



Progression through apprenticeships

The final report of the Skills Commission's Inquiry into apprenticeships

March 2009



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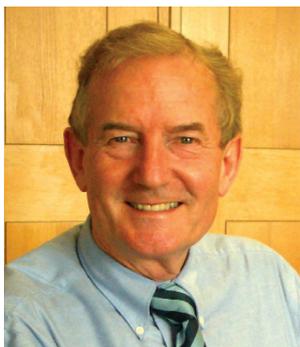
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Contents

1. Foreword	4
2. Chairman's preface	5
3. Introduction	8
4. Context and policy landscape	9
4.1 What is an apprenticeship?	9
4.2 Current provision	10
4.3 Government policy	10
4.4 Potential for employer engagement	11
5. Summary of recommendations	12
6. Entry to apprenticeships	16
6.1 Careers Education and Guidance (CEG) on apprenticeships	16
6.1.1 Current delivery of Careers Education and Guidance	17
6.1.2 Careers guidance and apprenticeships	18
6.1.2.1 Teachers	18
6.1.2.2 School and employer relations	21
6.1.2.3 Links to the labour market	22
7. Progression from other learning pathways	24
7.1 Apprenticeships and Diplomas	24
7.1.1 Competition	24
7.1.2 Integration and progression	25
7.1.3 Young apprenticeships	25
7.2 Programme-led apprenticeships	27
7.2.1 Programme-led apprenticeships in the recession	28
7.2.2 Time to define programme-led apprenticeships	28
8. Progression to advanced apprenticeships	32
8.1 Framework design	34
8.2 Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP)	34
8.3 Train to Gain	35
8.4 Funding levels for 19-plus apprentices	36

9.	Progression to advanced further education and higher education	38
9.1	Part-time courses	39
9.2	UCAS tariff points	40
9.3	Admission to higher education courses	41
9.4	Progression to the Professions	42
9.5	Monitoring apprenticeship progression to advanced further education and higher education	42
10.	Appendices	46
	Appendix 1: Institute of Careers Guidance/Skills Commission Careers Guidance Professionals Survey 2008	46
	Appendix 2: YouGov/Edge Survey 2008: apprenticeships	48
	Appendix 3: Apprentice case studies	54
	Appendix 4: Contributors to the Inquiry	58

1. Foreword



The Skills Commission is a leading group of experts and opinion-formers from the skills sector. For the past two years we have undertaken independent inquiries to help bring fresh thinking to the skills debate and engage in constructive dialogue with Government. We established this Inquiry into apprenticeships following a navigational seminar held in July 2008.



As a result of a strong drive from the Government, employers and the skills sector, there has been a significant improvement in apprenticeship provision over the last ten years. However, it became clear, during our initial seminar, that further investigation of certain aspects of apprenticeships policy was needed. Concerns were expressed at the low levels of young people taking up apprenticeships and the lack of progression within the apprenticeship system. In light of the Government's plans to expand apprenticeships, we decided these issues warranted further investigation.

During the course of this Inquiry, we have explored: ways to encourage more young people, of all abilities, to take up apprenticeships; the progression routes between apprenticeships and other vocational pathways; how to ensure a far greater proportion of apprentices progress on to advanced apprenticeships and higher levels of learning.

This report outlines the Inquiry's findings and makes a series of policy recommendations we believe will help to ensure the future prosperity of apprenticeships.

We recognise that during this time of economic downturn securing quality vocational routes for young people, such as apprenticeships, is ever-more important. Our aim is to support the work of Government on this agenda and offer solutions for policy-makers to the issues we have raised.

The Skills Commission is extremely grateful to Sir William Taylor CBE, who so expertly chaired this Inquiry, and to the education foundation, Edge, for sponsoring the research.

We also wish to express our gratitude to all those who contributed to the Inquiry: in particular the witnesses who gave evidence and those agencies and individuals who made written submissions, undertook surveys and supplied data to help inform our findings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Sheerman'.

Barry Sheerman MP
Co-Chair, Skills Commission

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Silver'.

Dame Ruth Silver DBE
Co-Chair, Skills Commission

2. Chairman's preface Sir William Taylor CBE



Apprenticeships are in the news. Ministers – including the Prime Minister – laud them. Academics put them under the microscope. Parliamentary committees undertake detailed scrutiny of legislation to regulate them. The setting up of new bodies to ensure they are administered effectively proceeds apace. Employers announce they are creating large scale schemes within their own industries. Record numbers of young – and not so young – people apply for and enrol in an increasing variety of apprenticeship programmes. The relevant numbers are huge – some 130,000 employers are currently involved and a 2020 target of 400,000 apprentices on recognised programmes, twice today's total.

There are many reasons for this interest and activity. They include critical reports on Britain's skill needs and shortages in the face of global economic competition; the decision to extend the period of compulsory education and training to 18 and offer new forms of provision; Government emphasis in a period of economic recession on raising the status of vocational education and providing meaningful employment for school leavers and for graduates; and not least, greater exposure to the term 'Apprentice' arising from the popular television series, the presenter of which, Sir Alan Sugar, has been asked to front the Government's promotion of apprenticeships. All these have played their part in giving new visibility and importance to a time-hallowed yet at times neglected form of education and training.

So why yet another inquiry – and this report? The justification is to be found in the three words of our title: *Progression through apprenticeships*.

In developed democratic societies, formal equality is recognised as necessary for justice, harmony and social integration. Necessary – but not sufficient. How rewards, resources and status are distributed matters to everyone. Individuals differ in their abilities, their efforts, and their opportunities, all of which interact in complex and often unpredictable ways to determine the levels of reward and status they desire and achieve. Not everyone will 'make it to the top' but block off possibilities and talent gets wasted, morale and effort suffer, everyone loses out.

It is for this reason that opportunities for school leavers to enter apprenticeships, progress on to advanced apprenticeships and then to foundation and to honours degrees, are all vitally important if the apprenticeship concept is to flourish, and why barriers to progression need to be dealt with.

Success can come at many points along the apprenticeship road. To complete an apprenticeship at level 2 is a success, not only in offering the possibility of further progress, but in its own right. For some who complete an apprenticeship, and their employers, it will be enough. For others the achievement will stimulate immediate efforts to move on to higher levels. For others still, whilst some time may elapse before the benefits of further study and training become apparent, the gate to the road ahead should remain open. For society and the economy as a whole, as Lord Leitch's report on Britain's skill needs showed, there is an urgent need to increase the numbers who, directly or eventually, aspire to and achieve these higher levels.

The first part of our Inquiry was concerned with the initial stages of progression for young people, from full-time schooling into employment and apprenticeship. A theme that runs through much of that evidence is the need to recruit larger numbers of able and high achieving people into apprenticeship. But in many schools, it is almost taken for granted that high achievement at level 2 will be followed by an academic course in a sixth form or college and then by entry to university. Apprenticeships are fine – for other people's children.

We also know that few teachers are well informed about apprenticeships. Teachers are not to be blamed for this. Most of them have come up through the academic route. Their whole approach is affected by their experience.

In recent years, however, many advances have been made. The Sector Skills Councils have introduced the apprenticeship model into new fields. At the same time as apprenticeship numbers have grown, so has the diversity of apprenticeship models. Completion rates have risen from 23 per cent to 64 per cent. Larger numbers of employers have become involved, including small and medium-sized enterprises. The Learning and Skills Council, set up in 2001, has been a means of achieving greater coherence in funding, and has encouraged academic study and research focusing on apprenticeships. It is being recognised that while the returns to the individual and to society from possession of a degree are still significant, those from successful completion of an apprenticeship are also tangible and worthwhile, and may contribute to the economy and social mobility in ways that traditional degree courses do not always make possible.

Our Inquiry makes no claim to be comprehensive in its coverage. But by focusing on progression we hope to stimulate more work on this important aspect of apprenticeship policy and emphasise the importance of apprenticeships as a high-quality route to success.

We are most grateful to all those organisations and individuals who contributed oral and written evidence to our Inquiry, and to the Edge Foundation which provided the necessary funding. The project was admirably managed by James Epps, who also drafted this report. It has been a pleasure to work with him and with the members and staff of the Skills Commission.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Taylor', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sir William Taylor CBE
March 2009

Introduction

3. Introduction

Apprenticeships have been revived over the last decade. By offering the chance to earn an income whilst achieving qualifications, apprenticeships are an excellent opportunity for both young people and adults to progress quickly in the world of work or retrain in a new occupation. With work-based learning as its central characteristic, apprenticeships equip individuals with transferable skills as well as the ability to carry out a specific job.

Government is rightly seeking to expand the programme, striving to create what it calls a 'renaissance' for apprenticeships. In line with targets recommended in Lord Leitch's *Review of Skills*, the Government aspires to have 400,000 apprentices in learning by 2020: double today's figures.

The Skills Commission strongly supports these ambitions. Increased investment in the high-quality skills training apprenticeships offer is of immeasurable benefit to individuals, employers and the economy. In tough economic times, the Government is right to continue its pursuit of such ambitions. Employers should be encouraged to exploit the opportunities of publicly-funded training and galvanise its labour force with the efficiency of on-the-job-trained workers.

However, the Commission believes that certain reforms are needed in order to maximise the impact of a 'renaissance'. An expansion of apprenticeships should not come at the expense of quality. Apprenticeships must continue to represent a high-quality learning route by offering the means to specialise in an industry, without closing off other options, and the opportunity to progress on to a successful career and higher levels of learning.

By focusing on quality and progression, this Inquiry has sought to make recommendations that will ensure the long-term prosperity and continued success of apprenticeships. A programme that, if well managed, has the potential to play a central role in combating the economy's current and future skills needs.

During the course of this Inquiry, the Skills Commission investigated learners' progression routes into, through and beyond apprenticeships, and has made a series of policy recommendations in the following areas:

- **Entry to apprenticeships:** Too few young people, of all academic abilities, are taking up apprenticeships, and serious questions have been raised about the adequacy of careers guidance relating to apprenticeships.
- **Progression from other learning pathways:** The Commission has investigated the potential impact of the new 14-19 Diplomas on apprenticeships and how to encourage learners to progress between the two routes. The Commission also explored the suitability of young apprenticeships and programme-led apprenticeships as progression routes to apprenticeships.
- **Progression to advanced apprenticeships:** Not enough level 2 apprentices are progressing onto level 3 advanced apprenticeships. The Commission explored why this might be, and why advanced apprenticeship numbers have remained relatively low.
- **Progression to advanced further education and higher education:** Very few former apprentices are currently progressing into advanced further education and higher education. The Commission has considered how this fundamental problem for apprenticeships can best be addressed.

To inform this Inquiry, the Skills Commission held five evidence sessions with expert witnesses including: apprentices, employers, learning providers, senior civil servants, unions and skills agencies. This research was also informed by written submissions following a call for evidence and two independent surveys (see appendices).

4. Context and policy landscape

4.1 What is an apprenticeship?

Throughout the seventies and eighties apprenticeship numbers fell rapidly. A declining manufacturing industry, concerns over the suitability of apprenticeship to the modern workplace and competition from other work-based initiatives, such as the now widely discredited Youth Training Scheme, all contributed to the downfall. In 1966 there were 243,700 apprentices but by 1990 numbers had fallen to around 53,000¹.

Since then, successive governments have sought to revive apprenticeships as part of an effort to address the nation's skills needs. In 1994 'Modern Apprenticeships' at level 3 were introduced across a number of sectors, including those not traditionally associated with apprenticeships, such as the retail sector. In 2000, the Government renamed a level 2 National Traineeship scheme as 'Apprenticeship' and the level 3 apprenticeship programme became an 'Advanced Apprenticeship'. In 2004 the term 'Modern Apprenticeship' was simplified to 'Apprenticeship', a brand that now encompasses the following:

- **Apprenticeship:** a level 2 programme that makes up a majority of overall apprenticeship numbers.
- **Advanced Apprenticeship:** a level 3 programme that makes up around a third of overall apprenticeship numbers.
- **Young Apprenticeship:** a small programme for 14-16 year olds (see section 7.1.3)
- **Programme-led Apprenticeship:** a type of provision that enables learners to train for an apprenticeship without employee status (see section 7.2)
- **Higher Apprenticeship:** a level 4 programme that is currently limited to just two sectors: IT and Engineering.

Today's apprenticeship is a form of training based on a combination of work-based and theoretical learning, funded, to differing degrees, by the Government. There are four core participants in any government-funded apprenticeship: the apprentice; the employer, who pays the apprentice a wage and provides on-the-job training and time away from work for additional learning; the learning provider, who provides off the job tuition and takes on the administrative workload; and the Government, which provides funding via the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

An apprenticeship is not a qualification in itself but a framework containing a number of different qualifications, all of which must be passed in order to complete the framework². Each framework is designed by the relevant Sector Skills Council and must include the following elements, in line with the apprenticeship framework blueprint:

- **National Vocational Qualification (NVQ):** the competency-based element that demonstrates the ability to carry out a certain occupation. The NVQ is usually certified via a work-based assessment.
- **Technical Certificate:** the knowledge-based element that demonstrates theoretical knowledge underpinning a job in a certain occupation and industry.
- **Functional Skills in numeracy, literacy and, in some frameworks, other personal skills.**
- **A module on employment rights and responsibilities, which is often taught as part of the Technical Certificate.**

¹ Brockmann, Clarke & Winch *The Apprenticeship Framework in England: the need for an educational component and for employee involvement* (2008) p.2

² While outside the detailed scope of this Inquiry, the Commission is sympathetic to the view expressed by both UCAS and Martin Dunford, Chairman of the Association of Learning Providers, that it would be helpful if an apprenticeship did become a qualification (as the Diploma and a Degree are) and if the elements of it were graded above the current minimum competence level.

The blueprint has been designed to equip learners with transferable skills relevant to the wider industry and world of work, as well as the specific skills associated with each occupation.

4.2 Current provision

The Government, via the LSC, fully funds all apprenticeship training for apprentices aged 16-18. For those apprentices aged 19 and over training is part-funded, with employers asked to contribute around 50% of the training costs. From August 2009 the minimum apprentice wage, paid for by the employer, will increase to £95 per week, though the average apprentice gets paid around £175 per week. A recent study estimated that advanced apprentices and level 2 apprentices earn around 18% and 16% more, respectively, than individuals qualified to the same level who have not completed an apprenticeship³.

There are around 180 different apprenticeship frameworks across over 80 industry sectors. However, a large majority of apprenticeship places are in the following 12 sectors: construction; hairdressing; business administration; customer care; hospitality; childcare and early years; engineering; vehicle maintenance; retail; health and social care; electro-technical; and plumbing.

Apprenticeship numbers have risen significantly from around 26,000 starts in 1995/96⁴ to around 200,000 in 2007/08⁵. Apprenticeship framework completion rates have also risen, from just over 20% in 2000 to just over 60% in 2008, and around 100,000 apprentices now successfully complete their framework each year⁶.

However, the proportion of employers involved in the apprenticeship programme is low. In a 2006 Government-funded survey, only 6% of employers said they had taken on an apprentice in the previous year⁷, and the Government estimate that only 130,000 businesses out of 1.4 million hire apprentices⁸. A more recent survey revealed that only 4% of very small businesses, those with fewer than five employees, are participating in apprenticeships, compared to 25% of large employers⁹. On average, those large businesses with apprenticeship programmes recruit around 10 apprentices per year, compared to an average of just over one for companies with fewer than 25 employees¹⁰.

4.3 Government policy

Following recommendations in Lord Leitch's *Review of Skills*, the Government announced in its White Paper on apprenticeships, *World Class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent Building Skills for All*, plans to further expand apprenticeships to 400,000 in England by 2020. To help meet these ambitions, spending on apprenticeships will increase to around £1 billion by 2010/11 and a new, dedicated National Apprenticeship Service will take over management of apprenticeships from the LSC in April 2009¹¹.

An entitlement to a choice of two apprenticeship places for every suitably qualified young person will also be in place by 2013, when the compulsory age up to which young people must be in education or training will be raised to 17¹². A statutory duty will be laid on the National Apprenticeship Service to meet this entitlement as part of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill that is before Parliament at the time of writing.

3 McIntosh, S *A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Apprenticeships and Other Vocational Qualifications* (DfES 2007) p.1

4 *The Draft Apprenticeships Bill* (CSF Committee, 2008) p.7

5 See Figure 5 on p.32

6 See Figure 4 on p.22

7 Winterbotham, M & Carter, K *Workforce Training in England* (DfES, 2006) p.1

8 *World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All* (DIUS/DCSF, 2008) p.33

9 *Research into Expanding Apprenticeships, Final Report* (LSC, 2008) p.8

10 *Ibid*, p.8

11 *World-class Apprenticeships*, p.11

12 The compulsory age up to which young people must be in education or training will be raised again to 18 by 2015.

The Government has acknowledged the importance of progression, stating in its White Paper on apprenticeships that it is 'committed to ensuring the availability of appropriate progression routes from apprenticeships.' The Government has also outlined plans to map apprentice progression routes as part of a new apprenticeship blueprint.

4.4 Potential for employer engagement

The Terms of Reference of this Inquiry did not include a detailed examination of the steps needed to increase employer demand for apprenticeships. However, during the course of the Inquiry the Commission received evidence stating that the difficulties in engaging employers, and in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), is a major obstacle to the expansion of apprenticeships. This issue comes into greater focus in light of the recession, and elsewhere in the report we assess the likely impact of the economic downturn on apprenticeship recruitment and training.

The Commission welcomes the steps Government is taking to help increase apprenticeship places. As well as plans to cut the bureaucracy involved with hiring an apprentice, a common complaint of many employers¹³, the Government has committed to expanding Group Training Associations and Group Apprenticeship Schemes, which help SMEs cope with the administrative duties and costs associated with training an apprentice.

A recent piece of research by the LSC shows that a large proportion of employers are completely uninformed about apprenticeships. Of those employers not participating in apprenticeships, less than one in five are aware apprenticeships exist in their sector, and the same number said they have never been contacted by a learning provider about the apprenticeship programme¹⁴.

In addition to this unrealised potential in the private sector, the Government has a number of levers at its disposal for increasing apprenticeship places through the public sector. The public sector directly employs 20% of the national workforce, but only 10% of apprentices are public sector employees and the majority of these are in the armed forces. There is huge scope for expansion, and in January 2009 the Government announced that 20,000 new apprenticeship places will be created in the public sector in early 2009. Indeed, it is expected that the Government will seek to meet many of its ambitions for increasing apprenticeship numbers through the public sector.

The Skills Commission believes that in a deepening recession there is a need for further action, and calls for the Government to urgently investigate other measures, including: incentives for employers to recruit additional apprentices and larger employers to 'over train' apprentices; employer rewards for the achievement of full apprenticeship frameworks; and, in some circumstances, wage subsidies to recognise the additional costs incurred by employers, particularly SMEs.

The Commission also urges the Government to clearly set out its plans for the expansion of apprenticeship provision in the public sector, indicating how many places it intends to create and in which sectors, and whether or not these places will be for new recruits or current employees converted onto apprenticeships.

13 The *CBI's Education and Skills Survey 2008* found that 81% of large employers are discouraged from taking on more apprentices by the bureaucracy involved.

14 *Research into Expanding Apprenticeships*, p.12

5. Summary of recommendations

Entry to apprenticeships

Recommendation 1: The Government should ensure that local authorities devote sufficient funds to Connexions so that it is able to deliver high-quality, impartial careers guidance on all routes, including apprenticeships, to all 14-19 year olds.

Recommendation 2: The Government and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) must ensure that courses of Initial Teacher Training and teachers' continuing professional development include appropriate information about apprenticeships. The opportunities apprenticeships offer to learners, and the skills required by employers of apprentices, should be communicated to all teachers working in secondary schools or in further education as part of an ongoing campaign by the National Apprenticeship Service in partnership with the TDA.

Recommendation 3: The Skills Commission welcomes the Government's commitment to implement the Business Recommendations made by the National Council for Educational Excellence. Direct exposure to employers is an excellent way to promote apprenticeships, and it should become a routine part of school/college activities and careers education and guidance for all 11-19 year olds.

Recommendation 4: The Government should ensure that the careers guidance professionals responsible for delivering guidance to young people are helped to acquire knowledge about labour markets, in particular local labour markets. A minimum number of visits to employers each year should be required of careers guidance professionals.

Progression from other learning pathways

Recommendation 5: The Government should monitor how the introduction of Diplomas affects the number of apprenticeship applications, and the academic standard of those students who apply.

Recommendation 6: There should be much clearer mapping between Diploma and apprenticeship requirements so that those studying Diplomas know precisely when and where they have acquired a qualification that is also part of an apprenticeship, and what further qualifications would then be required to complete the apprenticeship.

Recommendation 7: The Government should protect against the further decline of young apprenticeship provision by ring-fencing funding for young apprenticeships ahead of the machinery of government changes in 2010. The current small cohorts of young apprentices do not reflect the programme's popularity, and many more 14-16 year olds would benefit from young apprenticeships if the Government increased (ring-fenced) funding and expanded the programme.

Recommendation 8: Programme-led apprenticeships require clearer definition. Vocational courses that involve full-time attendance at an educational institution and come with no guarantee of an employer-led apprenticeship place upon completion should continue to be fully-funded, but should be re-named 'pre-apprenticeship training'. It must be communicated to learners how the learning they undertake as a programme-led apprentice relates to an employer-led apprenticeship.

Progression through apprenticeships

Recommendation 9: If an apprentice is unable to progress directly onto an advanced apprenticeship because the required supervisory role is not available to them, the apprentice should be granted a 'right to resume' training as an advanced apprentice when such a role does become available. The 'right to resume' should guarantee the same funding levels for the advanced apprenticeship as if the learner had progressed directly.

Recommendation 10: The Commission acknowledges that for some apprenticeship frameworks a supervisory role may be an intrinsic part of the occupation but, where possible, the Government should ensure frameworks are broadened and made more flexible, offering level 3 technical skills units as well as management units. Sector Skills Councils should assess how the supervisory element of advanced apprenticeships affects progression rates.

Recommendation 11: The Government should introduce a new performance target system for learning providers that takes account of the prior attainment and academic record of individual learners. This would give learning providers greater flexibility to take on learners they believe should be able to complete an apprenticeship or an advanced apprenticeship, if given the opportunity, without fear of losing their contracts.

Recommendation 12: The Government should implement its policy of prioritising apprenticeships funding ahead of all other work-based learning for 19-25 year olds. Special attention should be paid to ensure that level 2 and level 3 NVQ training, through Train to Gain, is not replacing apprenticeships.

Recommendation 13: In line with its policy on social mobility, the Government should reform current funding arrangements for apprentices over the age of 19. All apprenticeships for learners who have not yet achieved a level 2 qualification should be fully-funded up to the age of 25. All advanced apprenticeships for learners who have not yet achieved a level 3 qualification should be fully-funded up to the age of 25.

Progression to advanced further education and higher education

Recommendation 14: The Government should ensure that the Higher Education Funding Council for England's funding mechanisms encourage the provision of more part-time higher education courses. The Council should ensure higher education institutions are able to respond to the learning requirements of a growing number of former apprentices.

Recommendation 15: The Government should develop a system for consolidating demand from different employers for part-time higher education courses, and the Skills Commission urges DIUS to take up UCAS' proposal for such a system. This would enable higher education institutions to provide specialist, part-time courses for former apprentices from a number of different local employers.

Recommendation 16: The Government should introduce incentives for learning providers to progress former apprentices onto advanced further education and higher education courses.

Recommendation 17: The Government should grant UCAS funding to carry out a feasibility study for the establishment of an infrastructure that records all data on part-time higher education provision.

Recommendation 18: The Government should accelerate the process of accrediting advanced apprenticeship frameworks with UCAS tariff points, laying down a clear timetable to ensure this process is completed by the end of 2009.

Recommendation 19: The Government should devise ways of increasing awareness amongst university admissions tutors about how apprenticeships can provide learners with the competencies to enter higher education.

Recommendation 20: Apprentices should have access to bridging courses which develop additional skills, such as essay writing, enabling them to progress to higher education after completion of their apprenticeship framework.

Recommendation 21: The Government's Panel on Fair Access to the Professions should ensure that the National Apprenticeship Service and the relevant Sector Skills Councils work with the professional bodies to create clear pathways from apprenticeship through to the Professions. All apprentices should be made aware of the qualifications and experience required to join the Professions.

Recommendation 22: The Government should commission systematic research enabling it to monitor former apprentices who progress to advanced further education and higher education, and those former apprentices who have already progressed. A study should be built up year on year until the Unique Learner Number starts to produce informative data.

Recommendation 23: The Government should commission research into apprentices' attitudes towards advanced further education and higher education and progression.

Entry to apprenticeships

6. Entry to apprenticeships

6.1 Careers Education and Guidance (CEG) on apprenticeships

Witnesses to this Inquiry were united in their belief that current provision of Careers Education and Guidance (CEG) relating to apprenticeships in schools, colleges and delivered through Connexions is inadequate. Stephen Gardner, Director for Youth Training at Rathbone, said: "Our experience with young people shows that hardly any of them have been advised of the benefits of apprenticeships as part of the careers education and guidance they have received."

Martin Dunford, Chairman of the Association of Learning Providers (ALP), told the Commission that "there are systemic problems around careers education and guidance that have a big impact on apprenticeships. There is a huge opportunity to recruit more apprentices directly from schools if these problems are solved." Such views echo findings from the LSC's own research. Two thirds of learners reported that more CEG on apprenticeships would have made them more likely to apply, and 92% of learners said they knew what apprenticeships were but had no idea how to apply for one¹⁵.

Anastasia Relph, a Childcare apprentice who gave evidence to the Commission about her experiences, said: "I found it very difficult to find out about apprenticeships. None of my friends nor I knew anything about them and they are not widely publicised."

The LSC estimate that 77% of those who began apprenticeships in 2006/07 were already with their employer¹⁶. Although there is no data on how many young people go directly from their school or college into an apprenticeship, this statistic indicates that numbers are low¹⁷. The Commission recognises that there can be benefits for both employers and potential apprentices in experiencing a short period of relevant employment prior to formally committing to an apprenticeship. However, in 2006/07, of the 63.2% of 16-18 year olds in full-time education and training, only 5.7% were apprentices and only 1.5% of these were on advanced apprenticeships¹⁸.

An apprenticeship should provide excellent opportunities for progression to higher level learning and give young people a strong platform of occupational experience and transferable skills. Too many young people, unaware of the potential opportunities offered by apprenticeships, are drifting down unsuitable academic routes or towards jobs which offer little or no training.

In a survey of careers guidance professionals, conducted by the Institute of Careers Guidance (ICG) on behalf of the Skills Commission for this Inquiry, 86% of respondents said their clients had only a medium to low level of awareness about apprenticeships¹⁹.

The Commission believes that better CEG relating to apprenticeships would encourage more young people, of all academic abilities, to consider an apprenticeship, and help to achieve the Government's goal of one in five young people enrolled on an apprenticeship within the next decade²⁰.

15 *Research into Expanding Apprenticeships*, p.17

16 *Pre-legislative Scrutiny of the Draft Apprenticeships Bill, Volume 1* (IUSS Committee, 2008) p.94

17 Answer to Written Parliamentary Question Number 235175, November 2008

18 *Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 Year Olds in England* (DCSF, 2008) Table 4

19 See Appendix 1

20 *World-class Apprenticeships*, p.5

6.1.1 Current delivery of Careers Education and Guidance

The provision of CEG to young people in the UK is based on a Partnership Model:

Careers education refers to programmes designed to help young people develop the knowledge and skills they need to enable them to make successful choices and manage learning and career transitions. School and college staff provide careers education through organising work experience and during Personal Health and Social Education (PHSE) lessons.

Careers guidance refers to a single or series of interventions to help young people at a time when they are making decisions relating to learning and careers, such as whether to undertake an apprenticeship. Such guidance should be delivered by Personal Advisors, employed by Connexions centres, who visit schools and colleges to advise learners in face-to-face sessions about their learning and career choices.

This Partnership Model is recognised nationally and internationally as the most effective approach for delivering CEG to young people²¹. It consolidates the understanding school staff have of their students with the expertise of careers guidance professionals and their knowledge of the full range of learning programmes, including out of school routes such as apprenticeships.

A previous report from the Skills Commission, *Inspiration and Aspiration*, highlighted that the provision of careers guidance for young people has declined since Connexions replaced the Careers Service in 2001²². According to Careers England, only 40% of young people in England receive an individual, face-to-face careers guidance intervention from a Connexions Personal Advisor²³.

The Government's decision in 2005 to devolve management and funding for careers services from Connexions Partnerships to local authorities has also affected the delivery of careers guidance to young people. Whilst all local authorities are required to continue delivering careers guidance through the Connexions brand, the model of delivery is no longer consistent. As the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC) reported, some local authorities have decided to retain an independent careers service, whilst others have sought to take it in-house²⁴. Furthermore, with funding now part of local authorities' mainstream budgets, spending cuts on careers guidance have been widespread, and the quantity and quality of Connexions' careers guidance now varies from one local authority to the next:

'...local authorities are moving in very different directions regarding the structure of their [CEG] services and related matters. It seems highly likely that this will produce a 'postcode lottery' in terms of the extent, nature and quality of the services which young people receive²⁵.'

A spokesperson for Unison, which represents the interests of around 15,000 Connexions staff, recently said:

"We can find examples in all of our regions where services, which were formerly delivered by Connexions Partnerships, are subject to cutbacks. These cutbacks will eventually affect the delivery of services to young people."

21 *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap* (OECD, 2004)

22 *Inspiration and Aspiration: Realising our Potential in the 21st Century* (Skills Commission, 2008)

23 Ibid, p.33

24 Watts, A & McGowan, *A New Arrangements for Connexions/Careers Services for Young People in England* (NICEC, 2006)

25 Careers England Policy Commentary 9

The Skills Commission believes that variations in the delivery model and funding levels for Connexions is having a serious impact on the provision of careers guidance, and preventing large numbers of young people from accessing careers guidance on apprenticeships.

Recommendation 1: The Government should ensure that local authorities devote sufficient funds to Connexions so that it is able to deliver high-quality, impartial careers guidance on all routes, including apprenticeships, to all 14-19 year olds.

6.1.2 Careers guidance and apprenticeships

Such a decline in the adequacy of careers guidance for young people at a crucial transitional stage in their learning is a real concern in itself. However, evidence submitted to the Skills Commission indicates that apprenticeships are particularly ill-served by the trend.

The Skills Commission recognises that the Government is taking steps to ensure young people receive more information about apprenticeships. A recent advertising campaign has been launched along with a new website, and an online National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service was opened in early 2009. This will enable prospective apprentices to identify vacant apprenticeship places in their chosen sector. In evidence submitted to this Inquiry, the DIUS/DCSF Joint Apprenticeships Unit said the DCSF is 'committed to the concept of impartial information, advice and guidance that is responsive to the individual needs of each young person.'

Furthermore, the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Bill states that the Education Act 1997 should be amended to include: 'Any consideration... of what advice would promote the best interests of the pupils concerned must include consideration of whether it would be in their best interests, or in the interests of any of them, to receive advice which relates to apprenticeships²⁶.'

This new duty on school staff, along with the decline in Connexions' careers services, will mean the role teachers play in delivering careers guidance on apprenticeships will become ever-more important.

6.1.2.1 Teachers

The Skills Commission believes that a number of issues need to be addressed if teachers are to be able to perform this new duty effectively.

Witnesses informed the Commission that teachers are strongly influenced by their own backgrounds and, in most cases, lack of knowledge about the merits of apprenticeships. Often this leads teachers to encourage young people to continue along a traditional academic route.

One of the largest and longest standing learning providers, JHP Group, stated that the general trend is 'that learners who attend schools with a sixth form are far less likely to have been made aware of apprenticeships as an option than those attending schools without A-level provision.' Research carried out by John Berkeley in 2004 showed that only 19% of advanced apprentices in engineering had been advised to apply for an apprenticeship by their school and two-thirds had been encouraged to stay on and study A-levels²⁷.

LSC research has also found concern amongst stakeholders that the limited promotion of apprenticeships in schools has impacted upon the level of ability of the young people applying for apprenticeships²⁸. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) told the Commission that 24% of employers report difficulties recruiting suitably qualified young people. Mark Andrews, Chief Executive of the construction company NG Bailey, told the Commission that his business "receives many references from teachers who have clearly labelled apprenticeships as an option for school leavers with low academic prospects." JHP Group echoed these concerns; its experience is that careers guidance in schools is often only 'directed towards those at the lower end of the academic

²⁶ *Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill* (House of Commons, 2009), clause 35

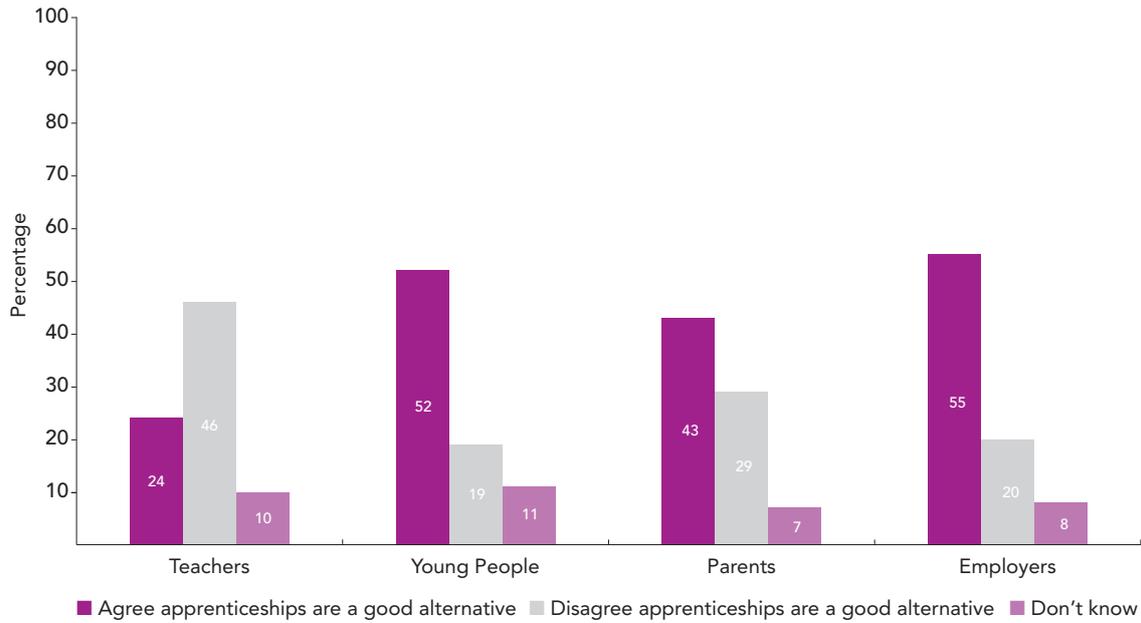
²⁷ Berkeley, J *Listening to the Work-based Learner: A Report on the Piloting of the National Trainee Feedback System for Engineering Modern Apprentices* (SEMTA, 2004) p.4

²⁸ *Research into Expanding Apprenticeships, Final Report* (LSC, 2008) p.16

achievement spectrum.’ It added that those young people with good academic records from whom they do receive applications ‘have had to undertake significant research themselves as information has not been freely and readily available to them through school.’ Of the 7,000 people who started an apprenticeship with JHP Group in 2007/08, only 6% were referred from a school or Connexions centre.

A 2008 study by YouGov, on behalf of the Edge Foundation, found that only 24% of the teachers surveyed agreed apprenticeships are a good alternative to A-levels, far fewer than the proportions of parents (43%), young people (52%) and employers (55%) who took this view²⁹.

Figure 1: Opinions on apprenticeships as alternatives to A-Levels or equivalent³⁰

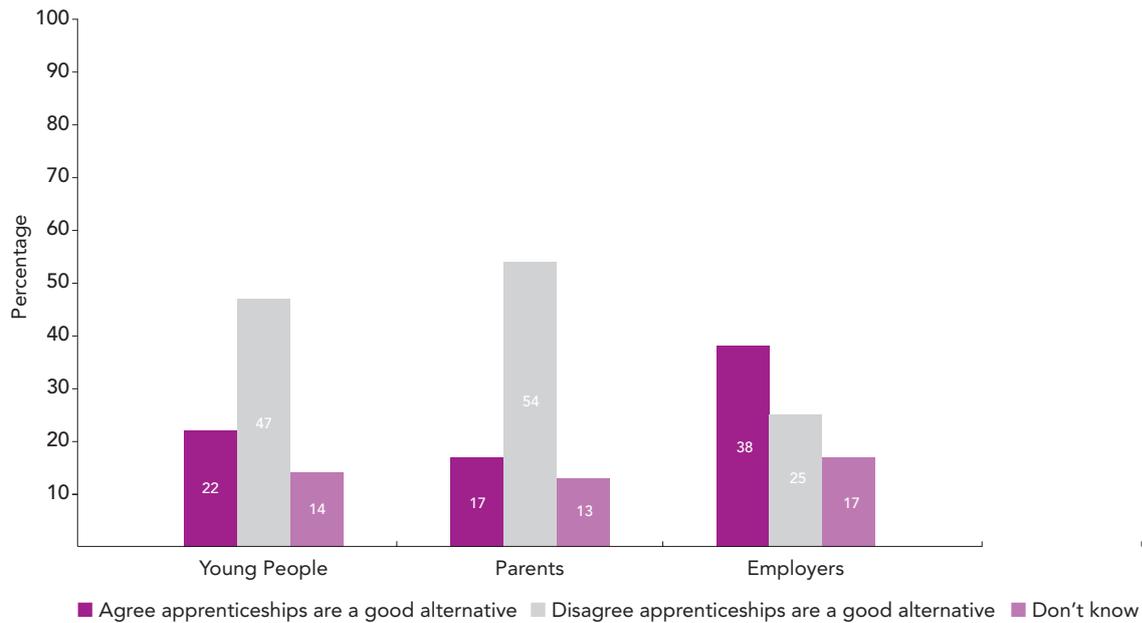


Furthermore, as Figure 2 overleaf shows, teachers consistently underestimate the extent to which young people, parents and employers value apprenticeships. For example, 47% of teachers believe that young people think apprenticeships are not a good alternative to A-levels, when in fact only 19% of young people take this view.

²⁹ Full survey can be found in Appendix 2

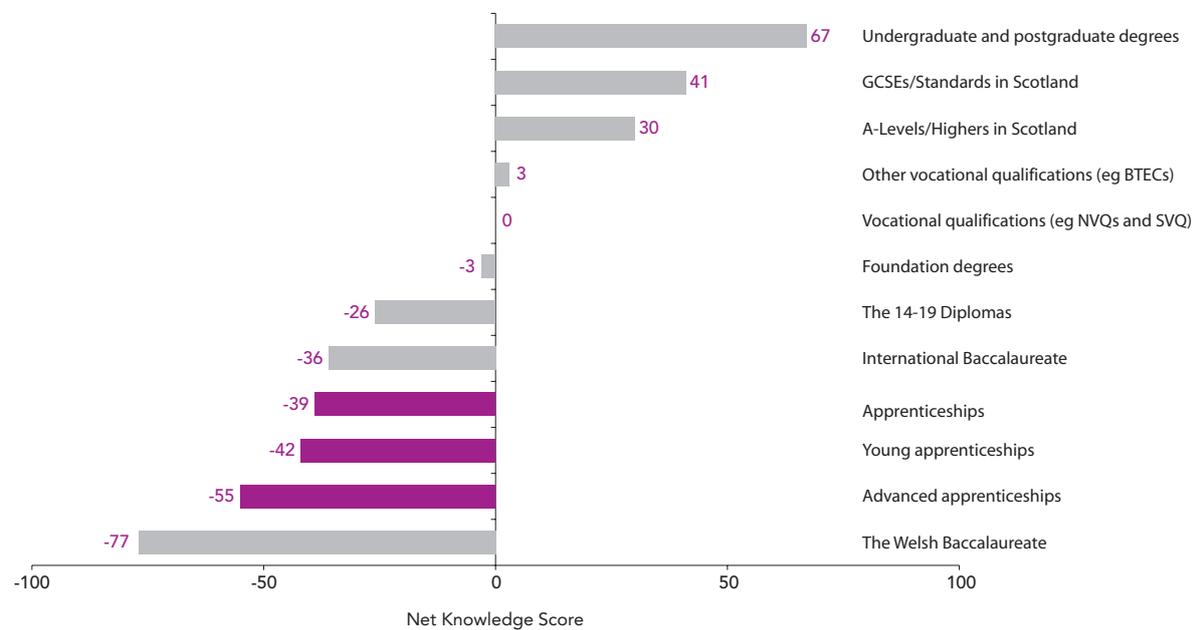
³⁰ Figures extrapolated from Edge/YouGov Survey 2008 (see Appendix 2)

Figure 2: Teachers opinions on other stakeholders' views on apprenticeships as alternatives to A-Levels or equivalent



Few school or college staff undertake apprenticeships themselves and a large number are unaware of the opportunities apprenticeships offer. As Figure 3 below illustrates, the 2008 YouGov/Edge survey found that teachers had less knowledge of apprenticeships than of any other learning route, other than the Welsh Baccalaureate.

Figure 3: Teachers' level of knowledge about learning routes³¹



**Net Knowledge Scores were calculated by subtracting the percentage of teachers who said they had poor knowledge of the qualification from the percentage who said they had good knowledge.*

As Dr Norman Crowther, policy advisor for the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), told the Skills Commission:

“It is very difficult for our members [schools and college staff] to understand which skills and abilities are best suited to the many different types of apprenticeship. This makes it difficult for them to offer advice to young people on apprenticeships.”

This knowledge and perception gap about apprenticeships is concerning in itself, but it takes on even greater significance if teachers must now consider whether or not careers guidance on apprenticeships is in the best interest of their pupils, as the new ASCL Bill requires. The Government must ensure that teachers acquire a greater understanding and awareness of apprenticeships to avoid the requirement in the Bill being rendered ineffective.

Recommendation 2: The Government and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) must ensure that courses of Initial Teacher Training and teachers’ continuing professional development include appropriate information about apprenticeships. The opportunities apprenticeships offer to learners, and the skills required by employers of apprentices, should be communicated to all teachers working in secondary schools or in further education as part of an ongoing campaign by the National Apprenticeship Service in partnership with the TDA.

6.1.2.2 School and employer relations

A further barrier to the recruitment of young people directly into apprenticeships, particularly 16-18 year olds, is a belief amongst employers that young people lack the maturity and commitment required for employment³². Concerns about school leavers’ propensity to ‘drop out’ of work and training adds to the perceived risk employers associate with investing in apprenticeships.

The construction company NG Bailey has sought to mitigate this risk by forging strong relationships with more than 100 individual schools. By developing classes and workshops with the schools, NG Bailey is able to introduce the idea of apprenticeships and work-based learning to the pupils, whilst helping the schools to fulfil elements of their curriculum obligations. This also enables the company to recruit high-calibre school leavers onto apprenticeships who have already demonstrated an interest and aptitude for the job. NG Bailey now recruits 80% of its apprentices directly from schools and has high levels of retention.

Dr Norman Crowther (ATL) said that many of ATL’s members would like to see employers engaging directly with schools and colleges to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to their students.

The need for greater collaboration between business and schools/colleges has been recognised by the Government. In October 2008, the National Council for Educational Excellence published a paper highlighting best practice partnerships between business and schools/colleges, and making recommendations to ensure such practice becomes widespread:

‘Together we need to raise dramatically the impact and scale of education-business links in primary and secondary schools, as well as colleges. Where there are quality partnerships, young people find increased motivation and subject relevance, gain insights into the world of work, and increase their work-related and entrepreneurial skills. Those choosing Apprenticeships and the Diploma have a practical preparation for their future career opportunities³³.’

Recommendation 3: The Skills Commission welcomes the Government’s commitment to implement the Business Recommendations made by the National Council for Educational Excellence. Direct exposure to employers is an excellent way to promote apprenticeships, and it should become a routine part of school/college activities and careers education and guidance for all 11-19 year olds.

32 *Research into Expanding Apprenticeships*, p.26

33 National Council for Educational Excellence: Recommendations (DIUS/DCSF, 2008) p.5

6.1.2.3 Links to the labour market

Witnesses also informed this Inquiry of a dislocation between careers guidance professionals and local employers. This has had a particularly adverse effect on careers guidance professionals' ability to offer effective careers guidance on apprenticeships.

In evidence to the Commission Alastair McGowan, Chair of the National Institute of Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC), said: "The Connexions era has witnessed a dilution in the quality of careers guidance – careers guidance professionals are no longer enabled to engage with the needs of the labour market. It used to be considered standard practice for careers advisors to make up to 50 visits to employers each year. These days as many as five visits might well be considered an imposition".

The Institute of Careers Guidance/Skills Commission survey revealed strong support amongst careers guidance professionals for the introduction of measures to reconnect their work and training with the labour market. Careers guidance professionals also agreed that such measures would enable them to provide better careers guidance relating to apprenticeships:

Figure 4: Career guidance professionals' views on apprenticeships³⁴

How could initial and continuing training for career guidance professionals be changed to improve their understanding of Apprenticeships?

	Yes	No
Employer contribution to training	69%	31%
Employer visits as part of the training	73%	27%

How can careers guidance professionals gain a better understanding of Apprenticeships?

	Yes	No
Regular visits to employers	65%	35%
Improved written briefings	48%	52%
More labour market information from employers	83%	17%
Local forums with employers	70%	30%

Recommendation 4: The Government should ensure that the careers guidance professionals responsible for delivering guidance to young people are helped to acquire knowledge about labour markets, in particular local labour markets. A minimum number of visits to employers each year should be required of careers guidance professionals.

Progression from other learning pathways

7. Progression from other learning pathways

7.1 Apprenticeships and Diplomas

As would be expected of such a major educational reform, interest in and scrutiny of the new 14-19 Diplomas has been intense. Lesley Longstone, Director General, Young People Directorate at the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF), told the Commission that “the introduction of the Diploma, by linking the vocational and academic routes, will simplify the choice for young people and make it easier for progression and transfer between different routes.” She added that ahead of 2013 and 2015, when the compulsory learning age will be raised to 17 and 18 years old respectively, the Government wants the offer for 14-19 year olds to comprise four principal routes:

- GCSEs/A-Levels
- Diplomas
- Apprenticeships
- Foundation Learning Tier

The Commission is aware that Diplomas are at an early stage. It would be premature to assess their impact until cohort sizes are larger and more diverse. However, there was concern amongst witnesses that the political capital the Government has invested in Diplomas could mean the scheme’s success being bought at the expense of other learning routes, in particular apprenticeships. Witnesses said there are a number of issues around the impact of Diplomas upon apprenticeships which must be acknowledged and resolved if apprenticeship recruitment is not to suffer.

7.1.1 Competition

The Government has outlined the differences between Diplomas and apprenticeships, demonstrating how Diplomas will add to and complement the current educational offer available to 14-19 year olds:

‘Diplomas and apprenticeships have different educational and training objectives. Diplomas provide a balanced mix of practical/applied and academic content preparing young people for a range of progression routes. Post-16 apprenticeships train young people in occupationally specific skills with generic skills and underpinning knowledge³⁵.’

“Apprenticeships are seen to be for those who, from a young age, are clear on what it is they want to do occupationally. Diplomas are broader qualifications, with academic content but also learning in a practical context. These are complementary learning routes with potential for progression between the two.” (Lesley Longstone, DCSF)

Although Government and the relevant agencies are focusing on ensuring that clear distinctions between Diplomas and apprenticeships are made and publicised, questions persist about whether young people who are inclined towards vocational learning will fully understand the differences³⁶.

It is likely that the currency of Diplomas will increase dramatically over the next few years. Small, hand-picked cohorts are expected to perform well, and there is a real risk that academically capable young people, who might have otherwise considered an apprenticeship, will be encouraged to take up Diplomas.

Diplomas have been designed, with high levels of input from higher education institutions and employers, to provide clear and distinct progression pathways through to higher education. This contrasts sharply with the relationship between apprenticeships and higher education. Due to the lack of appropriate pathways, the evidence that there is suggests that very few former apprentices progress on to higher education (see section 9).

35 Written submission to this Inquiry from the DCSF/DIUS Joint Apprenticeships Unit

36 *Apprenticeship 1: Prospects for Growth* (The Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training, 2008) p.11

Recommendation 5: The Government should monitor how the introduction of Diplomas affects the number of apprenticeship applications, and the academic standard of those students who apply.

7.1.2 Integration and progression

Professor Deian Hopkin, Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive of London South Bank University and Higher Education Champion of the 14-19 Diplomas, told the Commission that the potential problem of Diplomas and apprenticeships competing for talent could be countered. He pointed out that component parts of apprenticeships could and should be taught within Diplomas, and vice-versa. This would help facilitate progression and cohesion between the two programmes. The same recommendation was made to the Commission by the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) and the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, both of whom said that Diploma students should be given the option to study for the Technical Certificate of the relevant apprenticeship as part of their Diploma. City & Guilds informed the Commission that they are looking to do just this:

'Wherever possible, we are endeavouring to ensure that [learners'] Additional and Specialist Learning lines of the Diploma cover the Technical Certificate requirements of the associated apprenticeship.'

Mapping the Technical Certificate across to the Diploma curriculum would not only facilitate progression, but also help to avoid any unnecessary repetition when Diploma students do progress to apprenticeships. In a memorandum submitted to the Children, Schools and Families (CSF) Select Committee, Jim Knight MP, Minister for Schools and Learners at DCSF, said:

'We want to ensure that young people know whether they need to take particular qualifications within the Additional and Specialist Learning (ASL) component of the Diploma so that they have the knowledge and skills needed to progress from, say, the Construction and Built Environment Diploma at Level 2 to a Level 3 Construction Apprenticeship³⁷.'

Maggie Galliers, Principal of Leicester College, which from 2009 will be teaching all five approved Diploma subjects alongside its apprenticeship provision, said to the Commission:

"I would strongly support any work by the Government to map more clearly those elements of Diplomas that overlap with apprenticeships. Progression between the two routes is extremely important and there is a concern that they have been designed in isolation."

The Skills Commission believes that the elements of apprenticeship and Diploma curriculum that do overlap should be clearly mapped, and that this overlap should be better communicated to learners and educational institutions.

Recommendation 6: There should be much clearer mapping between Diploma and apprenticeship requirements so that those studying Diplomas know precisely when and where they have acquired a qualification that is also part of an apprenticeship, and what further qualifications would then be required to complete the apprenticeship.

7.1.3 Young apprenticeships

Launched in 2004, the young apprenticeships programme has for some time been heralded as a highly valuable route for those 14 year olds with a strong sense of ambition and occupational enthusiasm. This view was recently endorsed by a glowing OFSTED report, which noted that young apprenticeship students achieved highly and developed good practical skills and knowledge related to their vocational area in over half the young apprenticeship programmes³⁸.

³⁷ *The Draft Apprenticeships Bill* (CSF Committee, 2008) Ev.44

³⁸ *Evaluation of the Young Apprenticeships Programme* (OFSTED, 2006) p.2

Although young apprenticeships are available across 12 sectors, cohort sizes are relatively small at around 9,000 per year. The National Foundation for Educational Research submitted to this Inquiry an unpublished evaluation of the first two young apprenticeship cohorts, carried out on behalf of the LSC in 2007. The findings showed that around 90% of young apprentices continued onto further education or training, with around a quarter progressing onto a full apprenticeship. Nearly 80% of learners from the first two cohorts said the young apprenticeship programme increased their awareness of the range of options available to them after Year 11.

Employers and learning providers also extol the benefits of the alternative curriculum that young apprenticeships offer. Philip Whiteman, Chief Executive of the Sector Skills Council SEMTA, and Sir Alan Jones, Chair of SEMTA, told the Commission that young apprenticeship starts in engineering nearly doubled between 2003 and 2007. Some 50% of those who enrol go on to an advanced apprenticeship with the same employer and 42% eventually progress on to higher education. SEMTA informed the Commission that 'employers are tremendously enthusiastic about the programme because it enables them to provide practical support to a genuinely interested and committed young person, and provides an excellent progression route to their own advanced apprenticeship scheme.'

The Skills Commission believes this successful programme should be expanded. However, witnesses were concerned that changes in the funding arrangements for young apprenticeships make the future of the programme far from certain. JHP Group informed us that support from the LSC for its young apprenticeship provision had recently been significantly reduced. 'Funding is now at one third of the level that was originally agreed. The rationale for [the reduction] is that schools would provide some funding towards the cost of provision. Our experience is that they are extremely reluctant to do so.' JHP Group told us that their young apprenticeship programme had received excellent feedback from OFSTED, and learners and employers had described it 'as an invaluable learning experience.' But these high standards became increasingly difficult to maintain after funding was effectively cut, and JHP is now curtailing its provision of young apprenticeships.

The Commission is concerned that, with the introduction of Diplomas and the transfer of responsibility for funding from the LSC to local authorities, there is likely to be increased reluctance on the part of schools and local authorities to facilitate young apprenticeships, let alone provide funding. Diplomas, easier and cheaper for schools to run, are a more viable option, whilst also being more likely to encourage students along a school-based learning route.

In addition, and as noted by the CSF Select Committee, Government has given no indication as to whether funding for young apprenticeships will be ring-fenced when responsibility for apprenticeship funding is transferred to local authorities, following the machinery of government changes in 2010³⁹. Without the protection of ring-fenced funding the Commission believes there is a real risk that the provision of young apprenticeship places will head into terminal decline.

The Skills Commission recognises that, given the low levels of young apprenticeship provision, calling for an entitlement to a young apprenticeship place for all young people is not a realistic ambition. However, if the programme is supported and allowed to expand, the Commission believes its continued success should lead to such an entitlement.

Recommendation 7: The Government should protect against the further decline of young apprenticeship provision by ring-fencing funding for young apprenticeships ahead of the machinery of government changes in 2010. The current small cohorts of young apprentices do not reflect the programme's popularity, and many more 14-16 year olds would benefit from young apprenticeships if the Government increased (ring-fenced) funding and expanded the programme.

7.2 Programme-led apprenticeships

Introduced in 2003 and fully funded by the Learning and Skills Council, programme-led apprenticeships (PLAs) were designed to give those learners unable to find employment in their chosen sector an opportunity to carry out some initial apprenticeship training, before progressing into an employer-led apprenticeship.

PLAs have become an extremely important part of the education landscape and overall numbers over the next few years are likely to increase. Research by the LSC in 2008 into how apprenticeships can be expanded revealed that around 60% of employers would be interested in offering more apprenticeships if they were programme led⁴⁰. Furthermore, as we explore below, the recession is also likely to contribute to a sharp increase in PLA provision.

As identified by OFSTED's report in 2008, broadly there are now three models of PLA provision:

Model A) Learners undertake a planned period of initial provider-based learning that contributes towards an apprenticeship framework, such as elements of the Technical Certificate, before progressing into an employer-led apprenticeship to complete the apprenticeship framework.

Model B) Learners receive the same learning experience as if they were in an employer-led apprenticeship but are placed by their learning provider in a work placement role with an employer, and do not therefore have employee status.

Model C) Learners are enrolled on full-time vocational programmes that contribute towards an apprenticeship framework, with the *intention* of progressing to employment or an employer-led apprenticeship⁴¹.

OFSTED reported that those learners who progress into an employer-led apprenticeship after an initial period of training – model A above – had a higher than average success rate and completed their apprenticeship in a shorter period of time than learners who enrolled directly onto employer-led apprenticeships⁴². SEMTA told us that 'starting apprentices on a programme-led pathway and then converting them to an employer-led apprenticeship is an essential way of operating, especially when trying to engage SMEs with apprenticeships... In all cases an employer must be in the loop to upgrade the apprentice.' SEMTA estimate that over 20% of their advanced apprenticeship starts have progressed from a programme-led apprenticeship.

OFSTED's findings showed that much of the provision found under model B 'gave a valuable opportunity for young people to start an apprenticeship where there were insufficient employers offering apprenticeships or where [learners] needed experience prior to being employed⁴³.' The experience for the learner is the same as if they were on an employer-led apprenticeship, as they spend four days with the employer and one day with the learning provider, however, they are not employed and do not therefore receive an income. Learners are instead supported by the Education Maintenance Allowance. Rathbone, a learning provider which specialises in helping disadvantaged young people, is a strong advocate of this approach, and told the Commission that the 'programme-led apprenticeship means we can prepare young people to the point where they can work alongside the skilled trades people to develop their skills.' However, OFSTED cautions that if the employer placement phase is too long, and the learner does not progress quickly into employment or an employer-led apprenticeship, learners lose motivation and are more likely to leave the programme⁴⁴.

40 *Research into Expanding Apprenticeships*, p.10

41 *The Impact of Programme-led Apprenticeships* (OFSTED, 2008) p.4

42 *Ibid*, p.5

43 *Ibid*, p.6

44 *Ibid*, p.6

OFSTED found that the PLAs which resembled model C, usually provided by further education colleges, tend to progress a smaller proportion of learners than other types of PLAs into employer-led apprenticeships, and that 'not all the college courses offered the specific qualifications needed to support entry on to an apprenticeship⁴⁵.' OFSTED also noted that model C type provision of PLAs has given rise to instances of young people completing full apprenticeship frameworks with 'minimal work experience and an NVQ that had not been assessed in the workplace⁴⁶.'

Adrian Holmes, Chief Executive of the Employability and Skills Group (ESG), expressed concerns to the Commission about this type of provision: "Programme-led apprenticeship has been labelled onto courses which involve people in colleges full-time, doing a vocational theory course with no practice whatsoever and not leading to any practice." Adrian went on to add that "programme-led apprenticeships should involve three months learning the underpinning knowledge in a training centre environment, followed by employment in a full apprenticeship."

7.2.1 Programme-led apprenticeships in the recession

It is widely believed that as a consequence of the economic recession we will witness a significant increase in the number of PLAs.

Struggling businesses are becoming less inclined to employ resource-straining apprentices, with short-term survival and a more streamlined workforce, rather than long-term skills needs and expansion, now the priority for many employers. Consequently, learning providers are opting to enrol those learners who are unable to find an employer onto PLAs to avoid the prospect of losing them from learning altogether.

Furthermore, those apprentices made redundant during the recession are often being moved to a programme-led pathway until a new employer can be found. The construction industry, a sector likely to suffer a particularly sharp contraction during the recession, has already moved a number of redundant apprentices onto PLAs to avoid losing learners who have already undertaken a substantial part of their apprenticeship programme.

Added to this, the Government has said it will place those young people entitled to an apprenticeship place (in accordance with clause 83 of the ASCL Bill), for whom it cannot find an employer, onto a PLA⁴⁷.

All this points to a significant expansion of PLA provision in the coming months and years and, in particular, an expansion of Model C provision as a result of the limited contribution such provision requires of employers. The Skills Commission believes there is an urgent need to bring greater clarity to the term 'programme-led apprenticeship' ahead of this likely increase in provision.

7.2.2 Time to define programme-led apprenticeships

The Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills (IUSS) Select Committee has called for all PLAs to be housed outside apprenticeship and to be re-labelled 'pre-apprenticeship training'. The Select Committee advises that PLAs 'could provide a useful preparation for an employer-led apprenticeship but they are not apprenticeships within the meaning of the proposals in the [ASCL] Bill⁴⁸.'

However, witnesses told the Commission that placing all programme-led provision outside apprenticeships would mean losing a lot of highly valuable PLA provision that benefits greatly from its 'apprenticeship' status, and provides many learners with the opportunity to progress to full apprenticeship.

The Skills Commission believes that tighter regulation of PLA provision is required. PLAs adhering to model A should be retained, but the length of the initial period of provider-based training should be

45 *The Impact of Programme-led Apprenticeships* (OFSTED, 2008) p.23

46 *Ibid*, p.17

47 *World-class Apprenticeships*, p.16

48 *Pre-legislative Scrutiny of the Draft Apprenticeships Bill*, p.15

determined in accordance with learners' individual needs. In each case, the PLA should come with the guarantee of progression into an employer-led apprenticeship after this initial period of training.

Model B PLA provision should also be retained. But the length of time the learner spends on work placement must be established with both the employer and the learner before they sign up. The length of time the learner spends training on the job should also be equivalent to that of an employer-led apprentice. The agreement between the learning provider and the employer with whom the learner is placed must stipulate that the employer employs the learner after completion of the programme-led apprenticeship.

In all cases, as was noted by the IUSS Select Committee, it should be made clear to learners participating in a PLA 'how the qualifications achieved through completing the programme-led apprenticeship connect with, and may count towards, the successful achievement of the qualification requirements specified in the (follow-on) apprenticeship⁴⁹.'

All PLA provision that falls outside these definitions should no longer be within the apprenticeship family. Full time vocational courses with a learning provider, involving no, or minimal, employer contact and no secured progression into an employer-led apprenticeship is a distortion of the PLA model and compromises the reputation of apprenticeships.

The Government, in its White Paper on apprenticeships, voiced concerns about associating certain types of PLA provision with apprenticeships, and the Skills Commission endorses the Government's decision to 'stipulate that arrangements need to be in place for every programme-led apprentice to have the opportunity for frequent contact with an employer in the relevant sector within six months⁵⁰.'

Although the Commission concedes that there are good reasons for Model C provision to be relocated outside apprenticeship, it also recognises that this is an extremely important mode of learning. If it were to be curtailed, many future learners could suffer and become disengaged from learning altogether. In these circumstances the Commission urges the Government to continue to fully-fund Model C provision, but to relocate it outside apprenticeship. Learning providers should endeavour to enhance employer engagement with the intention of increasing the proportion of programme-led apprenticeships adhering to Model A and Model B.

Recommendation 8: Programme-led apprenticeships require clearer definition. Vocational courses that involve full-time attendance at an educational institution and come with no guarantee of an employer-led apprenticeship place upon completion should continue to be fully-funded, but should be re-named 'pre-apprenticeship training'. It must be communicated to learners how the learning they undertake as a programme-led apprentice relates to an employer-led apprenticeship.

49 *Pre-legislative Scrutiny of the Draft Apprenticeships Bill*, p.15

50 *World-class Apprenticeships*, p.22-23

Progression to advanced apprenticeships

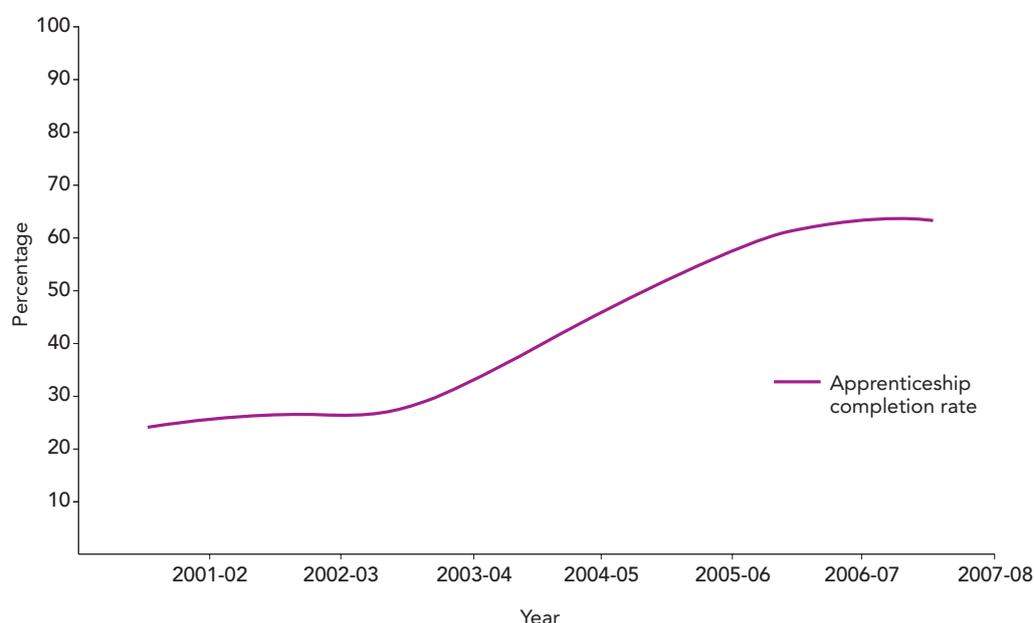
8. Progression to advanced apprenticeships

A key proposal by Lord Leitch in his *Review of Skills* was that the UK should dramatically improve its intermediate skills base and shift the balance of intermediate skills from level 2 to predominantly level 3. The Leitch target is for 4 million adults to attain a first level 3 qualification by 2020⁵¹. Leitch argued that apprenticeships should play a central role in achieving this and called for apprenticeship numbers to be doubled by 2020⁵².

The opportunity apprenticeships offer, as a focused, effective and well-regarded training route to high-level skills, must be harnessed if we are to meet the nation's future intermediate skill needs. Indeed, it is upon Leitch's recommendation that the Government has acted and from where the drive for increased apprenticeship numbers has come.

An increase in the annual number of apprentices completing their apprenticeship framework, from around 39,000 in 2001/02 to around 112,000 in 2006/07, allied to the recent improvements in completion rates, from 23% in 2000/01 to 63% in 2006/07 (shown in Figure 5 below), have been rightly acknowledged as indications of a revival of the apprenticeship programme.

Figure 5: Apprenticeship completion rates⁵³



However since 2000/01, as Figure 6 opposite shows, there has been a decrease in the proportion of advanced apprenticeships (level 3). It is already clear that Lord Leitch's recommendation is only being partially fulfilled. A failure to capitalise on the growth of apprenticeships through an equivalent growth in advanced apprenticeships is a matter for concern. As Martin Dunford (ALP) told the Skills Commission:

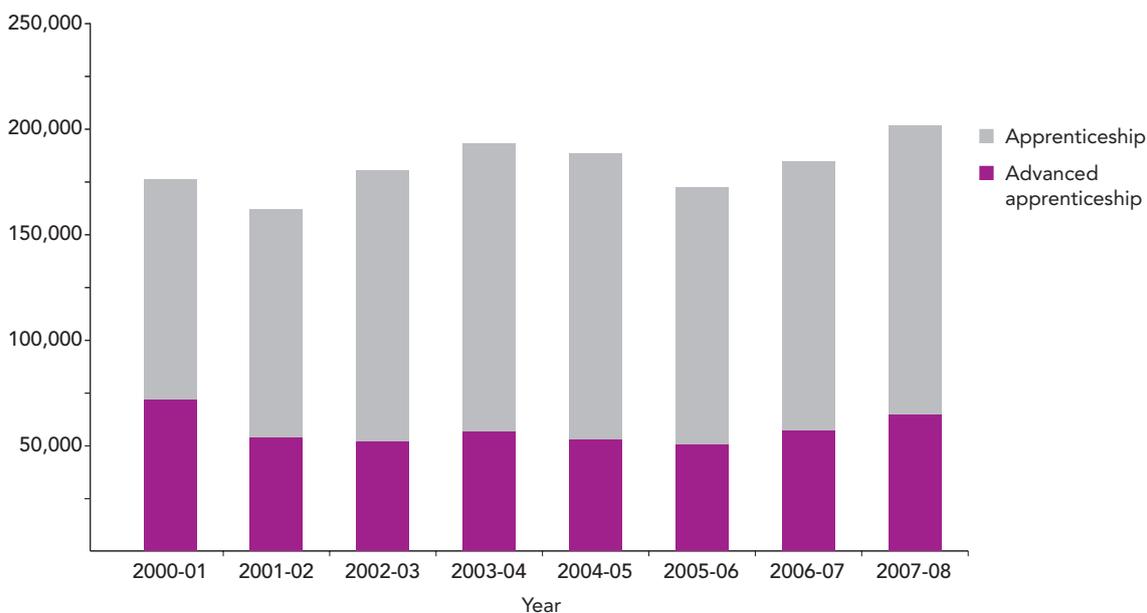
"A level 2 and level 3 apprenticeship framework is now available in all but one or two sectors. However, level 2 skills have become the 'licence to practice' for large parts of the economy so the motivation for attainment of an advanced apprenticeship often lies with the individual, rather than the employer. There is growing frustration that level 2 apprenticeships continue to make up a large majority of the numbers."

51 *Leitch Review of Skills*, p.57-58

52 *Ibid*, p.57

53 Figures for 2001/02 are from Written Parliamentary Question number: 116777. Figures for 2002-07 are from the Learning and Skills Council's Data Reports www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Figure 6: Number of apprenticeship starts⁵⁴



The Skills Commission recognises that apprenticeship places are employer demand-led, and as such must reflect employers’ needs. An increasingly service-based economy has no doubt contributed to the stagnant numbers of advanced apprenticeships, with many frontline jobs in service sectors, such as care, hospitality and retail, being positioned at level 2.

However, these sectors do still offer higher-level employment opportunities and the Commission believes that every apprenticeship should offer the opportunity for progression onto an advanced apprenticeship, and no apprentices should be limited to a level 2 as the height of their achievement. Figures submitted to this Inquiry by the Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network showed that only around a third of level 2 apprentices progress onto an advanced apprenticeship.

Figure 7: Progression rates from apprenticeship to advanced apprenticeship⁵⁵

Age	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
16-18 Total	32%	35%	33%
19-24 Total	34%	41%	40%
25+ Total	-	-	12%
Grand Total	33%	38%	32%

The Skills Commission believes that the low numbers of advanced apprentices and low levels of progression are a concern. If the expected growth in apprenticeship numbers is not commensurate with growth in advanced apprenticeships the Government will fail to achieve the outcome that motivated it to expand apprenticeships in the first place – that of Leitch’s recommendation for substantial growth in level 3 intermediate skills⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ Figures for 2000-02 are from Written Parliamentary Question number: 133357. Figures from 2002-08 are from the Learning and Skills Council’s Data Reports www.apprenticeships.org.uk

⁵⁵ Data presented to Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network by the Learning and Skills Council. The data is reliant on learners self-declaring their status and only accounts for those learners who have progressed directly from apprenticeship to advanced apprenticeship.

8.1 Framework design

Advanced apprenticeship frameworks in service sectors and non-craft occupations often require the apprentice to be employed in a supervisory role. As Adrian Holmes, Chief Executive of the Employability and Skills Group (ESG), pointed out to the Commission:

“Providers will exclude people from doing an advanced apprenticeship if they are not confident they can secure the right supervisory role for the apprentice throughout the programme. Someone doing an advanced apprenticeship could complete 85% of their framework and have received some very valuable learning at level 3, but if the remaining 15% of the framework is not achievable, because they cannot move into a supervisory role for a few years, they will be written off the programme and both learner and provider will be labelled as a failure.”

Young people are particularly hampered in sectors with low levels of staff turnover or where legislation prohibits supervisory roles going to those below a certain age. Martin Dunford (ALP) told the Commission that “it can be very difficult for young people to pursue qualifications at level 3 because the nature of their role sometimes automatically disqualifies them from doing so.”

Recommendation 9: If an apprentice is unable to progress directly onto an advanced apprenticeship because the required supervisory role is not available to them, the apprentice should be granted a ‘right to resume’ training as an advanced apprentice when such a role does become available. The ‘right to resume’ should guarantee the same funding levels for the advanced apprenticeship as if the learner had progressed directly.

Witnesses informed the Commission that, over recent years, management skills have become an even greater part of many advanced apprenticeship frameworks, further compounding the problem. Martin Dunford (ALP) told us that “the problems around low levels of progression will not change unless the relevant Sector Skills Councils look very carefully at the design of their advanced apprenticeship frameworks.”

Recommendation 10: The Commission acknowledges that for some apprenticeship frameworks a supervisory role may be an intrinsic part of the occupation but, where possible, the Government should ensure frameworks are broadened and made more flexible, offering level 3 technical skills units as well as management units. Sector Skills Councils should assess how the supervisory element of advanced apprenticeships affects progression rates.

8.2 Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP)

Learning providers are currently subject to a Minimum Level of Performance (MLP) which requires a 45% apprenticeship framework completion rate. Providers that fail to meet the MLP will no longer be granted Government funding. The MLP was originally introduced to weed out inferior training practices, and has no doubt contributed to the dramatic increase in completion rates. However, witnesses informed the Commission that the MLP has also had an unintended and adverse effect on advanced apprenticeship numbers and progression.

Functional Skills (previously called Key Skills) are an important part of apprenticeship frameworks, equipping apprentices with broad and transferable skills which help them progress into other types of learning and adapt to changing employment conditions. However, learning providers told the Commission that apprentices find elements of the Functional Skills required by advanced apprenticeship frameworks hard to complete. In particular, the Application of Number module is a far more rigorous test than its level 2 apprenticeship framework counterpart. As Adrian Holmes (ESG) said: “It’s a huge step up for a lot of these learners who want to progress into an advanced apprenticeship. Those who have struggled through school find some parts of Functional Skills challenging.” It is noteworthy that the same requirements are not imposed on those taking the equivalent level 3 qualifications in A-Level. For example, a student taking politics, media studies and sociology for A-level is not required to do a maths or statistics paper.

The MLP has made learning providers risk-averse; they have naturally become less likely to enrol an individual on an advanced apprenticeship who they suspect may have difficulties completing the framework.

Whilst it may not sound too surprising that learning providers question the wisdom of the MLP, the Skills Commission believes that the MLP has had indirect and unintended consequences on advanced apprenticeship numbers and progression. No learning providers we spoke to called for the MLP system to be abolished altogether, asking instead for a more provider and learner specific approach to be adopted. Adrian Holmes (ESG) told us that “unless reforms are made to the current MLP system there is little hope that numbers of advanced apprenticeships will improve. In fact, with minimum performance rates set to become tougher, advanced apprenticeship numbers are likely to decline further.”

During the Inquiry, witnesses also informed the Commission that the current MLP system does not account for providers and employers who take on young apprentices from disadvantaged backgrounds with low levels of prior attainment, who consequently may find it harder to complete an apprenticeship framework. Some learning providers deal with large numbers of, and in some cases exclusively with, this type of learner, and for them the MLP is therefore harder to meet. With the MLP rising each year the Commission is concerned that it may become increasingly difficult for learning providers to offer the opportunity of an apprenticeship to learners with relatively low levels of prior attainment.

Recommendation 11: The Government should introduce a new performance target system for learning providers that takes account of the prior attainment and academic record of individual learners. This would give learning providers greater flexibility to take on learners they believe should be able to complete an apprenticeship or an advanced apprenticeship, if given the opportunity, without fear of losing their contracts.

8.3 Train to Gain

The introduction of Train to Gain, which includes full funding for many level 3 NVQs, has added to learning providers’ unwillingness to enrol individuals on to the more demanding advanced apprenticeship. Courses available through Train to Gain are fully-funded for learners of all ages and only require completion of the NVQ. Success is more likely, completion rates are higher and the MLP are easier to meet.

Martin Dunford (ALP) told us that “because of the need for learning providers to meet Minimum Levels of Performance for apprenticeship completions, it is frequently the case that providers will reduce the risks to their contract by seeking to progress learners who have already achieved a level 2 apprenticeship onto a Train to Gain programme rather than an advanced apprenticeship.”

Stephen Gardner (Rathbone) said: “Train to Gain is fine as long as it isn’t taking learners away from apprenticeships, and in particular, advanced apprenticeships. Apprenticeships offer broad and transferable skills whereas Train to Gain offers only a narrow, job-based NVQ.”

These concerns were echoed by the LSC’s own findings: ‘Case study discussions with employers suggest that alternatives to apprenticeships (such as NVQs through Train to Gain, or in-house schemes) are often seen as offering better value for money or as being more appropriate for the company... Apprenticeships have a reputation for generating a lot of bureaucracy and paperwork, and this was mentioned as another deterrent. Employers opt for NVQs rather than apprenticeships because they are ‘faster’ and a less resource-heavy way of acquiring qualifications... Some training providers suggested that NVQs delivered through Train to Gain were in direct competition with the apprenticeship programme⁵⁷.’

Indeed, and as these LSC findings suggest, it should be noted that Train to Gain is also affecting level 2 apprenticeship take up. The Government has recognised this as a problem and stated in its apprenticeships White Paper that funding arrangements for training 19-25 year olds, including Train to Gain, should be prioritised towards apprenticeships⁵⁸. However, evidence submitted to the Skills Commission from a number of leading learning providers suggested that this policy is not being carried out by the LSC. As a result, many adults are still receiving NVQ-only training through Train to Gain, rather than the expansive, transferable training experience of an apprenticeship.

Recommendation 12: The Government should implement its policy of prioritising apprenticeships funding ahead of all other work-based learning for 19-25 year olds. Special attention should be paid to ensure that level 2 and level 3 NVQ training, through Train to Gain, is not replacing apprenticeships.

8.4 Funding levels for 19-plus apprentices

Current Government policy is to fully-fund the training of all apprentices under the age of 19 and to part-fund apprentices aged 19-plus. The Government believes older apprentices are more productive and less of a burden to train than those aged 16-18, and therefore asks employers to contribute around 50% of the costs of training.

However, witnesses told this Inquiry that the age of an apprentice is not always an indicator of productivity levels, and that this funding policy is adversely affecting progression from apprenticeship to advanced apprenticeship.

If a young person struggles at school and does not achieve the requisite qualifications for an apprenticeship they can enrol on a pre-apprenticeship programme, such as Entry to Employment. Even if this individual makes good progress, they will be 17 years old before they start an apprenticeship and are unlikely to be ready to progress onto an advanced apprenticeship until they are at least 19 years old. In this case an older apprentice will not necessarily mean a more productive apprentice. In fact, as Stephen Gardner (Rathbone) remarked to the Commission:

“Often they are likely to require more training, and be more costly to the employer, than someone who achieved well at school and moved directly into an advanced apprenticeship at 16. As apprenticeship is a programme based on achieving and demonstrating competence, the length and cost of training varies with ability not age.”

In its recent White Paper on social mobility, the Government recognised that far more public money is spent on learning for individuals who go to university soon after leaving school than those who move from school into a job:

‘Lifelong learning should be supported by fair chances, fair funding and fair rules. A young person who goes to university soon after leaving school will typically have significantly more spent on their lifetime learning than one who goes from school to work. We believe that those who do not go to university but who have the desire and ability to study and train throughout their working life should also be able to access the support they need in order to raise their skills levels⁵⁹.’

The Skills Commission warmly welcomes the Government’s decision to address this inequality and believes that apprenticeship funding is a priority area for such reform. Reducing apprenticeship funding at 19 years old deepens inequality by stifling levels of progression to advanced apprenticeships for the large group of learners who develop later than average.

Recommendation 13: In line with its policy on social mobility, the Government should reform current funding arrangements for apprentices over the age of 19. All apprenticeships for learners who have not yet achieved a level 2 qualification should be fully-funded up to the age of 25. All advanced apprenticeships for learners who have not yet achieved a level 3 qualification should be fully-funded up to the age of 25.

58 *World-Class Apprenticeships*, p.40

59 *New Opportunities Fair Chances for the Future* (HM Government, 2009) p.8

Progression to advanced further education and higher education

9. Progression to advanced further education and higher education

Data on the number of former apprentices who progress to advanced further education, such as Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and Foundation Degrees, and higher education is not recorded. However, anecdotal evidence, together with the few studies that have been carried out, indicates overall numbers are very low.

Figure 8 below shows the number of full-time undergraduates who progressed directly from apprenticeships to higher education. The numbers are extremely low and applications dropped by around a quarter from 2007 to 2008.

Figure 8: Apprentice applicants to higher education institutions 2006-8⁶⁰

	2006	2007	2008
Total Applicants	301	386	288
Total Acceptances	218	273	202

However, as Anthony McClaran, Chief Executive of UCAS, told the Commission, a majority of former apprentices in higher education will not have moved directly from their apprenticeship to higher education and will be studying on a part-time basis, and will not therefore be included in this dataset.

The strikingly low figures in Figure 9 below are progression rates based on the stated intention of apprentices upon completion of their frameworks.

Figure 9: Progressions from apprenticeships into further and higher education⁶¹

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Progressed to Further Education	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%
Progressed to Higher Education	0.1%	0.1%	0%
Progressed to Further and Higher Education	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%

A University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC) study carried out in 2005 concluded that between 2% and 4% of former apprentices progressed to higher education⁶². In evidence submitted to this Inquiry UVAC said a more recent piece of research, due to be published shortly, shows these numbers have not significantly improved in recent years.

There was agreement from witnesses that a sea change in the number of former apprentices progressing to advanced further education and higher education is critical. The likely growth in apprenticeship numbers and the advent of Diplomas will give rise to a new type of learner, with the ability and the aspiration to progress to higher-level learning. Anthony McClaran (UCAS) said "the demographic downturn means that, for pragmatic reasons, apprenticeships can become crucial to higher education participation levels. Government targets for higher education participation and apprenticeships are equally ambitious. There is a real opportunity on both sides."

⁶⁰ Data submitted to this Inquiry by UCAS

⁶¹ Data is collected from the stated intention of learners upon completion of their apprenticeship. Data was presented to the Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network by the LSC in 2008

⁶² *An Analysis of the Progression of Advanced Apprentices to Higher Education in England* (UVAC, 2006) p.77

LSC research revealed that a majority of learners would be more likely to apply for an apprenticeship if it provided a route through to university⁶³. John Berkeley, Chairman of Brandauer, informed the Commission that a survey he conducted for the Government in 2004 revealed that 78% of first year engineering apprentices thought that many more young people would choose an apprenticeship if it offered a clear route to university⁶⁴.

There is little doubt that the acceptance of apprenticeships as a route through to advanced further education and higher education will be central to ensuring greater participation from the most capable young people, and would be of immeasurable benefit to the apprenticeship brand. Whilst no witnesses were advocating the progression of all apprentices into advanced further education and higher education, they were clear that the opportunity for that progression must exist. The Commission heard encouraging words from those within higher education that signalled a strong desire to engage with apprenticeships, and overcome the barriers that prevent progression from outside traditional academic entry routes.

9.1 Part-time courses

A number of witnesses informed us that a majority of those former apprentices who do progress to higher education enrol on part-time courses. Apprentices are used to scheduling learning alongside an occupation and, after years of being employed, giving up work for full-time study is often impractical and unattractive. As Anthony McClaran (UCAS) told the Commission:

“Many former apprentices, having experienced the advantages of a system that allows them to earn whilst they learn, will be entering higher education on a part-time basis in order to maintain their lifestyle.”

Professor Deian Hopkin (London South Bank University) said: “The issue is what universities must do to make higher education a better fit for apprenticeships, rather than the other way around. Universities could, for example, offer far more part-time courses, but they aren’t always set up for this type of provision at the moment.”

The Skills Commission believes that, with apprenticeships expanding, it is important that higher education provision becomes more responsive to the unique learning needs of individuals who have followed a work-based learning route.

Recommendation 14: The Government should ensure that the Higher Education Funding Council for England’s funding mechanisms encourage the provision of more part-time higher education courses. The Council should ensure higher education institutions are able to respond to the learning requirements of a growing number of former apprentices.

George Kessler, Group Deputy Chairman of Kesslers International, told the Commission that it is very difficult for apprentices at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to find specialist, part-time higher education courses. Large employers have a big enough yearly cohort of apprentices from their own workforce to make it feasible for local higher education institutions to offer appropriate part-time provision. SMEs, however, will usually only have one or two apprentices each year who want to study part-time, and universities can rarely provide a specialist, tailored course for such small cohorts. At present there is no system in higher education that enables universities to consolidate the demand for part-time higher education courses from different employers. George Kessler told the Commission: “I will ring round 70 institutions asking for the appropriate part-time course for my apprentices whilst another employer could be doing the same, but our demand is not linked up. We are missing a huge opportunity here.”

63 *Research into Expanding Apprenticeships*, p.18

64 Berkeley, J: *Listening to the Work-based Learner: A Report on the Piloting of the National Trainee Feedback System for Engineering Modern Apprentices* (DfES, 2004), p.5

Anthony McClaran (UCAS) told the Commission that UCAS submitted a proposal to the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) in September 2008, recommending UCAS acts as a brokerage service between employers and higher education institutions. The service would allow employers to indicate to higher education institutions, and other employers, the type of course they require for their apprentices. George Kessler said that he, and other medium-sized employers, would greatly welcome such a system. The Commission has been informed that UCAS is still waiting to hear back from DIUS about this proposal.

Recommendation 15: The Government should develop a system for consolidating demand from different employers for part-time higher education courses, and the Skills Commission urges DIUS to take up UCAS' proposal for such a system. This would enable higher education institutions to provide specialist, part-time courses for former apprentices from a number of different local employers.

Furthermore, witnesses told the Commission that SMEs receive little support in finding those advanced further education and higher education courses that do exist and are suitable for such learners. There is currently no incentive for learning providers to help former apprentices negotiate the difficult pathways through to advanced further education or higher education. The responsibility lies with the employer, for whom there is little immediate advantage, or the learner, who has very often never engaged with the institutions that offer these courses.

Recommendation 16: The Government should introduce incentives for learning providers to progress former apprentices onto advanced further education and higher education courses.

Anthony McClaran (UCAS) told the Commission that the lack of data around current part-time higher education provision is also a concern. UCAS record and analyse a huge amount of data on full-time higher education provision. This record is very valuable in allowing them to spot negative trends in the system, such as access patterns and inequalities, as well as giving them a great insight into progression pathways. However, nothing comparable is currently in place for part-time higher education provision. UCAS has made a submission to the Higher Education Funding Council for England for funding to conduct a feasibility study into the establishment of a national infrastructure to record all data on part-time higher education study. This would enable UCAS to carry out detailed analyses of part-time higher education provision, track part-time students through their learning programmes and offer an invaluable insight into the current experiences of former apprentices in higher education.

Recommendation 17: The Government should grant UCAS funding to carry out a feasibility study for the establishment of an infrastructure that records all data on part-time higher education provision.

9.2 UCAS tariff points

Much of the debate amongst witnesses around progression from apprenticeship to higher education centred on the overwhelming need for a system that awards UCAS tariff points to advanced apprenticeship frameworks.

Anthony McClaran (UCAS) told the Commission:

“Attributing UCAS tariff points to frameworks is paramount to progression and creates something symbolically very important to aspiration. It shows that apprenticeship is part of the family of qualifications through which you can progress onto higher education.”

ALP told the Commission that because apprenticeships do not attract UCAS points ‘some learners, who would like to do an apprenticeship, choose not to as they feel it may hinder their aspirations to progress to university.’

The Government signalled its intention to develop a tariff points system for apprenticeships in its White Paper on apprenticeships: ‘We will ask the LSC to extend its work with UCAS (to evaluate

apprenticeship frameworks in terms of UCAS points) to include all frameworks. Two frameworks have been successfully mapped to date: IT and engineering⁶⁵. This ambition has been restated in the recent White Paper on social mobility: 'We will work with the UCAS to implement our commitment to incorporate apprenticeship frameworks into the UCAS points system by 2010⁶⁶.'

However, evidence submitted to the Commission by the Sector Skills Council SEMTA revealed that as yet no engineering apprenticeship has been awarded UCAS tariff points and the process has been held up:

'SEMTA has carried out initial work with UCAS to accredit the engineering advanced apprenticeship in tariff point terms for entry to higher education. After initial work this process seems to have stalled and needs to be continued to ensure apprentices can access higher education either on a full or part-time basis and gain credit for their programme.'

UCAS told the Skills Commission that it has developed and submitted to the LSC the methodology for a 'tariff calculator' that accredits tariff points to apprenticeship frameworks, but has not yet heard back from the LSC.

Mapping in excess of 180 different apprenticeship frameworks, with the many different qualifications each framework entails, is no small task, but UCAS assured the Skills Commission that the methodology is already in place and that the process could be completed quickly.

Awarding tariff points to every advanced apprenticeship framework would be a significant breakthrough. Not only is it a necessity in order to increase progression from apprenticeship to higher education, it would also, as the IUSS Select Committee noted, 'be a powerful demonstration of the quality, consistency and currency of the [apprenticeship] programme⁶⁷.' The opportunities apprenticeships offer for progression to higher education would then be quantifiable alongside other higher education entry routes, dispelling the idea that undertaking an apprenticeship limits individuals' chances of progressing to higher education, whilst also 'providing the leverage necessary to facilitate and encourage progression to higher education⁶⁸.'

Recommendation 18: The Government should accelerate the process of accrediting advanced apprenticeship frameworks with UCAS tariff points, laying down a clear timetable to ensure this process is completed by the end of 2009.

9.3 Admission to higher education courses

A number of witnesses also expressed concern about the extent to which university admissions tutors are aware of apprenticeships. Deian Hopkin (London South Bank University) told the Commission:

"There are a very significant number of gatekeepers across the [higher education] sector with low levels of knowledge and understanding of different routes and qualifications. I think this has been a real issue for vocational qualifications and apprenticeships in particular."

The Skills Commission contacted a number of university admissions tutors to discuss their views on apprenticeships. An overwhelming majority said that, as apprenticeships are not qualifications and do not attract UCAS tariff points, it is very difficult for them to assess an individual on the basis of having once been an apprentice.

Recommendation 19: The Government should devise ways of increasing awareness amongst university admissions tutors about how apprenticeships can provide learners with the competencies to enter higher education.

Witnesses to the Inquiry also told the Commission that progression levels are not helped by the fact that apprenticeship frameworks do not always develop the skills needed for higher education. These

65 *World-Class Apprenticeships*, p.24

66 *New Opportunities*, p.58

67 *Pre-legislative Scrutiny of the Draft Apprenticeships Bill*, p.39

68 *Ibid*, p.40

skills include essay writing and in some cases, such as engineering, advanced maths. Where this is a barrier to progression, the Government should seek to ensure that apprentices have access to additional study that makes it possible for learners to bridge the gap that may exist in their learning, enabling them to progress more easily to higher education.

Recommendation 20: Apprentices should have access to bridging courses which develop additional skills, such as essay writing, enabling them to progress to higher education after completion of their apprenticeship framework.

9.4 Progression to the Professions

The Skills Commission also notes that there is a need for greater levels of progression from apprenticeship through to the Professions, and there is a real opportunity for professional bodies to work closely with the new National Apprenticeship Service to encourage more former apprentices to progress into the Professions.

All apprentices should be made aware of the experience and qualifications needed to qualify as a professional in their given occupation, and progression from apprenticeship to the relevant profession, whether it is via higher education or further work-based learning, should be clearly indicated to all apprentices as part of the apprenticeship framework's progression pathway.

The Commission recognises the Government's continued efforts in widening access to the Professions and welcomes the establishment of the Government's new Panel on Fair Access to the Professions⁶⁹. The Commission urges the Panel to look closely at the key role progression from apprenticeship could play in this widening participation agenda.

Recommendation 21: The Government's Panel on Fair Access to the Professions should ensure that the National Apprenticeship Service and the relevant Sector Skills Councils work with the professional bodies to create clear pathways from apprenticeship through to the Professions. All apprentices should be made aware of the qualifications and experience required to join the Professions.

9.5 Monitoring apprenticeship progression to advanced further education and higher education

In evidence to this Inquiry, a number of witnesses, in particular employers and learning providers, expressed frustration at the absence of data on those former apprentices who have progressed to higher levels of learning. Stephen Gardner (Rathbone) said:

"The National Apprenticeship Taskforce, and latterly the Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network, has repeatedly asked that the higher education system is asked to collect this information. It is very disappointing that there continue to be no figures to inform the debate about how many apprentices progress to higher education and other forms of learning."

George Kessler (Kesslers International) told the Commission he has "been asking for the data for five years and was recently told that it wouldn't be available until 2012, and only then in limited form."

Collection and analysis of this data is of utmost importance both to help illustrate current progression routes and to highlight and overcome some of the unique problems that may be faced by former apprentices in higher education, given their unconventional entry route.

Stephen Marston, Director General of the Further Education and Skills Group at the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), explained that the way in which data on higher education participants is, and has always been, collected, makes tracking former apprentices across to higher education very difficult. Many of those apprentices who do progress to higher education will not move directly after completing their apprenticeship. Mr Marston told the Commission that the current data system does not account for this discontinuity of learning and only records training immediately preceding entry to higher education. The Government is taking steps to address this

and a Unique Learner Number (ULN) and the Learner Achievement Record will in future document each stage of a learner's educational progress. This will be recorded onto a single database and will track learners over decades, giving a complete picture of which courses and qualifications each learner has undertaken and achieved.

A new and comprehensive method of data collection is welcome. This new method will also provide valuable data on former apprentices progressing into advanced further education, such as HNDs and Foundation Degrees, about whom little is also known. However, these are long-term solutions that will take many years to provide results that inform policy and practice. Given the great efforts by Government to boost apprenticeship numbers, the need to address the systemic problems that prevent former apprentices from progressing to advanced further education and higher education becomes ever-more pressing. Data on apprenticeship progression to these levels of learning is urgently needed if we are to give an increasing number of apprentices the best opportunity for progression and success.

Recommendation 22: The Government should commission systematic research enabling it to monitor former apprentices who progress to higher education and advanced further education, and those former apprentices who have already progressed. A study should be built up year on year until the Unique Learner Number starts to produce informative data.

An equally worrying aspect of the data gap is how little we know about apprentices' attitudes towards advanced further education and higher education. Anthony McClaran (UCAS) said "it would be extremely informative to know more about apprentices' own aspirations and in particular their attitudes towards progressing through to higher education. A greater understanding of the demand from these types of learners is required to ensure reforms to the system are effective."

Recommendation 23: The Government should commission research into apprentices' attitudes towards advanced further education and higher education and progression.

The Skills Commission calls on the Government to carefully consider the policy recommendations in this report. As Lord Leitch identified, apprenticeship is an excellent mode of skills training, and, properly utilised, has the potential to make a significant contribution to the future skills needs of our economy.

Engaging more employers with apprenticeships is a challenging prospect for the Government, particularly during a recession. It is important that the Government implements our recommendations alongside the steps it takes to increase apprenticeship places. This will help to create a true 'renaissance' for apprenticeships, by ensuring expansion does not come at the expense of the programme's long-term prosperity.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Institute of Careers Guidance/ Skills Commission Careers Guidance Professionals Survey 2008

With your clients what level of awareness is there generally of apprenticeships? (low, medium or high)

Low	Medium	High
31%	55%	14%

Do you think that your clients are fully aware of the following factors in relation to apprenticeships?

	Yes	No
Existing opportunities	31%	69%
Entry requirements	26%	74%
Opportunity for career progression	28%	72%
Opportunity for progression to high-level skills and higher education	14%	86%
Application procedures	22%	78%
Advantages and disadvantages	41%	59%

What are the key factors that you identify in advising your clients to consider the apprenticeship route?

	Yes	No
Aptitude	71%	29%
Family history	16%	84%
Good record of academic achievement	32%	68%
High levels of aspiration	33%	67%
Personal interest	76%	24%
High levels of motivation	70%	30%

Please describe any circumstances or reasons why someone should not do an apprenticeship if they wanted to progress into higher education?

	Yes	No
Reduces the option available	33%	67%
Distracts from higher education route	15%	85%
Unclear pathways to higher education	52%	48%
Universities do not recognise the option for entry	47%	53%

What do you perceive as the advantages of progression into advanced apprenticeships and higher-level skills for someone who takes up an apprenticeship?

	Yes	No
Better career prospects	72%	28%
Financial reward	65%	35%
Improved recognition from employers	72%	28%
Self esteem	74%	26%
Opportunity to match degree standard	48%	52%
No significant advantage	2%	98%

How could initial and continuing training for career guidance professionals be changed to improve their understanding of apprenticeships?

	Yes	No
Employer contribution to training	69%	31%
Employer visits as part of the training	73%	27%
Special information packs for students	60%	40%

How can careers guidance professionals gain a better understanding of apprenticeships?

	Yes	No
Regular visits to employers	65%	35%
Improved written briefings	48%	52%
More labour market information from employers	83%	17%
Local forums with employers	70%	30%

Appendix 2: YouGov/Edge Survey 2008: apprenticeships

Introduction

In November 2008, YouGov conducted surveys of four key stakeholder groups on behalf of the Edge Foundation. The research was carried out online. The sample was sourced from YouGov's panel of 250,000 adults and young people in the UK.

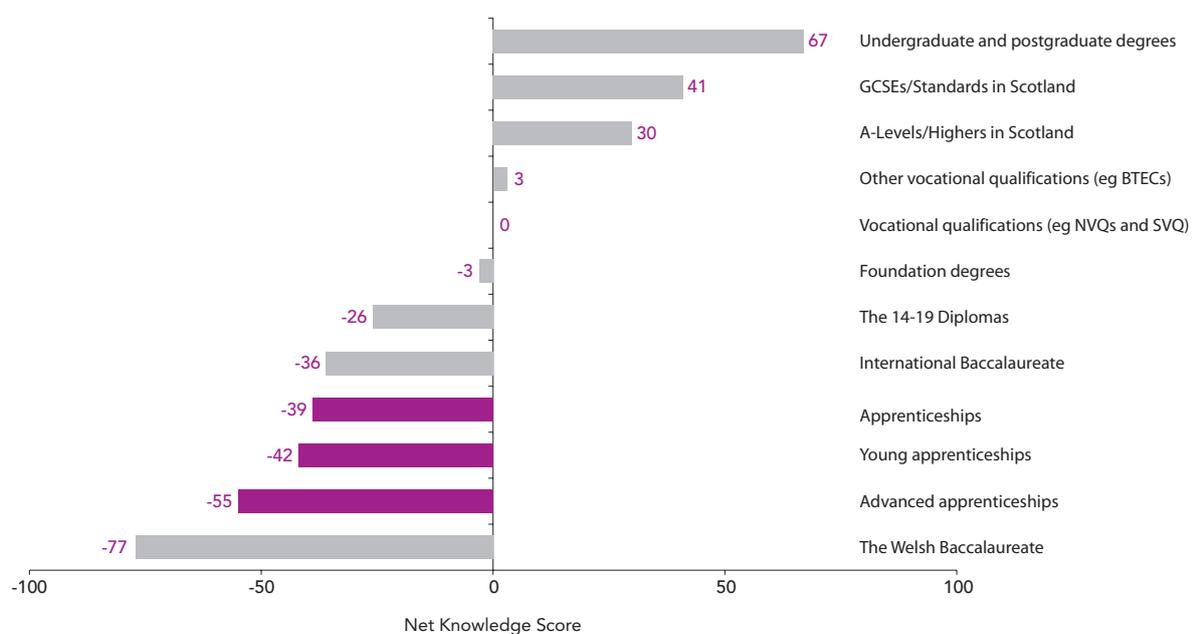
Headline details about the four stakeholder surveys

Stakeholder group	Dates	Sample	Invites	Response rate
Children and young people	13th to 24th November	2,538	7,312	35%
Parents	3rd to 10th November	1,030	2,000	52%
Employers	3rd to 10th November	1,001	2,020	50%
Teachers	3rd to 10th November	1,199	2,305	52%
Total	-	5,768	13,637	42%

Teachers' knowledge of apprenticeships

Despite apprenticeships being around for some time, teachers' level of knowledge about them is extremely limited. The figure below shows net knowledge scores among teachers, across a range of qualifications. Net knowledge scores were produced by subtracting the percentage of teachers who said they had good knowledge from the percentage who had poor knowledge.

Level of knowledge among teachers for specific qualifications



Base: Teachers (1,199)

Aside from the Welsh Baccalaureate, net knowledge scores for apprenticeships were the lowest of all qualifications listed in the survey, and stand in marked contrast with positive scores for undergraduate/ postgraduate degrees and GCSE's/ Standards in Scotland. This gap in teachers' knowledge and understanding is a clear cause for concern.

By comparison, parents claim a fair understanding of apprenticeships, with a net knowledge score of +10, 49 percentage points higher than the score for teachers. However, this figure should be treated with a degree of caution as it represents what parents say they know – their actual knowledge of apprenticeships may in practice be weaker than this suggests. Being closer to the education system, teachers may be giving a fairer answer.

Apprenticeships – a good alternative?

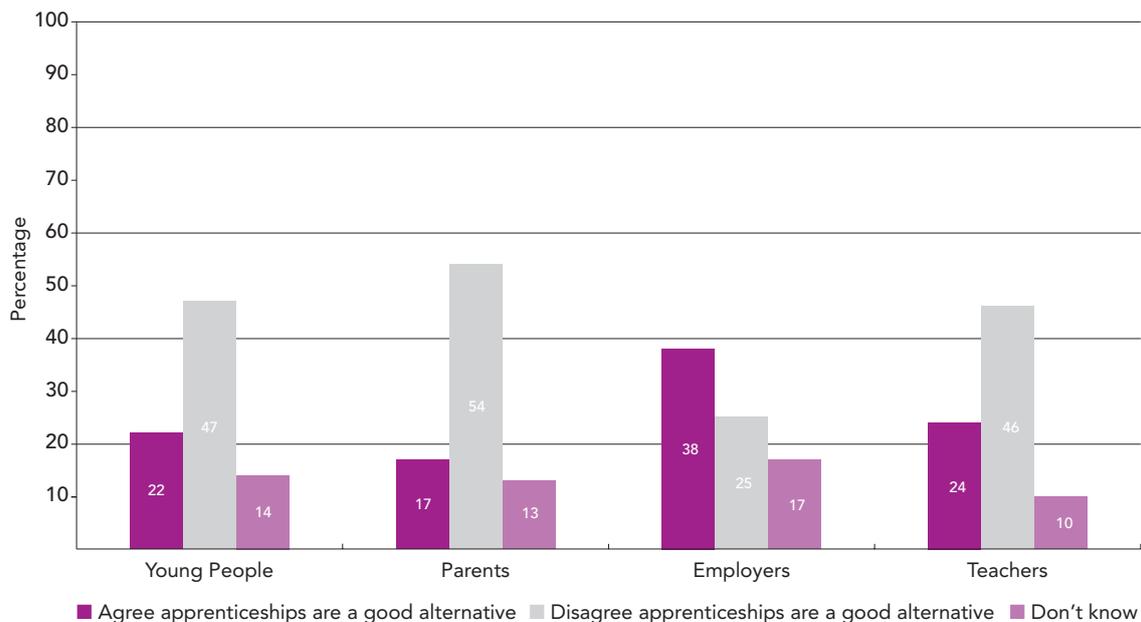
The four stakeholder groups were asked their opinions of apprenticeships as alternatives to A-levels or equivalent qualifications. Each stakeholder group was firstly asked their own opinion on apprenticeships as alternatives to A-levels or equivalent qualifications, and then how they think other stakeholder groups would feel.

Teachers – are apprenticeships a good alternative?

One in four teachers (24 per cent) agree that apprenticeships are a good alternative to A-Levels or equivalent qualifications. However, 46 per cent disagree. 47 per cent believe that apprenticeships are suitable for individuals of all abilities. A further 10 per cent of teachers don't know if apprenticeships are a good alternative to A Levels.

As identified earlier, teachers' knowledge of apprenticeships is very limited. This lack of knowledge could be a factor in why so few teachers see apprenticeships as a good alternative to A-Levels or equivalent qualifications. In addition, the vast majority (85 per cent) of teachers feel there is a clear progression route for academic qualifications but only a third (35 per cent) feel the same is true for vocational qualifications. It is likely that they see academic qualifications as a better stepping stone to higher education than apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships as alternatives to A-Levels or equivalent: what teachers say themselves, and what they think other stakeholders will say



Base: Teachers (1,199)

As we will discuss in more detail later, many parents and young people consider that apprenticeships are a good alternative to A levels and equivalent academic qualifications. This will come as a surprise to many teachers. Figure 62 shows that only a small percentage of teachers believe young people and parents regard apprenticeships as a good alternative to A levels. Figure 63 shows that there is a very large gap between what teachers think parents believe, and what parents actually believe.

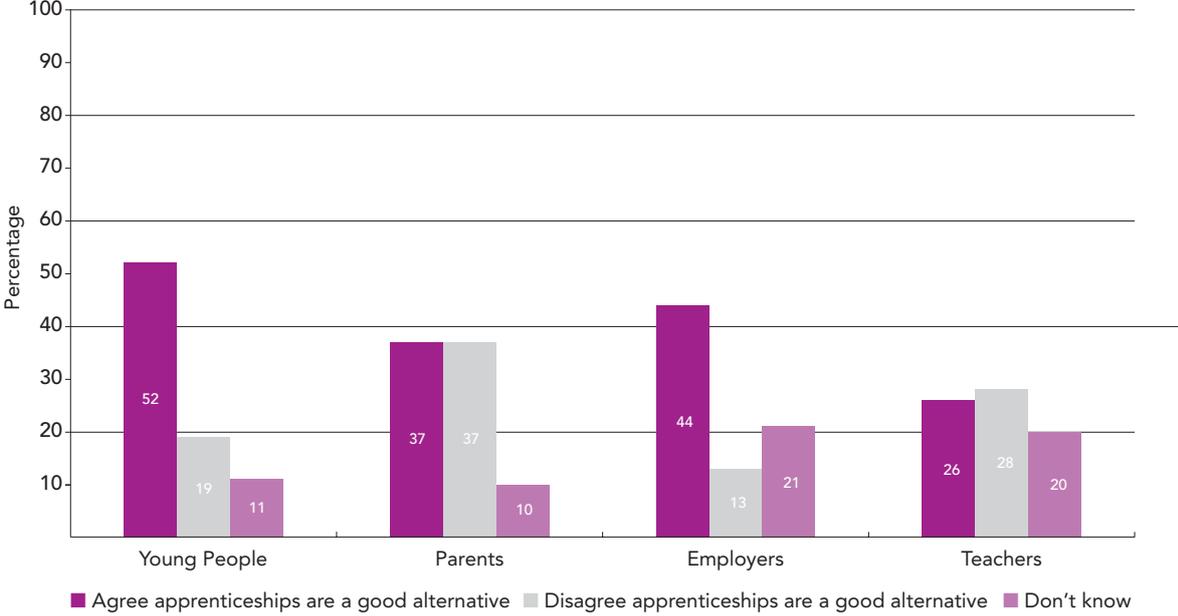
Figure 1: Teachers’ perception of parents’ view of apprenticeships, compared with what parents actually think



Children and Young People – are apprenticeships a good alternative?

Young people are generally more positive towards apprenticeships than expected by teachers with over half (52 per cent) agreeing that apprenticeships are a good alternative to A-Levels or equivalent qualifications. Young people in group C2DE are more positive towards apprenticeships than those in group ABC1 (56 per cent compared to 48 per cent).

Apprenticeships as alternatives to A-Levels or equivalent: what children and young people say themselves, and what they think other stakeholders will say



Base: Children at Key Stage 4 (376)

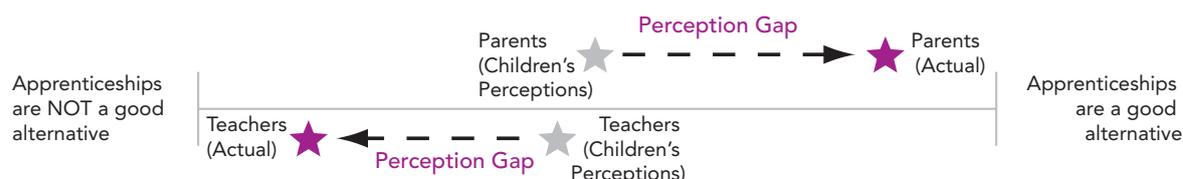
Some other survey findings may also shed light on young people’s attitudes:

- A third (32 per cent) of young people at Key Stage 4 agree that learning by doing things is more fun than academic learning. apprenticeships could be seen by these young people as ‘fun learning’ which might result in a positive outlook.
- Some young people at ‘Key Stage 5’ (age 16 to 18) said the information and advice provided in schools and colleges about learning, jobs and careers was poor. Within this group, 70 per cent would have liked better advice on jobs. apprenticeships may be seen by some young people as better preparation for the working world. Lack of advice in school/ college could also be a contributing factor as to why apprenticeships are viewed as good alternatives.

When asked how they think their parents perceive apprenticeships, young people are evenly divided: 37 per cent think their parents would see apprenticeships as a good alternative to A Levels, and 37 per cent think the opposite. This indicates there may be some confusion among young people as to their parents’ attitudes. Half (51 per cent) of those at key stage 4 feel their parents think academic qualifications are more important than vocational. That said, a further third (33 per cent) think their parents regard academic and vocational qualifications as equally important.

Overall, young people underestimate their parents’ support for apprenticeships. They also underestimate teachers’ lack of support for apprenticeships, as illustrated in Figure 65.

Children & young people’s opinion on apprenticeships as alternatives to A-Levels or equivalent

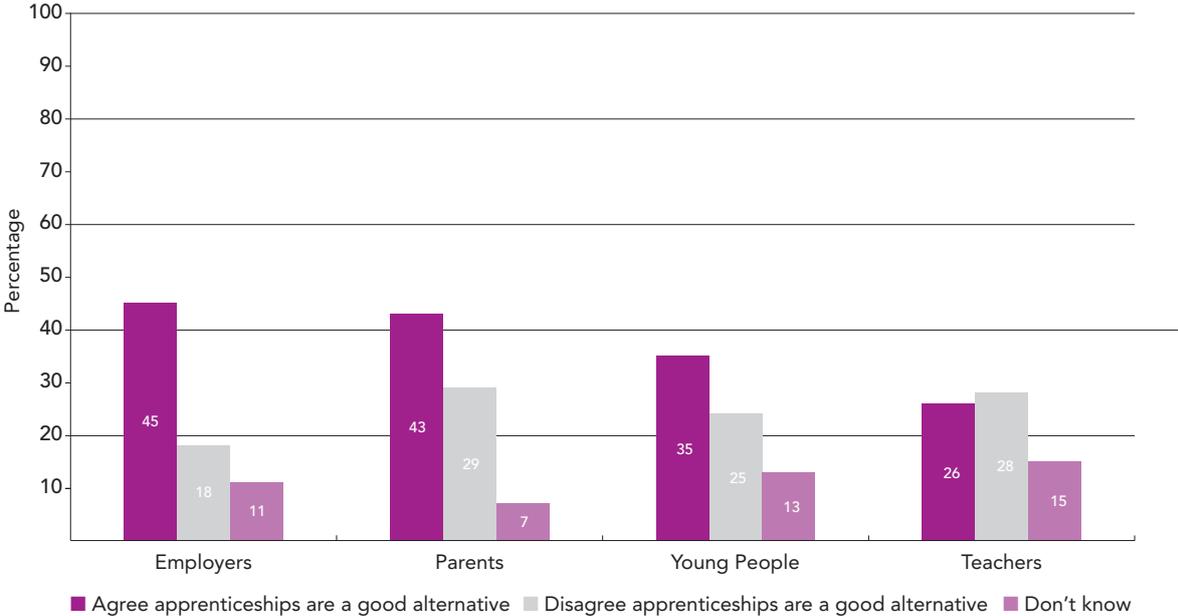


Teachers and young people think, correctly, that employers are likely to regard apprenticeships as a good alternative to A Levels.

Parents – are apprenticeships a good alternative?

As noted already, parents are much more positive about apprenticeships than teachers expect. 43 per cent of parents agree that apprenticeships are a good alternative to A Levels or equivalent qualifications.

Apprenticeships as alternatives to A-Levels or equivalent: what parents say themselves, and what they think other stakeholders will say.



Base: Parents (1,030)

Again, other survey findings might shed some light on why parents are relatively well disposed towards apprenticeships:

- 43 per cent of parents with a child at key stage 4 think children prefer a mixture of ‘academic’ and ‘practical’ learning. Though young people think their parents favour academic rather than vocational qualifications, it seems this may not be the case.
- 48 per cent of parents state that there is too little practical learning in school. Parents perhaps see apprenticeships as redressing the balance between different types of learning.

Social grade also influences parental attitudes, with parents from groups C2DE being more favourable towards apprenticeships than parents in ABC1.

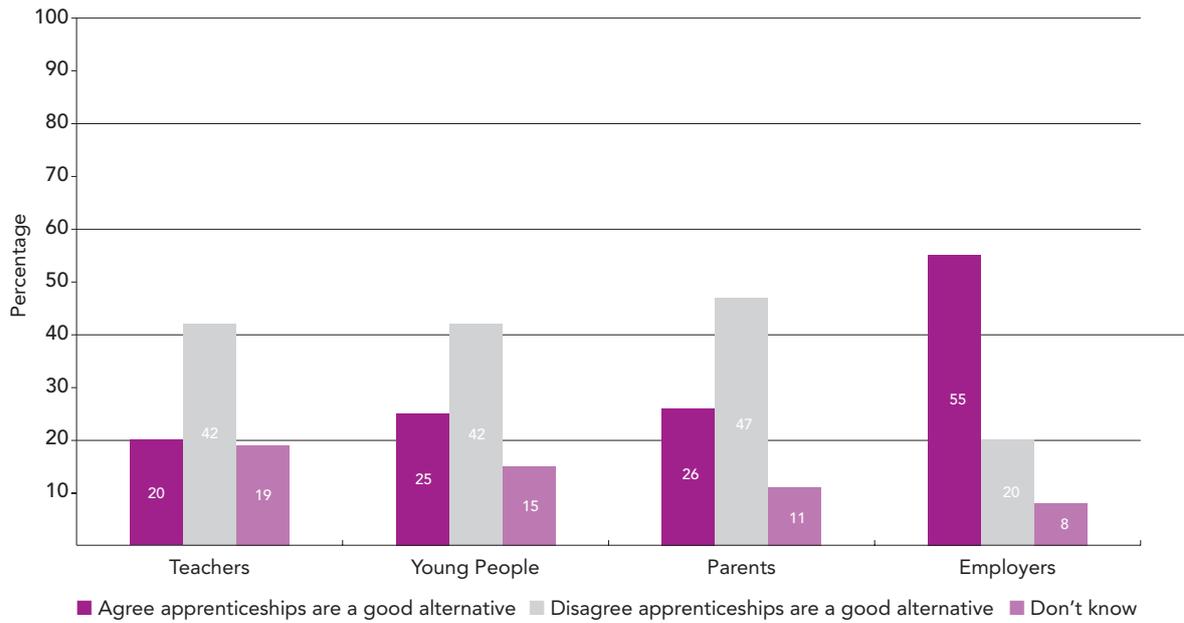
We noted earlier that parents say they have a good level of knowledge of apprenticeships. They also have a positive view of vocational qualifications more generally. However it is possible that parents overestimate their understanding of apprenticeships; it is also possible that they see apprenticeships as a good alternative to A-Levels for other people’s children, rather than their own; this could be explored in greater depth in future research.

As before, parents were asked how they think apprenticeships are regarded by other stakeholders. A quarter of parents think their children do not regard apprenticeships as a good alternative and one in eight do not know how they would feel. As with all other stakeholder groups, parents feel that employers will be most likely to agree that apprenticeships are a good alternative.

Employers – are apprenticeships a good alternative?

Employers are the most positive towards apprenticeships of all the stakeholder groups. Over half (55 per cent) of employers agree that apprenticeships are a good alternative to A-Levels or equivalent qualifications. When considering other stakeholders groups, however, employers tend to think that parents, teachers and young people do not view apprenticeships as good alternatives.

Apprenticeships as alternatives to A-Levels or equivalent: what employers say themselves, and what they think other stakeholders will say.

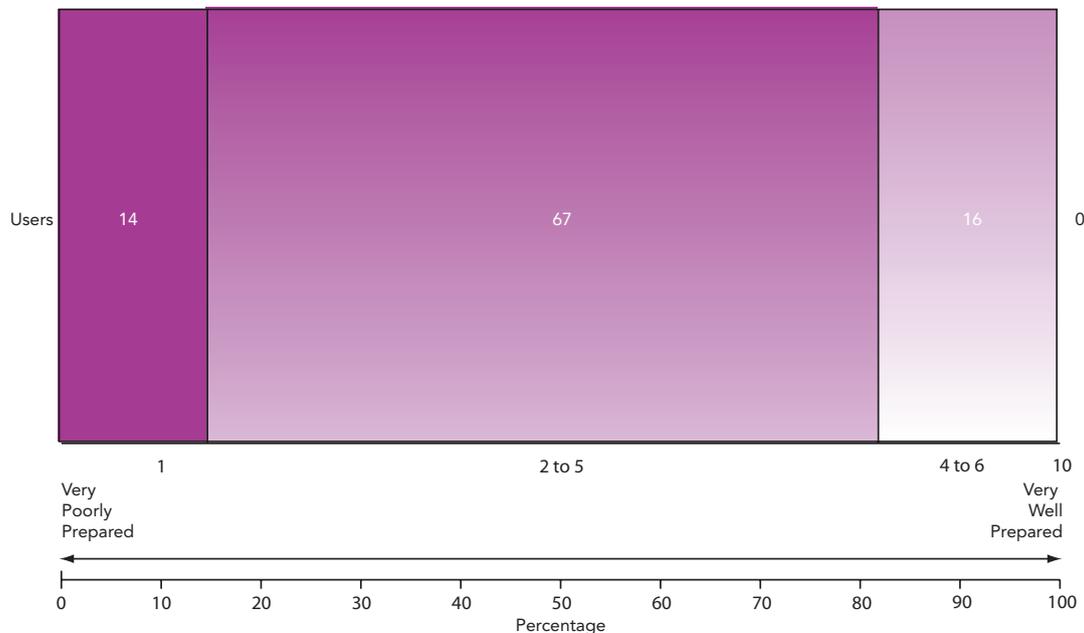


Base: Employers (1,001)

Almost half (47 per cent) felt that parents would not see apprenticeships as a good alternative to A-Levels or equivalent qualifications, and 42 per cent thought this opinion would be shared by young people and teachers. One in five (19 per cent) did not know whether teachers would regard apprenticeships as a good alternative to A-Levels or equivalent qualifications.

When asked about school leavers' readiness for the world of work, most employers gave a score between 1 and 5 (a score of 10 means very well prepared) as shown below. None of the employers felt that school leavers were very well prepared, demonstrating that there is a real concern here.

Employers' opinion on how prepared school leavers are for the world of work



Base: Employers (1,001)

In addition, almost three quarters of employers agreed that there is a mis-match between the skills of young people and the requirements of their organisation. Over half (55 per cent) of employers think schools place too much emphasis on academic achievement and not enough on vocational achievement. Employers clearly perceive that there is a skills gap: this is perhaps one of the reasons why employers feel so strongly that apprenticeships are a good alternative to A-Levels.

Appendix 3: Apprentice case studies

The following case-studies are of apprentices who gave oral or written evidence during the course of the Inquiry.

Craig Brewster

Advanced Apprenticeship with BAE Systems Submarines

"My career as an apprentice welder started in September 2005. Before then I worked for a company called Playdale Playgrounds installing kids' playgrounds. This was a well paid job, but there were no opportunities and my experiences were worthless in a majority of other jobs. I realised that if I was to leave the company in the future I would have nothing to fall back on and finding another job would prove to be difficult, especially a job that could match my current salary.

One weekend I noticed an advert in my local newspaper for accelerated apprentices in welding at BAE Systems. I applied and was one of the 12 people taken on by the company. The group of 12 lads of different ages started in the welding School and within 6 weeks in we had all passed an overhead welding test and were ready to start our apprenticeship on the shop floor. We were all assigned a journeyman to show us the ropes for the first 6-12 months, and all continually improved and were constantly given opportunities to work on big jobs with the tradesmen.

In the second year of my apprenticeship I was nominated to participate in the Queens Silver Medal Award, where I competed with 24 of the best apprentices in the country. I was lucky enough to make the final 6 and went on to receive the Derrick Kimber award for the best Craft Apprentice in the country.

Soon I will be placed on a High Potential Scheme where I will be put on further courses, such as shadowing Team Leaders – a position I hope to have in the future.

So I have a lot to thank of BAE Systems and my apprenticeship for. The opportunities and experiences have been out of this world and I wouldn't change a thing about my apprenticeship programme."

Anastasia Relph

Advanced Apprenticeship in Childcare with Rathbone

During her time at school Anastasia suffered from dyslexia. She left school and completed an apprenticeship (level 2) in Childcare with a training provider in Carlisle.

After completing her apprenticeship she was told by the provider that she could not progress to level 3, largely because of the significant problem she had with communicating in writing. They would therefore not accept the risk of her failing the level 3 Course.

Anastasia was recruited by Rathbone and her individual needs assessed and given close support by her tutor. This led to the purchase of Dragon voice recognition software for Ana to use in producing her written work. This has proved to be a transformational development for Anastasia who is now working on a book, she has produced a first draft, outlining her own story and the barriers she has faced as a dyslexic.

Ana is now Rathbone's equal opportunities representative for the North West and, following the acquisition of the 'Dragon' software, she has managed to complete her level 2 communication portfolio which she needs for the childcare course she is on.

Ana has faced many 'barriers to learning' on her educational journey but is now preparing to go to university when she has passed the key skills tests.

Peter Hollis

Apprenticeship in Retail with Rathbone

Peter lives at home with his mum, dad and younger sister. His mum is a dinner lady and his father a sheet metal worker. Peter's parents have always been aware of his shyness and lack of confidence and due to this they have always encouraged him to participate in many outside activities to help him overcome these barriers.

Peter had excellent attendance at school and although not very academic, through his determination and hard work, he achieved 6 GCSEs, all grades F to G.

Peter attended Rathbone upon leaving school on its Entry to Employment programme, and although very shy, Peter made a few friends. During the course he achieved level 1 in Literacy and Numeracy and progressed onto the Retail level 2 apprenticeship as a programme-led apprentice with WH Smith. This is where Peter has really made huge progress. Both the Manager and his tutor very soon spotted in Peter a genuine kindness and desire to help people and the decision was made for Peter to work on the stationary dept, where customers often require help.

Despite his shyness and confidence issues, Peter really embraced this opportunity and took on board all the challenges of a retail environment. Peter was very soon "till trained" and given targets to achieve with regard to add on sales at the till point. This involves talking to customers, making positive comments on their purchases and trying to encourage them to spend additional money on the stores special offers. No small task, for one so shy. Peter has proven to be very consistent and competent in this area, often selling more items than full time paid staff.

The Manager has recognised this achievement and Peter has often been praised and rewarded for his success. Peter's confidence has grown, he will chat to everyone, make jokes and smiles often.

Alan Dennis

Advanced Apprenticeship in Metalwork with Kesslers International Limited

"My name is Alan Dennis, I am in my 3rd year of my apprenticeship where I am doing my level 3 diploma in welding and fabrication and just starting my level 3 NVQ.

After school, I went to college, where after a year I decided that it was not what I wanted. I worked for Sports World for 2 years, but I didn't think I had a future there. I searched the internet and newspapers and eventually found the Kesslers apprenticeship within my local newspaper.

What I like about the apprenticeship is that it keeps my mind fresh, I enjoy the welding and fabrication that I am doing and I am also enjoying that I am allowed to work in different areas of the workshop, which is expanding my knowledge of the area I am working in.

I would like to continue with welding at Kesslers and progress to a supervisory position. More choices give me the chance to get the best out of me."

Hannah Burns

Apprenticeship with Remploy

20-year-old Hannah Burns, who has restricted growth and a hearing impairment, completed a BTEC National Diploma in Media straight from school and needed advice on how to get into employment.

Hannah attended a two-week employability skills course at Remploy's Coventry branch and discussed her options with an employment advisor, who helped her decide that an apprenticeship could be a good way forward.

The branch arranged a two week placement for Hannah with Coventry City Council's Workforce Development Unit, which proved so successful that she ended up staying on for three months. Hannah then learned of an apprenticeship opportunity with the Council's City Services department. She decided to apply and was thrilled to be offered the job at interview. Nine months on, Hannah's career is flourishing.

"Since starting the role my responsibilities have expanded and I'm now an assistant to the PA to the Director of City Services," she said. "I'm given day release every Thursday to study for my NVQ in business administration, attend a variety of vocational training courses and am hoping to progress my career soon by applying to the admin pool."

"All in all, it's going really well and I'm so pleased I decided to approach Remploy for support."

Hannah's manager, Ruth Jeffery, said: "When Hannah started working here she hadn't got much experience of the workplace and there was a lot to learn, but over time she has progressed and learnt new skills, and gained confidence. She now helps in the office with a variety of different tasks and is a valued member of the team. She has a positive approach, always trying to do her very best and showing commitment to her job."

Robert Bell

Apprenticeship & Advanced Apprenticeship in Carpentry with Lewisham College

"I joined Lewisham College in September 2005 as a Carpentry Apprentice employed by Wates who are the construction company undertaking the Decent Homes Works on all the Peabody Housing Estates. This apprenticeship lasted two years and I achieved the full framework in July 2007.

I wanted to progress on the advanced apprenticeship in Carpentry and Wates have supported me in doing this, I am due to complete this by March 2009. Whilst on this apprenticeship I have learnt all the hands on skills and the theory of carpentry at Lewisham College. This, together with the experience gained on-site, has given me the qualifications and confidence to practice my trade anywhere in the UK.

My future plans involve progressing to Site Manager with Wates so I will be joining their Management Training Programme this year, people that join this scheme are usually recruited from University but I can use my advanced apprenticeship."

John Warne**Advanced Apprenticeship in Metalwork with Kesslers International Limited**

"When I was in year 11, I was at school in Romford and we were visited every couple of weeks by some people from Careers Advice.

Apprenticeships were mentioned as one of the range of the options available, but some of them said we should do it and some said we shouldn't. They did try to persuade us to carry on with our education. My family were happy to support me in whatever I decided to do.

I decided I wanted to look for an apprenticeship, because I wanted to go to work and earn money and still learn. I found the job advertised in The Metro and 'phoned and applied for it, then came along for an interview and was offered an apprenticeship in metalworking. The other apprenticeships I'd seen advertised then were for building and construction, which I wasn't interested in.

I have learned a lot in the time I've been with Kesslers. My current skill range includes welding, bending, ancillary, punch and laser cutting and I consider myself to be competent. I've just had training for the new punch machine which is coming in this week. Programming would be good to learn and I'd like to do that, to keep moving forward.

When I started my day release at college, I did 2 years ABC Welding & Fabrication, then the 3rd year was the ABC Diploma. I'm pleased with what I've learned at college and would like to continue, if there was something relevant for me – maybe TIG welding."

Joanne Beckford**Apprenticeship & Advanced Apprenticeship in Business Administration with Lewisham College**

"I started at Lewisham College in September 2007 on a programme-led Business Administration apprenticeship which I successfully completed in the summer of 2008. This included 6 months work experience in the Sports Department. In September 2008 I progressed onto my advanced Business apprenticeship which includes a one year work contract with the college. I will complete my advanced apprenticeship in July 2009.

Being an apprentice has been a positive advantage for me because I have gained a lot of experience and there has been a lot of support. Not only am I gaining the experience but I am also getting the qualifications at the end of it. My aim for the future is to go on to study my Foundation Degree in administration at Lewisham College, throughout my studies I can still work my full time job which is an advantage. Once my two years are up I aim to go on to complete the top-up degree at Greenwich University. Once I have finished my studies I will have over four years experience in administration and I hope to become a personal assistant."

Appendix 4: Contributors to the Inquiry

We are grateful to all those who contributed to this research.

Evidence Session 1

Mark Andrews, CEO, NG Bailey

Norman Crowther, Policy Advisor, Association of Teachers and Lecturers

Allister McGowan, Chair, National Institute for Career Education and Counselling

Evidence Session 2

Maggie Galliers, Principal, Leicester College

Sir Alan Jones, Chair, SEMTA; Chair, Emeritus of Toyota Motor Manufacturing (UK)

Lesley Longstone, Director General, Young People Directorate, DCSF

Anne Seaman, Chief Executive, Skillsmart Retail

Philip Whiteman, Chief Executive, SEMTA

Evidence Session 3

Peter Bennett, Director of Human Resources, Network Rail

Martin Dunford, Chairman, Association of Learning Providers

Stephen Gardner, Director for Youth Training, Rathbone

Adrian Holmes, Chief Executive, Employability and Skills Group

Evidence Session 4

Christian Elliott, HR Director, BAE Systems

Professor Deian Hopkin, Vice Chancellor, London South Bank University

Jill Johnson, Senior Policy Advisor, UCAS

George Kessler, Group Deputy Chairman, Kesslers International

Stephen Marston, Director General, Further Education & Skills Group, DIUS

Anthony McClaran, Chief Executive, UCAS

Evidence Session 5

Joanne Beckford, Apprentice, Lewisham College

Robert Bell, Apprentice, WATES and Lewisham College

Alan Dennis, Apprentice, Kesslers International

Peter Hollis, Apprentice, WH Smith and Rathbone

Anastasia Relph, Apprentice, Rathbone

Pauline Thackaberry, Personnel Manager, Kesslers International

John Warne, Apprentice, Kesslers International

Navigational Seminar

Alex Kahn, Managing Director, VT Training

Pat Penniston, Work Based Learning Manager, Luton Borough Council

Richard Wainer, Senior Policy Adviser on Human Resources, CBI

David Way, National Director of Apprenticeships, LSC

Written Submissions

- Aimhigher
- Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network
- Association of Colleges
- Association of Learning Providers
- Association of School and College Leaders
- Brandauer Holdings Ltd
- British Gas Services
- CBI
- Children’s Workforce Development Council
- City & Guilds
- Construction Skills
- Demos
- DIUS/DCSF Joint Apprenticeships Unit
- Edexcel
- Edge
- E-skills
- Financial Services Sector Skills Council
- Foundation Degree Forward
- Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
- Institute of Careers Guidance
- Intec Business Colleges
- International Centre for Guidance Studies
- JHP Group Limited
- JTL Training
- Kimberly-Clark Barrow Mill
- Learning and Skills Improvement Service
- Michaela Brockmann
- National Foundation for Educational Research
- One: Regional Development Agency for the North-East
- Professor Alan Brown
- Professor Christopher Winch
- Professor Jenny Bimrose
- Professor Linda Clarke
- Proskills
- Rathbone
- Sainsbury’s
- Semta
- Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities
- Skillfast UK
- Skills for Care
- Skills for Justice
- University of Vocational Awards Council
- YMCA Training

The Skills Commission is a select group of key individuals in the skills sector, co-chaired by Barry Sheerman MP and Dame Ruth Silver DBE. The Commission acts as a steering body to the National Skills Forum and the Associate Parliamentary Skills Group and also conducts its own campaigns and inquiries.

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For further information, please contact:
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