up to me to decide which of our six local offices handles different enquires," she said.

"In our region, most of the local offices have a broker who can take on the employer liaison duties. It is up to local offices to fully brief training providers as to what is expected of them, although I will ensure it all happens."

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Research supports change

The change from the 10 year old Modern Apprenticeship framework to the new and re-branded family of Apprenticeships is being introduced after independent research conducted on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council with employers, young people and parents.

Findings showed that Apprenticeships is a strong brand in its own right with good awareness and respect, even though perceptions are generally concentrated on traditional industries.

Respondents felt that the new Apprenticeships offered more range and more choice than did the Modern Apprenticeship framework, which offered Foundation and advanced

Apprenticeships for people up to the age of 25.

The new family of Apprenticeships will offer places from age 14 with the introduction of Apprenticeship pilot schemes for people aged 25 and over. It provides a more comprehensive structure – open to people at many stages of their lives and offering many levels of qualifications, according to the research

Employers were impressed by the new structure and many who had employed apprentices particularly welcomed the introduction of Young Apprenticeships, which they said gave young people a chance to find their feet in a new profession.



Apprenticeships

Employers interested in Apprenticeships should call 08000 150 400

To find out more about Apprenticeships, visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Getting on in Tesco

The country's largest supermarket chain has turned to Apprenticeships to develop home grown skills and to build upon its successful internal training programmes.

Tesco, which has more than 225,000 staff throughout the UK, has introduced Apprenticeship pilot schemes at three of its stores, Meir, Uttoxeter and Solihull, and currently employs 20 young people as retail apprentices.

Clare Chapman, Group Human

Resources Director, said the pilot was introduced this February and that early indications were extremely encouraging.

"Giving our people the skills they need to do their jobs is key to our success. Our Apprenticeship pilot is already getting great feedback from staff, who tell us that they like the opportunity to earn and learn.

"It is part of our continued commitment to giving our staff the opportunity to get on."

Luke Albutt, 18, left school and went to college to study IT but left because he didn't enjoy the classroom experience. He had worked at Tesco's Solihull store for 18 months in various roles before embarking on his retail Apprenticeship and is now employed in the price integrity department.

"At college I didn't really feel like I was learning," he said. "With an Apprenticeship at Tesco I get to build on my experiences from working, which helps."

His colleague, Sara Robinson, 20, went to college before joining the Tesco Solihull store a year ago and enjoys the variety of work there. She wants to build a career in the retail sector and believes her Apprenticeship will help her to succeed.

"Friends of mine didn't realise you could do an Apprenticeship in retail," she said. "It has been great for me because I get to work and study at the same time.

"There are a few of us here studying for an Apprenticeship at work, so we help each other out. Getting experience and qualifications out of it will really add to my profile."

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Sara Robinson and Luke Albutt outside the Solihull store

Apprenticeships Contacts



Apprenticeships

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