Briefing note and event summary: Into Apprenticeships, Traineeships and Supported Internships

The government has made a commitment to increase the quality and quantity of apprenticeships in England, reaching three million starts in 2020. “Our goal is for young people to see apprenticeships as a high quality and prestigious path to successful careers, and for these opportunities to be available across all sectors of the economy, in all parts of the country and at all levels. This will support our aim for young people to get the best start in life, through the opportunity that high quality education and training provides.”


Doing an apprenticeship is a great way to earn a salary, get training and qualifications and develop a career. Apprenticeships are open to a wider range of people, including disabled people and people with a health condition or learning difficulty. Employers are beginning to understand that it’s important to give everyone a fair and equal chance and are also seeing this means they can choose from a wider pool of talent. Almost all apprenticeships can be made accessible and being disabled should not restrict job choices.

However, since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April 2017, there has been a decrease in apprenticeship applications which has been attributed to different factors such as misunderstanding of the apprenticeship levy, teething problems, employers taking their time to maximise opportunities and the changes to funding. Some say that the levy itself undermines the social mobility agenda by the way the funding system is designed,


Neil Carberry, CBI managing director for people policy, said: “This disappointing data will come as no surprise to companies, who have repeatedly made clear that the current design of the apprenticeship levy system is not effective. Businesses believe in apprenticeships but there can be no argument now - reform of the levy system is needed urgently
to ensure its success. Firms are still having to adjust to the new system against difficult timescales, but the challenges of the levy run deeper than just a timing issue. That’s why the CBI has consistently said that for the levy to really meet business and learner needs, more flexibility is vital so firms can deliver high-quality training".  

The statistical first release urged caution over the latest figures, stating: "It may take time for organisations to adjust to the new funding system, and so it is too early to draw conclusions based on the number of apprenticeship starts recorded since May 2017."

As part of the Government’s plans to improve apprenticeship opportunities for disabled people they are implementing the recommendation of the 2016 Taskforce led by Paul Maynard. Since September 2017, apprentices with an Education Health and Care Plan or ‘legacy statement’ can apply for an adjustment to English and maths requirements to Entry Level 3, and British Sign Language (BSL) will be an alternative to English Functional Skills for those who have BSL as their first language.

Anne Milton, Minister of State at the Department for Education, responded to a question (05/09/2017) on what progress she has made on implementing the recommendations of the Maynard Review into apprenticeships for people with a learning disability:

“From this autumn, we are evaluating how the new funding system is working to encourage the successful take up and likely achievement of apprentices with a disability, embedding apprenticeships into the wider Civil Service diversity and inclusion strategy, as well as developing communications and guidance for employers, including toolkits and diversity training.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has continued to develop the Access to Work funding stream to consider pre-existing assessments of need agreed by other agencies. DWP has further updated the Access to Work Pre-employment eligibility letter and is developing supporting case studies, as well as promoting the Mental Health Support Service to apprentices. It is also embedding the Disability Confident scheme in the apprenticeship recruitment service and using the scheme to promote public sector good practice. We have set a public measure of success to increase apprenticeship starts by people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by 20% by 2020."
Further resources:


https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help/benefits-information/factsheets/work-related-factsheets

https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work

Making your apprenticeship programme more inclusive makes good business sense: enabling you to recruit and retain the best talent, grow your business, increase productivity and improve accessibility for other staff and customers.

The Employer Toolkit brings together inspirational case studies of employers who provide an inclusive apprenticeship programme, along with hints and tips on how to improve the accessibility of your own apprenticeships.

http://www.employer-toolkit.org.uk/

Disability Rights UK campaigns to make apprenticeship inclusive and welcomes further government initiatives to extend flexibility in the apprenticeship scheme.

The DR UK Disability and Skills Unit aims to share information, ideas and best practice examples to support more disabled people into apprenticeships, traineeship and supported internship.
DR UK/DSU summary of event: ‘Into Apprenticeships, Traineeships and Supported Internships’

DSU held a daylong event on Apprenticeships, Traineeships and Supported Internships on 06/02/2018. This event was aimed to be of interest to employers, Human Resources and other stakeholders to gain greater understanding and information on support available to disabled apprentices, trainees and supported interns including Access to Work, the role of training providers, colleges and organisations, the advantages of being an inclusive employer and best practice examples and ideas on reasonable adjustments. The event also aimed to provide networking opportunities and give information about relevant resources, as well as first-hand stories from young disabled trainees/apprentices/supported interns.

The event was attended by 100 delegates from different sectors including local and national government, businesses, colleges, voluntary sector and parents. The event brought together key speakers from the business sector, local and national government, FE colleges, training providers and NHS.

For presentations of the event: https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2017/december/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-supported-internships-seminar

Presentations included:

Kamran Mallick, CEO Disability Rights UK talked about his personal journey into education and employment and the importance of providing opportunities for disabled people that include inclusive apprenticeships and internships. Kamran highlighted the work Disability Rights UK does, including information provided through the helpline and careers guides such as Into Apprenticeships and Into Higher Education. Kamran also spoke about the barriers he experienced with career advisers, recruitment agencies and having less career opportunities in comparison with his non-disabled brothers.

Jo Baty, Head of Local Offer and SEN at the Royal Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham spoke about the supported internships project they are running in collaboration with public, private and voluntary sectors. In Hammersmith and Fulham they have young people rotating in and out every 10 weeks. The learners are assigned a mentor and a buddy and they have a job coach from Action on Disability. Jo explained that supported internships are a full-time work placement with a job outcome at the end and that most employees have their classroom
on-site. They are in their second year working with L’Oréal. Jo reported this has been a very powerful experience for the young people. https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/

**Caroline Archer, Action on Disability** presented on the role of job coaches, the importance of understanding different learning styles and reasonable adjustments. The job coaches liaise with managers and mentors. They look at the tasks to hopefully expand them and then they work on the roles – ensuring all necessary reasonable adjustments are put in place. https://actionondisability.org.uk/

**Rachel Knight, West London Colleges** talked about their student-centred curriculum tailored to each individual student and their holistic approach towards learners. This year they have students up to level 2. They take on board their personal interests, personal development, interests outside the workplace e.g. cooking. They also build in job search skills, CV, going to interviews. They find it very rewarding to develop each individual student rather than following a curriculum scheme.

There was a lively response from the floor when two supported interns talked about their experiences. **Naomi Naghales** did three job rotations (L’Oréal and two other employers) and talked about the skills she learned. “My biggest journey was my confidence.”

**Jodie Clark** did a supported internship working with the managing director at L’Oréal and other areas such as Health and Safety, reception and the post room. “I felt every emotion you could imagine a person with a disability could feel. It was an amazing experience, it built up my confidence.”

https://www.wlc.ac.uk/

**Daniel Simons, Senior Employer Engagement Strategy Manager, DfE (Apprenticeships)** talked about how apprenticeships provide high quality training, transferable skills and qualifications and the importance of inclusiveness so that these opportunities are accessible to all members of society. He highlighted that over 75% employers note that they have improved productivity, 90% of apprenticeships stay in employment after education and 70% remain with the same employer. He stated that the department’s mission is to ensure as many people as possible can take advantage of apprenticeship opportunities.

“We want to increase the number by 20%. Our task force made recommendations to achieve that goal – new legislation to make maths and English more accessible – funding for those with learning disability and study materials for trainers. Trainers can use British Sign Language
as an alternative to English. In our network of supporters we are trying to engage more people into apprenticeships.”

**Diane Lightfoot, CEO Business and Disability Forum** gave a presentation on ‘Getting it right for disabled trainees – top tips for employers’. Over the last five years 400 organisations have used Business Disability Forum’s Disability Standard to improve disability performance across their business. The Forum aims to help employers support disabled people into work by sharing expertise and advice, providing training, facilitating networking opportunities. She stressed the importance of getting the culture right so that people can tell employers what they need. She also talked about inclusive design and the value, when creating any kind of process, to look at and test it with disabled people so they are completely involved. She explained how the recruitment processes should be designed to remove as many barriers as possible and provide ‘top up’ adjustments where possible. One of the things to keep at the front of the mind when talking about reasonable adjustments is cost. Diane explained that most workplace adjustments cost less than £150 and a lot are free e.g. software adjustments, flexible working times. https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/

**Lauren Bennet, Senior Researcher, Learning and Work Institute** talked about reducing the disability employment gap, the underrepresentation in apprenticeships across a range of characteristics and about L&W’s online Employer Toolkit which has resources to help businesses make their apprenticeships/ internships inclusive and as accessible as possible. www.employer-toolkit.org.uk.

Lauren highlighted how parental attitudes can be a barrier, so educating parents about apprenticeship is important. She also talked about tips for recruiting apprentices, such as ensuring apprenticeships are clearly advertised. “There are many candidates that are put off when they don’t see that employers are willing to employ people from a range of backgrounds. If you are disability confident please shout about it because it does attract people.”

**Alicia Moyles, Strategic Manager Employment and Apprenticeships, Kent County Council** gave a presentation on ‘Successful, sustainable employment- a co-ordinated approach’. She spoke about their supported employment programme which includes a contract with adult support services to work with 200 clients a year, being part of the local support employment contract and transition work in schools. They help young people move into professions they’re interested in. The next piece of work they are moving onto is transition work and introduce children to programmes whilst they are still in school. https://www.kent.gov.uk/jobs/starting-your-career/be-an-apprentice
Linsay McCulloch, Bid Lead, Lifestyles and Work, Royal Mencap Society spoke about Mencap supporting around 10,000 people a year, their supported employment and study programmes for people with a learning disability, promoting work experience and work trials, the 3 Ships approach and endorsing best practice as an employer. ‘We are scaling up employer engagement. Some are champions. We need to get it on everyone’s radar. We know that there are employer benefits. Mencap has developed an e-learning resource. There are modules about how to get people into work and the support around it. We hope this resource will spread the message. Work should be an assumption regardless of someone’s disability. People can work.’ Two things that Mencap have found especially useful are work trials and job carving – splitting one job into two or offering flexible work hours. Mencap have a case study at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrsvQ3-M6jQ
https://www.mencap.org.uk/

James R Coates, Traineeship Impact Officer, ICON Training spoke about their apprenticeship and traineeship support, working in the leisure sector, making support and learning person centred and ‘quality provision’ to ensure value for money for employers. http://icon-training.com/
A case study featuring an ICON apprentice Harry Masser is now available on the DR UK website at www.disabilityrightsuk.org/harry-masser.

Stuart Edwards, Access to Work Strategy Lead, DWP gave a presentation on the Access to Work scheme and how it can provide help with additional costs and for getting people into work and enabling employers to retain valued workers. Access to Work (ATW) is also available for anyone on apprenticeships and on a supported internship or pre-employment activity. Besides funding for equipment and taxis to and from work. https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work
https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/access-work

Nasser Siabi, CEO, Microlink PC explained how providing assistive technology and having the right tools gives independence to employees, increasing work efficiency and makes good business sense. If an employer wants retention of staff they should ensure that the equipment and devices are in place. https://www.microlinkpc.com/

Catriona Curry, National Programme Manager, Talent for Care, Health Education England / NHS, talked about apprenticeships, supported internships and work participation schemes available in the NHS and their resources toolkit for employers. There are over 350
positions and a lot of them are accessible via apprenticeships. HEE is doing a pilot in the North East and there are 113 learners supported this academic year. [https://hee.nhs.uk/](https://hee.nhs.uk/)

Vicky Self and Charlotte Sutton, Cornwall and Warwickshire Partnership Trust / NHS talked about how being in a learning disability and mental health trust it’s important to have a work force that is representative of the community they serve. They have evidence to suggest people find it easier to receive support from others with similar experiences to them. They have a link with Princes Trust and we have a programme of traineeships.

Feedback from the break-out session questions included:

1. As an employer, what is the biggest obstacle to you offering a work placement or job to a disabled person?
   - Bad access arrangement/physical accessibility
   - Transport to work
   - Employers want guidance on placement withdrawing, should the internship employment not work.
   - Employers are bound to traditional recruitment processes- maybe better ways are profiling, task days, work trialling
   - Health and safety /fire rescue issues
   - Uncertainty on liable if things go wrong
   - Lack of understanding about disability- fear factor/ how to interact
   - Lack of understanding of support available
   - Lack of knowledge of the range of additional needs and the support may be required
   - Previous bad experience
   - Socialising/ fitting in with the rest of the workforce
   - Need for flexibility and the effect that has on the rest of the workforce
   - Productivity
   - Can the disabled candidate do the task?
   - Impact of absence due to ill health etc.
   - Will it be financially viable?
   - Time and commitment from other staff
   - Too busy-not having the time to identify reasonable adjustments etc. (especially small business)
   - Having a lot more work to do
   - Time consuming and the different agencies involved
• Not enough support from other agencies such as job coaches who only provide advice and give no practical support
• How much support the person will actually need
• Lack of resources
• No understanding of job carving
• Having to make too many adjustments/changes in job specification and tests
• Rethinking job interviews/competency based alternatives/presentation
• Hidden disabilities / the need for open and honest interview
• Making it a meaningful experience for a disabled person
• ‘Doing someone a favour’ rather than seeing what they can offer

2. What are the 3 main actions you can take to address this obstacle?
• Educate and train employers/ staff training and awareness for companies
• Develop marketing materials
• Employers to visit internship on site to see how it works
• Recruitment events for disabled people and people with LDD
• Policy-equal opportunities of flexible arrangements
• Matching skills to opportunity so workers/apprentices are productive
• Build good relationships
• Build trust and stand by your word
• Normalise- bring more people with disabilities into the business to have a diverse workplace
• Job coach support
• ‘Testing the water’ opportunities eg. Work experience, Saturday jobs, holiday jobs, supported internships, supported apprenticeships
• Dedicated mentors
• Use adaptive technology
• Education/ having more case studies
• Start with the individual and their skills / job carving
• Make the whole recruitment process easier for everyone
• Re-designing job specs /flexible processes during interviews
• Promote benefits of having a diverse workforce eg. Good retention inclusive culture
• More information about disability /resources/toolkits available
• Support employer, understanding, support individual/ work tied with support
• Talk to other employers/case studies
• Better information on different options available including apprenticeships, ( supported apprenticeships) traineeships, supported internships
• Clarity ion expected outcomes
• Exit strategy

3. **Can anyone in this room today help you with this?**
• Business Disability Forum
• AtW
• British association of supported employment (BASE)