



Apprenticeship Ambassador Network



October/November 2018

Dear fellow ambassadors,

Our **annual conference** in Birmingham is on the horizon. We have almost 200 people registered with a good representation from both the AAN and YAAN across every region – even with potential 5am starts!. I want to thank all the chairs and co-ordinators for their efforts in encouraging a strong turnout. There is still an opportunity for regions to nominate additional active and influential ambassadors. If so, please email marcus.rai@education.gov.uk - he will make all the arrangements.



At the conference, we will be hearing more information about the new **T Levels**. These are 2 year courses (at level 3) where 80% of the time is classroom-based. The remaining 20% is 'on the job' training. T Levels and apprenticeships are 2 options within the same **technical education** system. As with apprenticeships, they are designed by employers and for employers. T Levels will be phased in over the next 5 years; from September 2020, the first 3 T Levels will be in Construction, Education & Childcare, and Digital.

To establish T Levels as a high quality option, a crucial component will be industry placements lasting a minimum of 45 working days. The placements will be structured and meaningful – embedding students into a good experience of a real working environment. As ambassadors, we need to understand T Levels because employers and young people will soon start to question us over their implementation.

In January, February and March next year, there will also be 1 event focused on T Levels in each of the 9 regions. Let's get behind this extra focus on technical education. And as the regional chairs know, a **new national advertising campaign** about apprenticeships will also be highly visible at this time – and I can tell you all that Cabinet Office approval for the expenditure for this has just been secured.

Next week, the Chancellor will deliver the **Budget**. This newsletter looks at some of the submissions sent into government from groups such as the CBI and the Federation of Small Businesses. Apprenticeships feature heavily. The consistent message is apprenticeships do make a powerful impact. As ambassadors, this gives us added confidence when we tell our stories to employers and young people. By making these stories locally relevant, our influence can help more employers embrace the reforms and make a positive difference up and down the country.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Birmingham. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to apprenticeships.

Kind regards,
Jason

FSB spotlight on apprenticeships and T Levels

The FSB has published its [Budget submission](#).

On apprenticeships, the FSB position is:

Since the introduction of 10 per cent co-investment for apprenticeship training among non-levy payers, there has been a significant reduction in the number of apprenticeship starts. The introduction of co-investment has come at the same time as significant increases in the cost of doing business for small employers and, as a result of the co-investment requirement, apprenticeships have become financially unviable for many smaller businesses. Reducing co-investment from 10 per cent to five per cent would help reverse this trend by alleviating the cost of the delivery and recruitment of apprentices. At the very least, the Government should suspend co-investment for those sectors struggling most with high costs of doing business and then review the impact on apprenticeship starts.

We welcomed the flexibility introduced into the system July 2018 allowing Levy payers to be able to transfer funds to multiple businesses. However the 10 per cent cap on the funds that can be transferred acts as a barrier to the system operating effectively. Alongside any relaxation of the cap, the Government should work with large employers to help identify small businesses in their supply chain which would benefit from their support.

We want to ensure that there is sufficient funding for all small firms to be able to take on an apprentice if they want to. Any changes to the Apprenticeship Levy should therefore come with a guarantee to co-fund apprenticeships in non-levy paying businesses in England for the duration of the next Parliament, and a pledge not to lower the Levy threshold.

On T Levels:

A third of our members have faced a skills shortage when recruiting, and almost half lack full skills proficiency within their existing workforce. The biggest skills gaps exist in the mid-level, technical skills. The Government's focus on improving the quality of technical education is welcome. However, the overall success of T-levels is largely dependent on how effectively small businesses engage with the programme, their demand for individuals that have completed T-levels, and their ability to deliver work placements.

FSB is particularly concerned about the ability of small businesses to host T-level students for a 45-day work placement. If T-levels are to work for both students and businesses, there needs to be clear incentives and guidance for small businesses when it comes to offering significant placements. Our research found only six per cent of small businesses in England would be able to offer work placements under current plans.

If small firms do not receive the right support, T-levels will fall at the first hurdle. The Government should introduce a T-level placement allowance to support small businesses in offering industry placements. This should match the funding provided to learning providers to deliver industry placements.

British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) comments on the upcoming Budget

Suren Thiru, Head of Economics at the BCC said: "The number of job vacancies is close to an all-time high, providing further evidence of the worrying skills shortages plaguing UK businesses. Firms are reporting that recruitment difficulties have reached critical levels, which coupled with Brexit uncertainty is increasingly putting employers off trying to hire, and if sustained could increasingly weigh on jobs growth.

"Against this backdrop, the Budget must be used to halt the alarmingly decline in apprenticeships, including scrapping the 10% co-investment apprenticeship contribution rule for small businesses, a key barrier to SMEs recruiting and training young apprentices. We also urge ministers to work closely with business to deliver a future migration system that enables access to the skills needed at all levels to help grow our economy."

CBI calls for support for apprenticeships in The Budget

In its [Budget submission](#), the CBI has asked for:

Double the budget of the Institute for Apprenticeships to £28 million to give it the capacity to approve training schemes quickly and efficiently.

Make it easier for SMEs to access apprenticeship levy funds by reducing the cap for SMEs from 10% to 5%

A clear long-term vision to introduce a flexible skills levy after 2020, to include life-long learning, ensuring business has ample opportunity to feed in.

CBI Director General Carolyn Fairbairn said: “While investing in capital is vital, there will not be an inch of progress in tackling the economy’s underlying challenges unless we invest in people. The Chancellor’s recent decision to listen to calls from the CBI to reform the Apprentice Levy is hugely welcome. By raising the limit on apprenticeship levy transfers from 10% to 25%, more firms and apprentices in supply chains will be able to benefit. And firms are also pleased to see the increase in funding for the National Retraining Partnership. But the Apprenticeship Levy is still a heavy part of the cumulative burden weighing on firms and needs ongoing reform.”

Careers & Enterprise Company announces investments

The Careers & Enterprise Company has [revealed](#) details of its £2.5 million to support personal guidance in schools and colleges.

Earn and Learn

Interesting [statistics](#) showing median annualised earnings of £16,500 for level 3 apprenticeships rose 27% to £21,000 over five years to the end of 2015-16. The figures increased up to 53% for level 4.

Committee wants high quality to drive apprenticeship focus

The Education Select Committee published its report - [The apprenticeships ladder of opportunity: quality not quantity](#) – which calls for:

- New providers judged by Ofsted to be making insufficient progress should be removed from the RoATP
- The Government to carefully monitor whether bodies responsible for apprenticeship quality have the resources to fulfil their remits
- The IfA to make the growth of Degree apprenticeships a strategic priority
- The Government should double the time employers have to spend their levy funds to 48 months

In response, **Anne Milton** said: “It is essential that apprenticeship training is of high-quality. We have given Ofsted additional funding so it can hold the rising numbers of training providers to account. Of those registered providers that have been inspected, 83 per cent were rated as good or outstanding. Any provider that falls short of the required standards will be removed from our register and stopped from taking on new apprentices until they have improved.

“We will look at the report with interest as we want to make our apprenticeship system work even better. Last week the Chancellor announced changes to the apprenticeship levy in response to feedback from business. We will respond to the report in full in the near future.”

Fixing the apprenticeship levy

An interesting [opinion piece from Lady Cobham at the 5 Per Cent Club](#) with her latest thinking on apprenticeships.

AELP vision post Brexit

An interesting [wish list](#) from the AELP on what the skills strategy should be after Brexit with references to both apprenticeships and T Levels.

Member in the spotlight

Mike Wade – Hodgson Saters Ltd – AAN North East



Q - What is your role within your company?

My official title is Finance Manager, as with most SME's the role encompasses disciplines relating to the non-operational side of the business. My responsibilities therefore also cover HR policy, Legal compliance, policy setting and implementation, planning and overseeing the IT and admin functions, and involvement in marketing and external relationships.

Q - How long have you been involved in apprenticeships?

I started working with Hodgson Sayers in 2009, and part of the longer-term strategic plan was to continue and to formalise the policy which was in place from the very beginning of recruiting and training our people through the apprenticeship route and promoting from within. As part of the senior management team I wholly supported this, and have led the implementation from the very beginning, wholly owning the process from the 1st cohort of the revised policy in 2010. The validation of this approach came when Hodgson Sayers were awarded the People Development Award at the National Chamber of Commerce Awards in November 2015, scooping the Company of the Year accolade at the same event. The apprenticeship programme and the complete and unwavering support of the entire workforce played a massive part in that success.

Q - What motivates you to support apprenticeships as an ambassador?

Both our Executive Chairman Billy Hodgson and Managing Director John Sayers benefitted from apprenticeships at the beginning of their careers, and the first apprentices who went away to Leeds and Birmingham for training in 1982 are still employed with one of these being the Contract Manager responsible for a multi-million-pound turnover division.

These as well as many others who are on this well-trodden path provide very visible examples of the available career paths for apprentices, as well as having the first-hand experience to model the real-world mentoring which is an essential part of any apprentice's journey. Just to see the differences in the individuals as they grow and develop, having conversations with them during that time and continuing to encourage their lifelong learning pathway on the career ladder and hearing some of the inspirational stories is more than enough motivation for me.

Q - How do you personally go about connecting more employers to apprenticeships?

As part of my external roles I am the Chair of the Durham Committee of the North East England Chamber of Commerce and sit on the Council of that body, I am also an Advisory Board Member of Business Durham which is the inward investment arm of Durham County Council, I also work within the NELEP Enterprise Advisor program and as a newly appointed Governor of New College Durham. These positions allow me to continue to meet and network with senior managers and policy influencers of businesses of all sizes. This allows me to provide information on the apprentice activity that Hodgson Sayers does and also allows me to help and advise them by making connections with schools and colleges who can supply both the talent they need, and the educational resource that will develop that talent.

Q - What has been your biggest achievement as an ambassador?

Participation in the NEAAN means having to make the time to engage fully in the process, not only to attend the meetings and contribute in a meaningful manner but also to be available for external events, providing the opportunity to advise and inform potential apprentices and their key influencers, employers of all types and sizes and to continue to promote the validity of apprenticeships as an equal outcome alongside other educational routes.

I must admit that I was as proud as I could be when my son started his apprenticeship at an engineering company in Oxford.

Q - Where do you see apprenticeships going over the next 10 years and where might ambassadors have the most impact?

With the continued support of the policy makers in Westminster to promote the equality of outcome between the different routes to employment, and for them to listen to the voices of those employers to address the current shortcomings in the apprenticeship levy, trusting that we all have a common interest in the success of that scheme within a wider planned employment and lifelong learning strategy, I believe that the bulk of entries into employment will be through apprenticeships.

Q - What would make the biggest difference to your role as an ambassador?

A crackdown on those rogue employers who see apprentices as nothing more than a cheap source of labour. This attitude is not helpful insofar as it detracts from the consistent positive messages from both apprentices and employers and is consistently referred to by those who do not agree as being the normal outcome when it is clearly not.

In addition, as a nation of small businesses I would like to see some form of central hub of apprentices in training providing a "talent pool" that these smaller businesses could dip into when they have the ability and time to provide the essential on the job training, without the longer term commitment that an apprentice would otherwise require, equally this would provide a breadth of experience to the apprentice, providing greater exposure to the variety of skills and roles within their chosen career path.

YAAN Member in the spotlight

Lois McClure – The Cooperatvie – NW YAAN



Q - What is your role within your organisation?

I work as the Studio Delivery Co-ordinator in our in-house Design Studio.

Q - Why did you choose to complete an apprenticeship?

I chose to do an apprenticeship because I felt that sitting in lectures and then going writing about what I'd learned was just not how I wanted to learn and progress myself. I wanted to get stuck into the working world but also felt like I needed to continue with further education – the apprenticeship route was completely right for me and I've never looked back.

Q - What motivated you to become a young apprenticeship ambassador?

I wanted to be an Apprenticeship Ambassador because I feel like young people aren't really told the proper options when looking at next steps. I wished when I was that age someone like me was going into schools and colleges and explaining what's out there.

Q - What has been your biggest achievement as a young ambassador?

My biggest achievement was being asked to speak at a school event on International Women's Day. I felt honored to be asked to speak as it just reiterated the fact that you can be successful through an Apprenticeship and allowed me to inspire other young females to do and be whatever they want.

Q - Where do you see apprenticeships going over the next 10 years?

I see apprenticeships being seen as the first choice for young people once they leave school or college, and the UK leading the way on apprenticeships.

Q - Where do you think young ambassadors have the most impact?

I think Young Ambassadors have the most impact in talking with young people whether that be primary school, high school or college level. Young people talking to other young people works so much better because we can relate to each other and their story feels real, they have gone through the experiences you might go through.

Q - What would make the biggest difference to your role as a young ambassador?

I think getting more young ambassadors in front of influential people and large conferences/events would help spread the message even more and engage other young people, parents, schools and employers. It's so powerful to see a young ambassador tell their story and I think it's an amazing way to engage people with apprenticeships.

Useful Information

Apprenticeship Service update

We are introducing a new feature on the apprenticeship service - "what employers are saying". We will be inviting employers who have registered apprentices on the apprenticeship service to feedback on specific aspects of their apprenticeship programmes.

The first beta version of the feature will ask for feedback on their training providers. We will publish the feedback on find apprenticeship training to help employers choose their training provider. All feedback will be anonymous.

For more information read the [ESFA Digital Blog](#).

Community activation content – please share

Please take a few minutes to share some of the content below that is most relevant to your audiences and help support the apprenticeships movement.

Hire an Apprentice

Please view and share employer [short films](#) available on our You Tube site, on the benefits of apprenticeships; the return on investment of apprentices and the support available in the recruitment of apprentices. A variety of employers give their perspective in the films including Nottingham City Homes, EEM, JCB and Eyesore Merch.

Sector engagement

We are still keen to engage employers in shouting about how great apprenticeships are. Please do share [this graphic](#) across social media channels, using the wording below:

'We are proud of our #apprentices who are vital for the future growth of our business. Search for information on how you can hire an apprentice at <https://bit.ly/2Cfne1r> #ApprenticeshipsWork'

Apprenticeship and levy statistics 25 October 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/apprenticeship-and-levy-statistics-october-2018>

This publication includes apprenticeship service registrations and commitments to 31 August 2018 and monthly apprenticeship starts covering the provisional full 2017/18 academic year.

There have been 1.49m apprenticeship starts since May 2015, and 3.87m starts since May 2010 reported to date.

The Apprenticeship starts reported in the provisional full 2017/18 academic year decreased by 24.8 per cent in comparison to figures reported at this time in 2016/17, and decreased by 26.6 per cent in comparison to this time in 2015/16. The decrease can be seen in all age groups. However, higher level apprenticeship starts have increased by 29.9 per cent in the provisional full 2017/18 academic year compared to the same period in 2016/17.

There is likely to continue to be a fairly negative public reaction amongst trade and some national media to the publication, with the focus being on how apprenticeship starts have dropped since the levy was introduced last April (and equating the levy specifically with the drop).

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton said:

"It's great to see the figures showing that there continues to be a growing number of people, of all ages, taking up our new, higher quality apprenticeship opportunities.

“Through our reforms we wanted to see high quality apprenticeships offered so it’s good to see that of all apprenticeship starts 43.7% are on the new high quality apprenticeship standards – that’s up from 4.8% this time last year.

“The range is growing with 350 apprenticeship standards now available for a wide variety of jobs from planning officers to agriculture to accountancy. There is something for everyone!

“Change is never easy but business and the public sector are now embracing the opportunities our new apprenticeship reforms have given them.”

Apprenticeships in England by Industry Characteristics 16-17 25 October 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/apprenticeships-in-england-by-industry-characteristics>

The Skills Policy Analysis Stats team have published a new set of experimental stats on apprenticeship starts which breaks them down in more detail by sector.

FE choices Employer satisfaction survey 25 October 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fe-choices-employer-satisfaction-survey-2017-to-2018>

This primarily covers employers responses to the delivery of apprenticeships by providers.

Regional Input

Apprenticeship Ambassador Network on the road in the South East!



SE Apprentice Ambassadors from Brighton & Hove City Council recently promoted apprenticeships at the Fuller Working Lives Careers Fair, held at the Brighton Centre last month. The fair was held in collaboration with the Council, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and the National Careers Service (NCS).

Local residents were provided with an opportunity to meet employers, training providers and volunteer organisations, and the AAN was on hand to talk to employers about recruiting apprentices using apprenticeships for their existing workforce and spoke to over 100 residents looking for new opportunities.

By 2030, 50% of the working age population in the UK will be over 50 years of age; this means that employers will increasingly need to rely on the skills and experience of older workers if they are to avoid skills shortages in the future. The Fuller Working Lives campaign encourages people to think about their future financial security by utilising transferrable skills and developing new skills in order to return to the labour market or volunteering.

The SE AAN stand was extremely busy and it was an opportunity to showcase our new branded tablecloth and banner promoting the work we do.

Case study by Employability services received from Yorkshire and the Humber

Ryan Smith –Success Story

Ryan said he could not stop smiling since recently securing his ideal job as an Apprenticeship Support Worker at Care Plus, Vulnerable Adult Day Services. Throughout his education, from leaving college and gaining his degree in Sport and Exercise Science at university, Ryan has had to overcome barriers and demonstrate his determination to succeed despite his condition – Asperger’s Syndrome.



Ryan first started his journey with Employability Services - Supported Employment a few months ago after being referred from the Intensive Support Team, to aid him in his quest to find employment within the care sector. When the opportunity became available at Care Plus, Vulnerable Adult Day Services for an Apprentice Support Worker, Ryan was eager to apply.

Norma Yarborough, Supported Employment Team Leader encouraged Ryan to apply for the vacancy, assisted him with the application process and provided interview techniques, in preparation for his interview. Norma said, “Ryan’s passion to help and support other people with disabilities and his caring and passionate nature will enable him to succeed within his new career pathway”.

Ryan said ‘I am so happy I have got the job and without Norma I don’t think this would have been possible’.

If you require further information please contact the Employability Services on 01472 256730.

Alternatively visit our website at <http://www.careplusgroup.org/services/employability-services>

Or follow us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/employabilitys>

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If you have any content for future issues, please contact Marcus Rai: marcus.rai@education.gov.uk

This is a regular bulletin from the National Apprenticeship Service about our activities, services, resources and publications, apprenticeship opportunities and forthcoming events.