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Research into Increasing Apprenticeships in the Public Sector

Final Report

December 2008

Of interest to everyone involved in increasing the number and quality of Apprentices in England

ⓘ For information

Contents

Executive summary

Study objectives and method

1   The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) commissioned Ipsos MORI and Cambridge Policy Consultants (CPC) to conduct research into how the Apprenticeship programme in England can be expanded across the public sector.

2   The primary aim of the research is to provide an understanding of the constraints and barriers facing the public sector in their use of Apprenticeships and to identify ways in which these can be overcome.

3   Preliminary interviews with Sector Skills Councils, employer representative organisations, public sector employers and training providers were carried out to inform the design of the survey questionnaire. Some 750 public sector organisations were then interviewed by telephone between August and September 2008, and 20 case studies were selected to illustrate how Apprenticeships had been used successfully across a range of sub-sectors. A small number of Union Learning Representatives were also interviewed, to explore their role in promoting Apprenticeships within the workplace.

Why do public sector organisations participate?

4   What emerges from the results of this research is that there is a significant interest in participating in Apprenticeships among public sector organisations, but that this rarely results in substantial numbers of places on the programme. Current participation by public sector organisations is indeed narrow: two-fifths of participants currently offer a single framework and, on average, organisations participate in just two frameworks. This is a low participation rate, given that respondents on average employed around 3,800 employees across a large range of business areas.

5   Local government, educational and health organisations are more likely to participate, with lower participation from public protection and central government departments. The health sector's use of administration and professional frameworks is substantially higher than its use of health and social care frameworks. Public protection agencies are unlikely to use Apprenticeships for their core staff – police and fire officers.

6   Most public sector employers have a strong business rationale for getting involved in the Apprenticeship programme: difficulties in recruiting staff and the ability to 'grow their own', responding to an ageing workforce and future workforce planning.

7   Some parts of the public services, particularly local government organisations and the armed forces, also report a social rationale for participation: to provide young people with skills or a recognised qualification, and to put something back into the local economy where the public sector organisation is often the largest employer in the area. Within local government in particular, this rationale is often linked to policy targets, for example related to worklessness, social inclusion or reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training.

8   A small number of organisations, mostly in central government, reported a policy rationale – senior management had decided to participate in Apprenticeships to meet government policy priorities. However, internal support for the programme at more junior levels was low, as many organisations remain unconvinced that Apprenticeships are relevant to their operations. Central government employers who had previously participated in the programme were mostly likely to cite the poor quality of Apprenticeship candidates as their main reason for no longer participating.

9   There has been an upward trend in participation – four times as many organisations have increased the number of Apprenticeship places they offer in the past three years than have reduced it. There is also some evidence of constrained demand among existing participants, as more than two-thirds would like to offer more places but are currently unable to

do so. A lack of funding was reported as the main constraint, but difficulties in sourcing appropriate training provision and their inability to offer apprentices employment once they had completed were also mentioned. One in 10 had asked their LSC or training provider for additional apprentices, but had been told that this was not possible.

10   Fewer than half of participants had ever been asked by the LSC or a training provider whether they would be interested in taking on more apprentices, and under a third had ever been asked whether they would be interested in getting involved in a different framework.

Awareness and perceptions of Apprenticeships

11   Among non-participants, awareness of Apprenticeships appears to be less of an issue for the public sector than for the private sector. According to research conducted by CPC and Ipsos MORI for the LSC (*Research into Expanding Apprenticeships*, 2008), just 6 per cent of non-participating public sector employers had never heard of the programme, compared to almost a third of non-participating private sector employers. However, a limited understanding of what Apprenticeships currently have to offer perpetuates more traditional perceptions of the programme:

- Apprenticeships are frequently associated with traditional 'oily rags' occupations, and less than two-fifths of non-participants were aware of Apprenticeships in administration and professional areas;
- Apprenticeships are often associated with the recruitment of young people from schools and colleges, and awareness of Adult Apprenticeships is limited; and
- a perception among some central government departments that Apprenticeships were 'not for us' was driven by a narrow appreciation of professional staff roles and did not appear to consider the administrative or customer-facing occupations within their organisation.

12   That said, lack of information appeared to be a significant barrier to participation, and 14 per cent requested more information about

Apprenticeships and general support to set up a scheme. Linked to this, just under two-fifths of non-participants thought it was very or fairly likely that they would get involved if a training provider contacted them with a bespoke offer. However, just over a third of non-participants stated that they would not know where to go for advice if they were interested in participating.

13   Increased awareness of the range of available frameworks is leading the majority of participants to forecast an increase in the number of apprentices they expect to offer over the next two years. However, case study interviews highlighted that extensive experience in delivering Apprenticeships in one framework area does not necessarily translate easily into other framework areas – the frameworks need to be assessed against specific job roles, training providers need to be sourced, funding needs to be secured, and so on.

Barriers to participation

14   Just under half of non-participants thought that they would be very or fairly likely to consider involvement in frameworks that are specific to their sector in the future. Barriers to participation were similar to those cited by participating employers. Over a fifth felt they would be more likely to participate if internal changes were made to the training budget.

15   Just under half of non-participants had considered using Apprenticeships in the past. These organisations identified a number of barriers to participation.

- The main reason for deciding not to participate was that the Apprenticeship framework was not felt to meet the needs of the business. Case study organisations echoed this concern, pointing to:
    – the difficulties in getting new frameworks introduced and existing frameworks adapted to their specific needs;
    – staff perceptions that Apprenticeships were for young people just starting out in work and not relevant to experienced employees,

> often reinforced by the requirement to undertake key skills (literacy and numeracy) in the qualification; and
>
> – the fact that, for some organisations, most of their employees were already qualified above Level 3.

- The limited availability of supervisors or mentors in the business was an issue for around 15 per cent of organisations.

- Some organisations stated that they were limited in relation to the number of trainees they could recruit, and over the past year almost one in 10 organisations had not recruited anyone aged under 24. In some cases, there were concerns over targeting young people due to age discrimination legislation.

16 Around 15 per cent of employers had used Apprenticeships in the past but had ceased to participate. Lack of funding was cited by many organisations but appeared to be a particular issue in the health sector and was linked to trainee pay bands introduced under the Department of Health's *agenda for change* (the single pay system in operation in the NHS, introduced in 2004). Other reasons included the relevance of the Apprenticeship framework to job roles in their organisation, the availability of supervisors or mentors, and limited ability to recruit apprentices once they had completed.

Overcoming barriers – case study experience

17 Getting involved in Apprenticeships is not as straightforward as it should be, even where case study organisations had made a clear decision to participate. Getting hold of information about Apprenticeships was a particular issue for organisations that were directed to Train to Gain skills brokers, who were felt to have limited knowledge about Apprenticeships and were more focused on promoting the take-up of NVQs. A number of organisations also suffered from slow and sometimes inconsistent responses after contacting the LSC on a range of issues, including:

- clarification of what funding was on offer from the LSC, whether any match-funding could be sourced and whether such funding was

available over an extended period (for example, in order to plan provision over a three-year programme);

- help and advice in sourcing a recommended training provider, especially where organisations did not have the economies of scale required to secure more flexible, more tailored or cost-effective provision;

- practical advice on how to recruit apprentices, ensuring that the Apprenticeship framework fits with the organisation's specific job roles and employment terms and conditions for apprentices (for example, one organisation discovered that no pay scale existed below Level 3 in order to pay apprentices on a Level 2 framework); and

- for those organisations that had used NVQs in the past, a lack of clarity on the advantages of the Apprenticeship model compared to NVQ-only training.

18   This process demands significant resources and all of the case study organisations had appointed staff to take forward their participation in Apprenticeships. These individuals operated as internal champions, interpreting Apprenticeships for their organisation and taking on the administration. This involved making the business case for Apprenticeships with departmental managers and acting as a point of contact for any planning or operational issues with the training provider or the LSC.

19   Many case study organisations were able to build up their knowledge through contact with training providers who had experience of delivering in similar organisations or with their counterparts in other public sector organisations. Some LSC staff have been helpful in this process, but contact with these individuals tends to be by word of mouth or by luck.

20   Senior buy-in to the process was also essential in helping to drive forward the process, especially when cross-departmental issues arose. Human resources (HR) and legal departments were sometimes in the vanguard of the process but were also sometimes part of the problem in getting Apprenticeships established in organisations.

Conclusions

21   Public sector organisations have a strong interest in participating in Apprenticeships centred on a business case for the organisation or social objectives.

- Most organisations would do more if possible and there is considerable interest from a significant minority of non-participants.
- However, take-up of Apprenticeships is patchy between different areas of the public sector, across different departments within the same organisation and between equivalent organisations in different parts of country.
- The cost of offering Apprenticeship places and making a relevant business case are key barriers.

What should the LSC do to promote take-up?

22   Given these barriers, a number of practical suggestions were made to help support increased take-up across the public sector.

- Improve awareness of Apprenticeships in such a way that organisations have more than a passing knowledge of the programme as it currently operates. High-level marketing will help engage interest, but employers want to talk to an informed source of advice.
- Provide clearer advice and guidance on how to set up an Apprenticeship programme from a contact that has specific and detailed knowledge about Apprenticeships. Train to Gain skills brokers currently appear to be inadequately equipped and focused to meet this need.
- Build on the existing knowledge base within public sector organisations by, for example, providing greater support for the establishment and facilitation of employer networks to share information about the use of, and business case for, Apprenticeships in similar organisations.
- Provide additional support to organisations in sourcing appropriate training provision.

- Consider funding Apprenticeship co-ordinators to work within public sector organisations and support the implementation of the programme.
- Set standards for customer service at the LSC, for example the setting of a reasonable timeframe for responding to enquiries.
- Simplify the Apprenticeship framework approvals process in line with government proposals, by enabling the recognition of existing training run by employers.

Introduction

Background and aims of the research

23   The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) commissioned Ipsos MORI and Cambridge Policy Consultants (CPC) to conduct research into how the Apprenticeship programme in England can be expanded across the public sector. Lord Leitch's review of skills (*Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills*, HM Treasury, 2006) challenged employers in the public sector to lead the way in committing to the Skills Pledge. However, the plan to expand and strengthen Apprenticeships, *World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All* (Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008), highlighted the low levels of penetration among certain public sector employers:

> The public sector directly employs around 20% of the national workforce but provides less than 10% of Apprenticeships places. However, only 7% of public sector workers are aged 16–24 compared with 16% in the private sector. In a related issue, there is currently little systematic effort to encourage companies winning large government contracts to avail themselves of this most effective route to increase the skills of their workforce.
>
> *World-class Apprenticeships*, page 33

24   The latter report recognises that the public sector should be doing more, although a number of constraints are identified. These include general constraints on recruitment in some parts of the public sector. Other constraints faced by public sector organisations include:

- the range of diverse sectors, many of which operate across multiple sites with a variety of sub-contracting arrangements. This is felt to create a complex and loosely connected employer network, leading to a fragmented approach to action;

- the complexity and diversity of parts of the public services, with hierarchical structures, multiple access points and fragmented lines of responsibility. This can lead to communication challenges and inconsistency of approach, and can introduce delays in decision-making;

- a range of differing priorities, some of which reflect local or regional needs, which may lead to differing focus across the same organisation in different areas, making co-ordination of activities and sharing of resources difficult;

- some public sector organisations sub-contract out a significant proportion of services and core activities to private sector or third sector organisations; others may have internal supply chains, for example between the local authority and schools;

- the diversity of particular organisations and hence the wide range of potential Apprenticeship opportunities available within a particular organisation; and

- in some parts of the public sector, legislation means that young people cannot take up full roles in the sector.

25   The Learning and Skills Task Group has been tasked by the cross-government Public Services Forum to recommend action to increase the level of skills in public services. This research is designed to feed into the group's thinking on ways in which barriers can be overcome and to provide information that will support the LSC in removing some of the barriers that public sector organisations face in offering Apprenticeships. The key findings of the research were disseminated at an event held in November 2008, aimed at promoting Apprenticeships across the public services.

Methodology

26   The research covered the whole of England. Fieldwork was undertaken in three phases.

- Phase 1 involved preliminary qualitative interviews to inform the content of the survey questionnaire, as well as to identify the most appropriate organisational level (i.e. local, regional or head office) and individuals (i.e. HR managers or HR directors or local operational managers) for interview in the main survey:
  - 9 Sector Skills Councils or employer representative organisations
  - 14 participating employers
  - 5 training providers.
- Phase 2 used the issues raised in the case studies to inform a telephone survey with a representative sample of 754 employers from across the public services. A technical note on the survey is appended in Annex C.
- Phase 3 consisted of 20 detailed case studies purposively selected from survey respondents to illustrate examples of best practice across a range of sub-sectors. The case studies are presented in full in Annex B. Five in-depth interviews were also undertaken with Union Learning Representatives, to explore their role in promoting Apprenticeships and other training in public sector organisations, to discuss any barriers to take-up, and to highlight good practice in overcoming these barriers.

Who Is Participating and Why?

27   This section discusses the level of take-up of Apprenticeships among public sector organisations. The key issues emerging from this section are summarised below.

- Although a relatively large proportion of organisations appear to be involved in Apprenticeships, this is linked to organisational size – over two-thirds of public sector respondents employed more than 500 employees, compared to just 1 per cent of total establishments in England.
- On average, participants employ one apprentice for every 500 employees.
- The majority of participants use a very limited number of Apprenticeship frameworks (an average of two frameworks per participant). In nearly three-quarters of cases, an administration and professional framework is used.
- There are strong variations in take-up by sector. In the health sector, use of administration and professional frameworks is substantially higher than use of health and social care frameworks. Public protection agencies are unlikely to use Apprenticeships for their core staff – police and fire officers. Local government organisations are the most likely to be involved. However, the scale of participation is relatively low, with 625 employees for every apprentice. Central government organisations are the least likely sector to use Apprenticeships.
- The majority of participants have a strong business rationale for involvement. Local government organisations and the armed forces, however, also express social reasons, for example linked to policy targets to upskill young people or to provide young people with a recognised qualification.

- Around 15 per cent of employers had used Apprenticeships in the past but had ceased to participate. Lack of funding is cited by many organisations but appeared to be a particular issue in the health sector linked to trainee pay bands introduced under *Agenda for Change*. Other reasons included the relevance of the Apprenticeship framework to job roles in their organisation, the availability of supervisors or mentors, and limited ability to recruit apprentices once they had completed.

What is the scale of participation?

28   Public sector involvement in Apprenticeships is limited. *World-class Apprenticeships* identified that the public sector directly employs around 20 per cent of the national workforce but provides less than 10 per cent of Apprenticeship places.

29   At organisational level, participation appears higher – the unweighted results from the survey of 754 public sector organisations suggest that around two-fifths of public sector organisations are currently involved in the Apprentice or Advanced Apprenticeship programmes, and a further 15 per cent had used Apprenticeships in the past (Figure 1). There are a number of reasons why the level of participation exceeds expectations.

- This question, when directed at organisations, conceals wide variations in take-up at the establishment level, and significant variations exist in the take-up of Apprenticeships across different departments and establishments of the same organisation. For example, the Prison Service, which has 70,000 employees, was recorded as a participating organisation because there are 360 apprentices currently employed across the service. However, a large proportion of individual prisons are not participating in the Apprenticeship programme and this low level of take-up at establishment level is not reflected in the survey results.

- The organisational size is large. Over two-thirds (69 per cent) of the organisations that took part in the research had over 500 employees and 16 per cent had over 5,000 employees. In comparison, across both the public and private sectors, just 1 per cent of establishments in England have more than 500 employees. More detailed analysis reveals that, in many organisations, Apprenticeships are being used with a relatively narrow group of total employees, with participating organisations on average employing just one apprentice for every 500 staff.

- We also believe that, in a limited number of cases, further education colleges have misinterpreted the question on involvement in Apprenticeships to include all apprentices who are on training courses at their college, rather than just the number who are employed on Apprenticeships for the college itself. (The number of FE colleges misinterpreting the question is expected to be small. If all FE colleges are removed from the sample, the proportion of organisations participating is reduced by 1 per cent, from 41 per cent to 40 per cent.)

Figure 1: Level of involvement with Apprenticeships
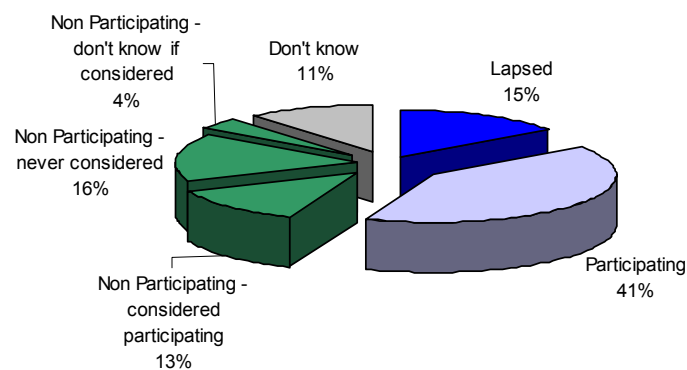
Source: Ipsos MORI survey of 754 public sector organisations

30   Of the organisations that had never been involved in the Apprenticeship programme, over a third (39 per cent) had considered

using Apprenticeships in the past. Local government organisations are significantly more likely than other sectors to have considered participating (Table 1).

Table 1: Non-participants that have not considered taking part

	% of non-participants that have not considered taking part
Local government	71%
Health	52%
Other	42%
Central government	30%
Public protection	24%
Education	18%
Total	**39%**

Source: Ipsos MORI survey of 754 public sector organisations

Note: Answered by 215 of 245 non-participants.

Are Apprenticeships fully deployed within organisations?

31   The participating organisations that were able to provide details of the number of Apprenticeship places they currently offer, offered a total of 5,375 places (an average of 19.3 places per organisation). On average, participants employ one apprentice for every 500 employees (Table 2).

Table 2: Involvement within organisations

	% of organisations participating	Count particip-ants	Average number of employees	Average number of apprentices	Employees per appren-tice
Other*	39%	7	7,643	100	86
Education**	52%	73	635	7	185
Central government	17%	17	5,659	34	494
Local government	62%	138	4,716	23	625
Public protection	23%	9	3,183	11	656
Health	35%	66	3,319	14	698
Total participants	**44%**	**310**	**3,765**	**19**	**513**

Source: Ipsos MORI survey of 754 public sector organisations. Answered by 310 of 310 participating organisations

*Notes: *Comprises the Crown Court Service, the County Court Service, six cultural and countryside agencies, the Prison Service, the Probation Service, and four transport bodies.*
**Includes FE colleges which may also include apprentices trained (rather than employed) within their figures.

Which frameworks and levels are offered?

32   The 310 current participants between them offer 694 frameworks – an average of 2.2 frameworks per participating organisation. Two-fifths (40 per cent) of participants offer a single framework and a fifth (20 per cent) offer four or more frameworks.

33   The types of frameworks used vary widely both between and within organisations at the establishment level (see Annex A for details). Overall, administration and professional frameworks are the most common, used by 71 per cent of participants. Case study organisations reported a high level of satisfaction with the content of the business administration framework in particular, which was felt to be sufficiently flexible to fit with a wide range of business activities and job roles.

> 'Business administration is nearly always the right choice for us – there are 22 specific units covering anything from accounts, customer service to health and safety, of which five are chosen, so it is very individualised.'
>
> **Richmond Borough Council**

Health sector

34   Within the health sector, take-up is patchy. The survey evidence suggests that just over a third of public sector organisations in this sector are involved in the Apprenticeship programme to some degree. This is similar to findings from a recent scoping exercise into Apprenticeship opportunities in NHS organisations across Yorkshire and the Humber (*Apprenticeship Opportunities in NHS Organisations across Yorkshire & the Humber. Report on the Scoping Exercise*

carried out across NHS Trusts, by A. Ackew, April/May 2008). The scoping exercise found that 14 (38 per cent) of the 37 NHS trusts in the region currently offered Apprenticeships. However, just two (17 per cent) of the 12 primary care trusts (PCTs) in the region were found to offer Apprenticeships. This pattern appears to be mirrored at the national level, with survey evidence showing considerably lower levels of take-up in PCTs than in acute and foundation trusts. The case studies suggest that this is linked to recent organisational restructuring and a more limited training infrastructure. The scoping exercise identified a number of ways in which PCTs could be helped to achieve increased take-up:

> A number of PCTS remarked that they had previously 'hosted' apprentices from the acute Trusts and supported them on work placements. This was seen as a model that could be promoted to address capacity and co-ordination issues. There was enthusiasm to explore further and interest in finding out more about how they could move forward on this. There was also the general feeling that PCTS were in the next year better placed to consider the Apprenticeship agenda and that a number of PCT initiatives including those aimed at widening participation improving the health of the community, making links with education (14–19 agenda), and engagement of young people and the local community that Apprenticeship could help PCTs achieve.
>
> *Apprenticeship Opportunities in NHS Organisations*
> *across Yorkshire & the Humber*

35   The 38 participating health sector organisations jointly offer eight different frameworks, the most common being administration and professional, offered by 71 per cent of participants in this sector. In contrast, health, care and public services frameworks are used by 38 per cent of organisations in this sector. Other frameworks offered are construction, engineering, customer service, finance, hospitality and transportation.

Public protection

36   The police and fire services (the public protection agencies) have relatively low levels of take-up, with just over a fifth currently

participating. The case studies and initial in-depth interviews indicated that Apprenticeships were most frequently used for support staff, for example administrators, customer service operatives and technical staff (such as vehicle technicians). The use of Apprenticeships for training police and fire officers was infrequent. Skills for Justice identifies a number of reasons for this low level of take-up:

- image and fit with existing training – 'The police are trying to make themselves more professional and turning to apprentice recruitment is not seen to fit with this desire. The traditional model of key skills plus NVQ does not turn them on ... there is a belief that you can't parachute Apprenticeships into [an] existing system';
- the level of required assessor resources – 'the annual volume of recruits would require a vast amount of assessor resource. For example, the Metropolitan Police Force recruits 2,000 p.a. It is estimated that assessment for a traditional framework would require 130 FTE staff, which is equivalent to a basic command unit'; and
- prior qualifications of recruits – 'Less than 5 per cent of recruits do not have a previous qualification'.

> **West Midlands Police** are currently running a degree course in policing studies at the University of Wolverhampton and the undergraduates will become special constables in their second year. The police force would be interested in linking this training to an Apprenticeship.

37   However, there were some exceptions, with one police force currently considering the use of Apprenticeships as a potential entry route for police officers.

> One police force is currently running a pilot programme with a local FE college, whereby anyone is able to complete a course at the college on the underpinning knowledge in criminal justice required to train as a police officer. They are considering incorporating this underpinning knowledge into an Apprenticeship, but will see if the

> pilot works before considering Apprenticeships in any more detail.
>
> The police force feels that this offers a number of advantages, including helping to widen access into the force, providing more community-based delivery, and enabling people to get an initial taster (as attrition is low in the initial training period). In the first year of the pilot, 60 people will undertake the college course.

38   The eight participating public protection organisations use four frameworks. Six offer administration and professional frameworks. Other frameworks used are customer service, engineering and transportation.

Education sector

39   Within the higher education sector, 6 of the 19 respondents were using Apprenticeships. Frameworks used comprised administration and professional, finance, insurance and real estate, construction and engineering. Although a higher proportion of higher education establishments were using Apprenticeships than in many sectors, the average ratio of staff to apprentices was lower (789:1), with an average of six apprentices employed in each organisation.

40   Participation rates in schools are relatively low. Just 2 of the 26 schools were identified as current users of Apprenticeships and were using administration and professional frameworks for their administration staff. The case studies highlighted low levels of take-up for the teaching assistant Apprenticeship. The Training and Development Agency for Schools highlighted a number of reasons for this low level of take-up, including the reluctance to release staff for training ('schools would rather just use the NVQ') and the low proportion of full-time jobs available.

41   There was some case study evidence to suggest that where local authorities had been proactive in raising awareness of the teaching assistant Apprenticeship, and had linked an apprentice to several schools, take-up had been higher. There was also more support

among schools for Adult Apprenticeships; this was linked to reluctance to recruit young people aged under 19 into these job roles, as they would be working with young people of a similar age to themselves.

> 'There is no minimum age, but in practice, teaching assistants are more mature, and the school would not wish to recruit young applicants, as this would be inappropriate for working with older pupils.'
>
> **Non-participating school**

Central government

42   Central government organisations experience the lowest levels of take-up within the public sector. This is despite the policy priority to increase take-up through the Apprenticeship Pathfinder. Government Skills SSC linked this low level of take-up to ignorance of Apprenticeships, academic snobbery and freezes on recruitment. There was also some concern surrounding the role of the unions. Some case study organisations felt that unions were imposing too many conditions on the recruitment of apprentices and use of Apprenticeships for existing staff, so that some schemes became unviable.

> 'The unions have a big push towards equality of opportunity. Whilst this appears reasonable, there is a danger that they will encourage all their members to go on the scheme. There is a question of when to stop and where the resources will come from … In some organisations the unions are pushing for better pay and terms and conditions of employment for the apprentices. This is their job, but if they push too hard the employer is likely just to say it isn't worth the hassle.'
>
> **Anonymous participating organisation**

43   The 13 participating central government organisations between them offer five different frameworks – eight organisations offering administration and professional frameworks, six offering engineering,

five offering customer service, two offering construction and one offering agriculture.

Local government

44   Over three-fifths of local government organisations were recorded as participating, with an average of 23 apprentices. This high level of take-up is partially linked to the number of additional benefits that Apprenticeships can offer, and they were frequently being used to tackle a wide range of other agendas, such as worklessness and community cohesion.

45   The 138 local government participants between them had participated across all 14 frameworks. Despite this seemingly high level of participation, it appears that take-up within organisations is variable – for example, county councils employ just one apprentice for every 2,628 staff. Local government organisations use the widest range of frameworks of all the sectors, although the most common is administration and professional (used by 71 per cent of participants in this sector). Just over two-fifths of organisations (41 per cent) use customer service frameworks.

Advanced Apprenticeships

46   Just under three-fifths (59 per cent) of participants offer Apprenticeships at both NVQ Level 2 and Advanced Apprenticeships at Level 3. Around 37 per cent just offer Apprenticeships and 4 per cent just offer Advanced Apprenticeships. None of the seven participating public protection organisations (fire services and police forces) offer Advanced Apprenticeships.

47   Over a third of organisations which offer Apprenticeships but not Advanced Apprenticeships were not sure why they did not offer them. Just under a fifth (19 per cent) felt they did not require staff at this level or it was easier to recruit staff already at this level. Around 16 per cent

stated that they were planning to use Advanced Apprenticeships in the future. Less than 10 per cent felt they were unable to offer the Advanced Apprenticeships because no appropriate framework exists at this level, and a further 10 per cent felt that funding or resources were a barrier.

What types of organisation are more likely to participate?

48   The organisations that currently participate in the programme share a number of common characteristics.

Recruitment of under-24s

49   Over the past 12 months, 9 per cent of public sector organisations have not recruited anyone aged under 24. This proportion is highest for central government (at 16 per cent) and lowest in the health sector (4 per cent). Although around 14 per cent of these organisations have not recruited anyone in the last year, the main reason provided for not recruiting from this age group was that 'they tend not to apply for available job opportunities', cited by almost a third of respondents. Legislation or required minimum age restrictions were an issue for a fifth of respondents. A further fifth of respondents preferred not to recruit from this age group due to the maturity required by the job role or a negative perception about attitudes to work and reliability.

50   There is a clear link between recruitment of young people and use of Apprenticeships – in the last 12 months just 20 per cent of organisations that have not recruited under-24s are currently involved with Apprenticeships, compared to 48 per cent of organisations that have recruited from this age group.

51   Nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of participants chose to use Apprenticeships to help address the problem of an ageing workforce and considered that offering Apprenticeships helped them to attract and retain younger workers.

> 'The Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy called upon local authorities to look ahead at anticipated workforce issues. We did an internal audit, which revealed that just 3 per cent of our workforce was aged under 24 and 36 per cent was aged over 50. The impetus for this programme is to increase the number of young people employed by the council and to increase retention.'
>
> **Participating local authority**

Recruitment methods

52   Both participants and non-participants appear to have a similar approach to filling vacancies, with 62 per cent and 63 per cent respectively stating that internal and external applicants are considered equally. There do not appear to be any substantive differences in recruitment methods.

Approach to staff development and progression

53   Participating organisations are more likely to have desired progression routes for staff working at all grades and levels. For example, 46 per cent of non-participants with skilled trade occupations do not have progression routes for these staff, compared to 28 per cent of participants. Similarly, 53 per cent of non-participants with customer service occupations do not have progression routes for these staff, compared to 27 per cent of participants.

The Skills Pledge

54   Just over half (53 per cent) of participants have made the Skills Pledge, compared to 29 per cent of non-participants. It is, however, difficult to isolate cause and effect – it is clear that those offering Apprenticeships are more likely to have also made the Skills Pledge. However, we do not know if the process of making the Skills Pledge has made them more likely to consider Apprenticeships, or whether the type of organisation that is willing to make the Skills Pledge is also more willing to use Apprenticeships.

55   Qualitative evidence from case study organisations and Union Learning Representatives suggests that organisations that are more reluctant to make the Skills Pledge are less likely to invest in Level 2 training (NVQs or Apprenticeships) for their staff. However, there is limited evidence of a causal relationship between making the Skills Pledge and investing in Apprenticeships. The case studies do highlight some non-causal relationships between making the Skills Pledge and undertaking Apprenticeships.

- In order to draw down Joint Investment Framework funding, the West Midlands Strategic Health Authority (SHA) joined the Public Sector Skills Challenge and made the Skills Pledge. One of the conditions of the Public Sector Skills Challenge was to increase the number of under-25s employed by 25 per cent, including 8,000 new Apprenticeships. The Skills Pledge supports upskilling to Level 2. In order to meet the Public Sector Skills Challenge through increasing apprentice numbers, the SHA has encouraged trusts to add on key skills to NVQs.
- In a large proportion of case study organisations, the Skills Pledge has led to an increase in the number of NVQs without a corresponding increase in the number of Apprenticeships.

Engagement with Train to Gain

56   Over four-fifths (85 per cent) of participants have engaged with Train to Gain in the last two years, compared to 57 per cent of non-participants. Despite this high level of involvement, just 3 per cent of participants cite Train to Gain skills brokers as an information source about Apprenticeships.

What drives employer involvement?

57   The case studies and survey of participating organisations highlighted a number of motivations for involvement. Among the majority of organisations a strong **business case** was necessary, and around three-quarters (74 per cent) of participants expressed a business case linked to recruitment, future workforce planning, funding or accreditation, or legislative requirements.

- 'Because we find it difficult to recruit staff with the skills we need' – 15 per cent of participants cited this as a reason for participating. This appeared to be most important for the health sector (29 per cent). The case studies highlighted areas where recruitment was more difficult and there was a strong correlation with more technical frameworks, such as health and social care. Linked to this, 14 per cent of organisations used Apprenticeships to 'make us more attractive to potential recruits'.

> 'The service is looking for a different type of firefighter, with different skills and personal attributes. Fire officers spend more time in the community, and on prevention, which require verbal and written communication skills.'
>
> **South Yorkshire Fire Service**

- 'Because we need young workers in an ageing workforce' – this is considered to be a reason for 23 per cent of participants. Just under a third (32 per cent) of local authorities cited this as a reason, and the case studies supported this finding, with many authorities being concerned about the proportion of employees reaching retirement age.
- 'Because staff need to be qualified to a certain standard to conform to a legislative requirement' – this was a factor for just 4 per cent of organisations. The case studies highlighted how, in some sub-sectors, organisations had been encouraged to provide Apprenticeships in order to get funding for the NVQ that was required for legislative purposes. For example, one SHA had

ensured that trusts use the dental nursing Apprenticeships, by tying the funding for the NVQ to the completion of a full Apprenticeship framework.

- 'To train the workforce of the future' – this is considered to be a reason for 26 per cent of participants, rising to 33 per cent of participants in the health and public protection sectors. The case studies highlighted growing awareness of the need to plan for future workforce requirements within the health sector in particular, with the SHAs taking the lead through the Joint Investment Framework in encouraging trusts to identify workforce needs.

58   The case studies highlighted how a strong business case for Apprenticeships could provide increased senior-level buy-in and consequently greater prioritisation of resources to support the programme. However, where no business case can be made, or where there is lack of senior support for making a business case, there can be considerable reluctance to pilot a programme. The Ministry of Defence provides an interesting example of both scenarios.

The **Ministry of Defence** has a long history of offering civilian Apprenticeships to enable craft and technician apprentices to learn various trade disciplines. Between 100 and 200 places are offered each year based upon business need. Apprentices undertake Standard-Based Training, which is designed to provide the MoD with craftsmen or women and the technical officers it requires to carry out its business. Currently around 89 per cent of new starts complete their Apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships are not used outside engineering, and the MoD prefers to use its own internal training supported by a professional body. If there is a professional body, for example the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants or the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, they will advertise for people with membership.

When the MoD was asked to sign up to the Pathfinder, they were unable to find any departments who wanted to use the Apprenticeship programme for existing staff. They therefore ended up using the Pathfinder to overcome a recruitment problem for administration staff in remote airfields.

There is felt to be a reluctance and lack of understanding of the term

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> 'Apprenticeship' within the organisation – it is still generally associated with blue-collar posts. The Apprentice Policy Unit within the MoD has in the past suggested the use of a business administration Apprenticeship. Every time this has been suggested, the answer has been 'it does not meet our business needs'.
>
> The Apprentice Policy Unit told us that: 'unless the Cabinet Office comes out with a directive which asks each Department to increase the number of apprentices, nothing will happen… They either need to be forced to take on apprentices or to be convinced that apprentices will help them solve a particular issue, for example a local recruitment problem, a local skills gap or cost savings.'

59   Just over half of participants (53 per cent) expressed a **social rationale**, for example to upskill young people. Local government organisations were the most likely to cite this rationale for participation, which was often linked to policy targets. For some police forces, Apprenticeships were used as a way of strengthening their link with the local community. A number of local authorities were using Section 106 payments made by developers to part-fund the wage costs of apprentices recruited from deprived areas or from priority groups.

> 'We are driving forward this programme because of government focus on the expansion of Apprenticeship training routes and because there are a significant number of 16- to 18-year-olds in the county who are not in education, employment and training.'
>
> **Kent County Council**
>
> 'For us, Apprenticeships have a strong diversity feature and help us to bring in more disadvantaged people into the force. We have participated since the launch of New Deal and feel it is the right thing to do for the community and [that it] provides us with the connection back to those who are not in work.'
>
> **West Midlands Police**

60   The armed forces in particular cited the opportunity for young people to achieve a nationally recognised qualification as a primary motivation.

> 'We do the training anyway … the LSC funding allows us to fund the certification or accreditation of this training through an Apprenticeship. This is great for our trainees, as it provides them with a transferable and nationally recognised qualification.'

61   A **policy rationale** was expressed more strongly through the case
        studies and the initial in-depth interviews than through the survey
        responses. In a number of central government departments and non-
        departmental government bodies, there appeared to be considerable
        external pressure to recruit apprentices, for example through the
        Pathfinder. However, in some cases there appeared to be little internal
        enthusiasm supporting implementation.

> 'The Department is begrudgingly participating in the Pathfinder but I
> have not got involved in promoting them, as I don't think it will work
> out and I don't want to raise hopes. They only got involved because
> there were told to and the senior managers are not interested. There
> is no capacity to expand, as the assessors are all very busy with
> NVQs. They are also cutting back staff numbers at the moment.
> There is high demand from staff for qualifications but I am not sure
> that they are really interested in Apprenticeships.'
>
> **Central Government Union Learning Representative**

62   Lapsed employers were generally less likely to provide business-
        based reasons for involvement and were more likely to provide
        political or social reasons. This may suggest that where there is no
        strong business case for involvement, sustainability can be lower.
        The reasons why lapsed employers discontinued participation are
        discussed in paragraphs 64–92.

Recommendations

63   Our recommendations are as follows:

- Apprenticeships are not fully optimised across the public services,
  with significant variations in take-up. However, within each sector
  there do appear to be a number of organisations which are
  participating on a wide range of frameworks and deriving benefit
  from this. The LSC needs to ensure that this good practice is
  shared with other organisations in the sector.

- A business rationale is a clear driver for involvement. In sharing good practice, the LSC needs to clearly demonstrate the business benefits of participation. Within some sectors, for example health, workforce planning exercises have highlighted future skills gaps and helped to increase apprentice numbers.

- A significant proportion of central government organisations choose to participate for political reasons. The case studies suggest that external pressure can increase take-up in the short term. However, in order to sustain participation, organisations need to feel that they are gaining tangible business benefits from participation – for example, supporting recruitment, attracting younger workers or addressing the skills gap of the existing workforce. If organisations feel that these problems do not initially exist, they are less likely to sustain participation after the external pressure has stopped.

- Organisations that have made the Skills Pledge are more likely to offer Apprenticeships. However, there is no evidence to suggest a direct link between making the Skills Pledge and using Apprenticeships. The Skills Pledge is, however, encouraging organisations to increase their use of NVQs.

- There is potential for increased linkages to be made between NVQs and Apprenticeships:
    - many organisations and Union Learning Representatives are not aware that an NVQ can be part of an Apprenticeship, and more could be done to raise awareness of the component parts of an Apprenticeship (see paragraphs 93–108); and
    - where funding had been tied to take-up, for example through the Joint Investment Framework in the health sector, organisations have been encouraged to add on Apprenticeships to NVQs in order to receive funding. This approach could be introduced across other sectors.

Reasons for Non-Participation

64   This section discusses why some organisations have decided not to participate and why other organisations have stopped participating. The key issues emerging from this section are summarised below.

- Organisations that have considered participating in the past are most likely to decide not to participate due to concerns over their capacity to deliver Apprenticeships or lack of support from senior management.

- Other concerns include the flexibility of the Apprenticeship to meet business needs or a preference for different types of training.

- Funding issues appear to be less of a deterrent, although there are variations by sector – for example, a large number of health sector organisations have stopped offering Apprenticeships due to the higher trainee pay scale introduced through *Agenda for Change*.

- Over two-thirds of participants would have liked to have offered more places over the last 12 months than they were able to. For this group, funding appears to be a significant barrier.

- Over the next two years almost three-fifths (59 per cent) of participants expect the number of apprentices they employ to increase. The main reason for this increase relates to an increased business need; however, greater awareness of Apprenticeships also appears to be a significant factor.

Why do some organisations decide not to participate?

65   There are a number of reasons why employers decide not participate in the Apprenticeship programme (see Table 3). Lack of **internal capacity and support** to deliver Apprenticeships is the most common reason, cited by around a quarter of employers. This includes concerns over availability of supervisors or mentors, cited by around 15 per cent of employers.

> 'We used to recruit apprentices into warehousing in the materials recycling facility (MRF). The targets in the MRF are now much higher and as a result there is insufficient supervision, so it is no longer viable to place apprentices there'
>
> **Richmond Borough Council**

Table 3: Reasons for non-participation

Reasons	Details	Lapsed	Considered	Total
Internal capacity and support	Limited availability of supervisors, issues involved in internal delivery, not high on senior management agenda, lack of resources to set up scheme, administrative overhead	28%	33%	30%
Recruitment issues	Limited trainee recruitment, poor quality of candidates, prefer to recruit older or fully trained staff, restructuring	24%	26%	25%
Framework flexibility and training provision	Framework does not meet needs, lack of training providers, prefer in-house or other training, need higher-level training	14%	27%	20%
Funding	Lack of funding	18%	8%	14%
Knowledge/awareness	Don't know enough about Apprenticeships	1%	8%	4%
Considering for the future		1%	6%	3%
Other/no reason/don't know		33%	16%	25%
No need		4%	4%	4%
Total (count)		**114**	**96**	**210**

Source: Ipsos MORI survey of 754 public sector organisations

Notes: Answered by 114 of 114 lapsed organisations and 96 of 96 organisations who considered participating. Multiple response – cells do not add to 100%.

66   Other concerns, cited by around 8 per cent of employers, relate to the internal delivery of Apprenticeships. Around 14 per cent of health sector organisations considered this to be a concern which appeared to be related to limited internal infrastructure, for example to undertake assessment and verification.

67   Due to limitations in the number of trainees that they could recruit in a particular occupational area, 10 per cent of organisations had decided not to recruit apprentices. This reason was most frequently cited by local authorities, and evidence from the case studies suggests that this

issue was not just related to the type and levels of jobs available. The case studies highlighted concerns and confusion about age discrimination legislation. Some local authorities had decided that Apprenticeships aimed at 'young people' alone conflicted with this legislation. These authorities were frequently unaware of funding to provide Apprenticeships for the over-25s.

68 A further 5 per cent of organisations cited a preference for the recruitment of older staff or fully trained staff, and 5 per cent felt that the quality of potential Apprenticeship candidates was poor. This latter issue appeared to be common among central government organisations that had ceased to participate, with over a quarter citing this as a reason. Among these organisations, 5 per cent were undergoing restructuring and had experienced a freeze in recruitment.

69 One in five employers stopped participating or chose not to participate due to the fit between the Apprenticeship framework and business needs or due to a preference for internal or other types of training. Over a quarter of lapsed employers cited this as a reason, with 17 per cent considering that the current Apprenticeship frameworks do not meet their needs and/or do not fit with the job role.

> 'The BTEC and key skills were much too hard … We don't ask for formal entry qualifications and many recruits struggled, especially with the literacy. They had to do IT as one key skill which is irrelevant. We tried to get the framework changed and reduce the levels, but the sector skills council was unhelpful and [did] not consider there to be enough participants to justify the effort involved in changing the framework.'
>
> **Greater Manchester Fire Brigade**

70 The case studies highlighted a number of occupational areas where employers felt that the current Apprenticeship frameworks do not meet their needs and/or do not fit with the job role.

- The radiography Apprenticeship no longer provides a pathway to higher education because institutions have raised their requirements. It is therefore no longer used by some trusts.

- There have been difficulties with the existing framework of an Apprenticeship for those involved in patient transport and for ambulance technicians, due to the 12 months driving experience required prior to gaining a C1 licence.

- Many occupational areas do not fall within the remit of a particular Sector Skills Council. For example, there is no Sector Skills Council to cover the occupational requirements of seamen specialists and submariners in the Royal Navy. Recruits in these areas undertake the public services Apprenticeship, which does not have a technical certificate and focuses on health and safety, personal skills and working relationships, and physical fitness.

- The information services and libraries framework and the community development framework are felt to be out of date. The Sector Skills Council has linked this to protracted processes in agreeing the new framework due to delays in writing the new National Occupational Standards.

- Some Apprenticeship frameworks are seen as unwieldy and overcomplicated. For example, the Apprenticeship framework for youth work has overlapping qualifications for NVQs and technical certificates that were felt to bring extra costs and place additional pressure on apprentices.

- The emergency fire occupations framework was felt to be too academic for a number of fire brigades. Levels of take-up are very low, with only one or two brigades across the country currently using the framework.

71   Some occupational areas were felt to have potential for the development of a new framework:

- an Apprenticeship for medical laboratory assistants at Level 3 (it is currently only available at Level 2);

- an Apprenticeship for healthcare scientists;

- an Apprenticeship for pharmacy technicians (developed from the pharmacy pre-registration scheme at Level 3); and

- an Apprenticeship in support services for cleaners, kitchen assistants and porters.

72   Some organisations claimed that frameworks had been changed without prior consultation. This was considered to be partially linked to a decrease in the resourcing of Sector Skills Councils – many of which were felt to be too overstretched to undertake their role effectively. Some organisational requirements are not always fulfilled by the framework – in many cases, organisations experienced difficulties in identifying an appropriate technical certificate and matching vocational and academic requirements to their needs.

> 'For our vehicle maintenance training, the evidence the verifier looks for is for repairs on small vehicles… the closest it gets to equipment used in the military is a land rover. This does not cover the communications equipment on army vehicles and the electrical systems and gun and laser sites. The verifiers then need to almost fudge it – the completion certificate leaves most of the work-based evidence out. There are not enough frameworks to pull off the shelf and the effort to introduce a new framework is mind boggling …
> A proposal would need to be put to SEMTA [the Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies] which would say there are enough apprentices to justify producing a new framework.'
>
> **Ministry of Defence, civilian**

73   Lack of funding or finance was considered to be a barrier by 8 per cent of non-participants and by 18 per cent of lapsed employers. Around a third of lapsed health sector organisations cited funding as a reason for ceasing to participate. The case studies provide detailed evidence for the reasons. Annex U of *Agenda for Change* (the single pay system in operation in the NHS, introduced in 2004) requires that the employer provides a much higher level of remuneration than the minimum apprentice wage. This appears both to be reducing the number of Apprenticeships available and encouraging trusts to use

programme-led Apprenticeships to avoid paying the higher
wage costs.

74   Around 8 per cent of those that had considered participating felt that
        awareness about how to set up an Apprenticeship scheme was a
        barrier, agreeing with the statement 'we do not know enough about
        Apprenticeships/what we would have to do'.

Participant barriers to increasing apprentice take-up

75   Just over two-thirds of participants (67 per cent) would have liked to
        have offered more places in the past 12 months. Local government
        and health sector organisations were the most likely to have wanted to
        offer more places; central government organisations were the least
        likely to have offered more places.

76   Barriers to increasing intake among participants differed to those
        expressed by non-participants and lapsed employers. Funding
        appeared to be a more significant barrier – two-thirds of participants
        cited a funding-related issue. Almost a quarter felt that limited 'internal
        capacity', for example the resources required to run the scheme, was
        a barrier.

Table 4: Participants' reasons for not offering more places

	%
Lack of funding	66%
Internal capacity	24%
Framework flexibility and training provision	16%
Recruitment issues	9%
Knowledge/awareness	6%
No need	3%
Other/no reason/don't know	2%
Total (count)	**207**

Source: Ipsos MORI survey of 754 public sector organisations

*Notes: Answered by 207 out of 207 participants who would have liked to have
offered more places. Multiple response – cells do not add to 100%.*

77   As for non-participants, internal capacity to deliver appeared to be a significant barrier. Although organisations were already involved to some degree, a significant proportion felt that they could not spare more staff time in training or found it hard to find the time to organise the training.

78   Again, the flexibility of the Apprenticeship framework and training provision appeared to be a significant barrier. However, participating employers also cited related concerns about a lack of good local training providers, a lack of appropriate training, a lack of knowledge about suitable training, difficulty in finding training providers and a lack of provision. Linked to this, one in 10 organisations had asked a training provider or the LSC for additional apprentices and had been told that this was not possible.

79   One in 10 participants had experienced recruitment issues. A number of the case study organisations (3 per cent of participating survey respondents) had experienced recruitment freezes that had affected their intake of apprentices, but the majority were now planning to increase the numbers of apprentices on existing frameworks.

> 'There has been a large decline in Apprenticeships. Four years ago the Air Force had to make a reduction in manpower from 47,000 to 41,000. There was a redundancy programme and a reduction in the intake of new trainees. Numbers of apprentices fell from around 4,000 to 1,348 this year. I estimate that numbers will increase over the next two years.'
>
> **Royal Air Force**

80   A small proportion (4 per cent) of participating employers also cited a lack of interest from, or applications by, young people.

Potential increase in take-up by participants

81   Over the next two years almost three-fifths (59 per cent) of participants
        expect the number of apprentices whom they employ to increase,
        3 per cent expect the number of apprentices to decrease, and 37 per
        cent expect numbers to stay roughly the same. The predictions for
        growth vary at the sectoral level, with organisations in the health
        sector (68 per cent) most likely to predict an increase in numbers.

82   The main reason for citing an increase (identified by two-fifths of
        participants) related to increased business need (Table 5). This
        included supporting the recruitment of suitable candidates and an
        increased need for succession planning. In comparison, funding was
        relatively unimportant and mentioned by only 9 per cent of
        organisations.

Table 5: Participants' reasons for citing an increase

	%
Business case/increased need	41%
Greater awareness of Apprenticeships within organisation	26%
Increased recruitment	16%
Internal support – increased priority for senior management	15%
Content/quality – greater relevance to job roles	11%
Funding	9%
External/political pressure	3%
Other/don't know	23%
Total (count)	**171**

Source: Ipsos MORI survey of 754 public sector organisations

Notes: Answered by 171 of 171 participants who expect the number of apprentices whom they employ to increase. Multiple response – cells do not add to 100%.

83   Information and awareness was cited by around a quarter of
        participants, with the majority stating a greater awareness within the
        organisation of the range of available Apprenticeship opportunities.

84   Recruitment-related reasons were mentioned by 16 per cent of
        organisations. The majority commented on changes to the statutory
        rules surrounding the employment of young people. However, other

reasons included an end to the recruitment freeze or the expansion of the organisation.

85   Greater internal support for Apprenticeships by senior management was mentioned by 15 per cent. The case studies highlighted the importance of getting complete buy-in from senior management from the outset.

> 'Apprenticeships were initially pushed from the bottom up but it is vital to have engagement from senior management … We now have full engagement and continue to work hard to raise awareness of the value of Apprenticeships to both the individual and to the organisation.'
>
> Awareness across the Fleet has been improved due to commanding officer briefings, ship visits and career progression initiatives.
>
> **Royal Navy**

86   One in 10 organisations cited reasons relating to the content and quality of provision. This included increased relevance of the Apprenticeship content to job roles and improved quality of training provision.

87   Of the 10 organisations that cited a decrease, four highlighted recruitment reasons (recruitment freezes, contraction of the organisation), three mentioned a decline in support from senior management, two mentioned increased budgetary constraints, two cited Apprenticeship quality and relevance, and one mentioned a decrease in external political pressure.

88   Over two-thirds (69 per cent) of participating employers had taken, or were planning to take, steps to address barriers to taking on additional apprentices – health sector organisations were the most likely to have taken or were planning to undertake steps to address these barriers and central government organisations the least likely. Steps undertaken or planned included:

- reviewing the funding for training and Apprenticeships and the costs of employing an apprentice (24 per cent);

- planning to develop Apprenticeships in different areas of the organisation (24 per cent);

- undertaking meetings or a consultation about Apprenticeships with other managers and departments (14 per cent) and networking or awareness-raising (16 per cent);

- making changes to recruitment policies and plans (7 per cent); and

- reviewing the training and learning strategy within the organisation (7 per cent).

89   The survey evidence suggests that there is considerable potential for existing organisations to offer new Apprenticeship frameworks in new occupational areas. Just over two-fifths (42 per cent) of participants considered that there were occupational areas within their organisation for which they do not currently offer Apprenticeships but would like to do so.

90   A number of the case study organisations were planning to increase apprentice numbers through the use of new frameworks.

> Since October 2006, 128 young people have completed an Apprenticeship with **Kent County Council** in one of six frameworks: business and administration, customer service, health and social care, warehousing, hospitality and catering, and early years childcare. The council is now considering expansion to other frameworks for activities within its commercial services unit, such as vehicle maintenance, landscape services, and printing. It is also exploring the possibilities in Skills for Care and Development SSC, in particular now that workers can be employed in this sector from the under-18 age group.

91   Organisations identified a number of barriers that currently prevent them from offering Apprenticeships in new occupational areas. A lack of funding was identified as an issue by 29 per cent of organisations. A lack of suitable frameworks and a lack of flexibility in existing frameworks were identified as an issue by 16 per cent of

organisations. There was a particular call for Apprenticeships in new areas, for example creative industries and health and safety. A further 13 per cent of organisations felt that there were no suitable training programmes or providers in their local area.

Recommendations

92   Our recommendations are as follows.

- Non-participants have expressed a number of common barriers to participation. A key concern relates to a lack of internal capacity and support. Organisations need to be provided with more information on how similar organisations have overcome this issue, for example by co-hosting apprentices or rotating apprentices across departments.

- A lack of support from senior management is a common barrier. The case studies suggest that presenting senior managers with a clear business case for involvement may help to overcome concerns.

- The flexibility of the Apprenticeship to ensure that business needs are met is fundamental to participation for many employers. This section has identified a number of gaps where employers have articulated demand. However, the current system of framework approval is onerous and discourages many employers from participating.

- The introduction of increased trainee pay scales through *Agenda for Change* appears to be linked to a large proportion of lapsed employers in the health sector. The case study interviews suggested that some organisations were exploring alternatives as a result, for example the programme-led option or sourcing financial support in return for employing young people from disadvantaged communities. The LSC could consider promoting these alternative options to organisations in this sector. However, care will need to be taken to ensure that the programme-led option in particular is not abused – for example by ensuring that all

trainees are offered a permanent position on successful completion of their training.

Barriers to Expansion

93   This section discusses the organisational barriers to take-up and the support required to increase Apprenticeship use. The key issues emerging from this section are summarised below.

- Non-participants appear to lack understanding about the Apprenticeship programme. Awareness of newer frameworks is lower than awareness of the more traditional frameworks, and some organisations fail to associate Apprenticeships with non-manual employment.

- Information is an important factor in encouraging participation – 16 per cent of non-participants stated that they would be more likely to participate if provided with more information about Apprenticeships. Over a quarter of participants cited an increase in Apprenticeship numbers due to increased organisational awareness of Apprenticeships.

- The main sources of information about Apprenticeships accessed by participants are the LSC and training providers.

- Just 3 per cent of participants cite Train to Gain skills brokers as an information source, and organisations that have been directed to these brokers for information have criticised their knowledge of Apprenticeships.

- Organisations can experience considerable difficulties in sourcing appropriate training provision. Case studies provided a number of examples of good practice, for example supporting organisations in working together to provide an increased number of places and to take a forward-planning approach.

- There is significant demand for internal provision of Apprenticeships, which are felt to offer advantages, including ensuring that the training meets business needs, quality control and cost. However, barriers include the level of resources required

to manage and maintain the scheme, as well as difficulties involved in adapting frameworks to meet business need.

- A number of suggestions have been made to help employers overcome internal barriers to setting up a scheme, including providing resources for an apprentice programme manager and facilitating networks between employers to share ideas and good practice.

- Three-fifths of public sector organisations sub-contract the delivery of some services to a third party. Around one in 10 of these organisations have required or encouraged their sub-contractors to use Apprenticeships. However, almost half felt that they could influence their sub-contractors to use Apprenticeships. The main reason for not doing so to date was lack of incentive.

What is the level of awareness of Apprenticeships?

94   Of those who have never considered using Apprenticeships, 6 per cent have never heard of them. A lack of detailed understanding of what Apprenticeships have to offer may well be undermining participation, as just a third of organisations that have never considered using Apprenticeships felt they knew a great deal or fair amount about the Apprenticeship programme (Table 6).

Table 6: Awareness of the Apprenticeship programme

	Currently used	Used in past	Considered use	Never used/never considered use	Total sample
A great deal	41%	11%	6%	4%	20%
A fair amount	44%	58%	47%	29%	40%
Not very much	12%	26%	36%	42%	27%
Heard of, but knew nothing about	3%	5%	10%	19%	10%
Never heard of it	0%	0%	0%	6%	3%
Count	**310**	**114**	**96**	**142**	**754***

Source: Ipsos MORI survey of 754 public sector organisations.

Note: *Answered by 754 of 754 respondents.

95   There appears to be a higher level of awareness of traditional frameworks, for example construction and engineering, than of more recent frameworks, for example customer service and business administration. Just under half (48 per cent) of those who had never participated in Apprenticeships were aware of Apprenticeships in grounds and building maintenance and construction, whereas less than two-fifths (38 per cent) were aware of Apprenticeships in administration and professional areas, for example business administration.

96   A number of case study employers told us that within their organisation Apprenticeships were associated with 'oily rags' work. There were barriers both in relation to awareness of what apprentices could be used for and in attitude ('they are not for us').

97   Just over a quarter of non-participants (27 per cent) knew of one or more Apprenticeship frameworks that they felt were **relevant** to the sector in which their organisation operates.

- Just under a fifth of non-participants knew of administration and professional frameworks and considered them relevant to their sector. This proportion rises to 38 per cent of local government organisations. Awareness is lowest (10 per cent) among central government organisations.
- Around 35 per cent of non-participating health sector organisations knew of health and social care frameworks and considered them relevant to their sector.

98   Just over a third (37 per cent) of non-participants are aware of Adult Apprenticeships (for the over-25s). Awareness was lowest among non-participants within central government organisations and public protection organisations (Table 7).

Table 7: Non-participants' awareness of Advanced and Adult Apprenticeships

	Level 3 Advanced App'ships		Level 2 App'ships		Adult App'ships for over-25s	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Central government	23	31%	28	38%	17	23%
Education	32	47%	41	60%	18	26%
Health	56	48%	71	61%	55	47%
Local government	48	56%	53	62%	40	47%
Other	10	38%	12	46%	11	42%
Public protection	10	33%	10	33%	7	23%
Total	**179**	**45%**	**215**	**54%**	**148**	**37%**

Source: Ipsos MORI survey of 754 public sector organisations

Note: Answered by 399 out of 399 non-participants.

Is information about setting up a scheme readily available?

99   Information is an important factor in encouraging participation – 16 per cent of non-participants stated that they would be more likely to participate if provided with more information about Apprenticeships (Table 3) and over a quarter of participants (26 per cent) cited an increase in Apprenticeship numbers due to increased organisational awareness of Apprenticeships (Table 5).

100   The main sources of information about Apprenticeships accessed by participants are the LSC (55 per cent), training providers (46 per cent), other government organisations (16 per cent) and professional bodies (12 per cent). Just 3 per cent of participants cite Train to Gain skills brokers as an information source.

101   Despite the relatively high usage of the LSC and training providers as an information source, under half (46 per cent) of participants had ever been asked by a training provider or the LSC whether they would be interested in taking on additional apprentices. Under a third (32 per cent) had ever been asked whether they would be interested in getting involved in a different framework.

102   Those organisations that have considered participation are less likely than participants already involved to access information from a training provider or college (32 per cent) or from the LSC (37 per cent). These organisations are more likely to have received information from a brochure in the post (5 per cent) or a professional body (18 per cent). Among the organisations that have considered participation, 7 per cent cite Train to Gain as an information source.

103   Just over a third of non-participants stated that they would not know where to go for advice if they were interested in participating in the Apprenticeship programme. Of the two-thirds that could identify a source of advice, just over half (52 per cent) would approach the LSC, just over a quarter (26 per cent) would go to a training provider, 10 per cent would approach another government organisation, 10 per cent would approach a local authority and 6 per cent would approach a professional body. Just 5 per cent of non-participants would contact a Train to Gain skills broker.

104   This is significant, given that at present interested organisations are immediately directed by the LSC to a Train to Gain skills broker, who is expected to be their first point of call for information about Apprenticeships. A number of case study organisations reported difficulties in getting hold of information directly from the LSC.

'In 2006 the council set up a scrutiny panel to oversee the implementation of an Apprenticeship programme. The objectives of the panel were to determine the role of the council, the extent of funds required, and the source of funding. The panel made recommendations to cabinet in January 2007, which approved the funding.

'A manager was appointed in early 2007 with the responsibility of implementing the outline plan for Apprenticeships. The manager contacted the LSC, but had great difficulty in making progress. Initially, by phone, she was asked to leave her contact details for someone to call her back. She was not impressed by the attitude and

> lack of interest shown by this first contact point; she mentioned size of the organisation and potential volume of places, but this did not seem to make any impression. She felt that she was not treated in a professional manner, and that the first contact point is not working as a service. She was asked to use the website, to request more information. On doing this, the website said that a skills broker would contact her.
>
> 'After a week of waiting, the manager called the LSC and was passed on to another officer. Eventually, she obtained contact details of three skills brokers and arranged to meet with one. When she asked what services the LSC could offer, the skills broker said that he hardly ever spoke about Apprenticeships. The broker said that he was paid "by the hour" and if she could not give him business immediately, then he would not get paid. At that early stage, the council could not meet this requirement.
>
> 'The manager had a similar discussion with a second skills broker before informing the LSC that this was an unacceptable way to deal with employers. The broker complained to LSC about the "wasted visit", saying that if a broker is sent out, there is an understanding that business will be agreed.
>
> 'The council estimated that it took around a year to establish a good relationship with the LSC but now has regular contact with the National Employer Service and the local LSC, which works well.'
>
> **Anonymous respondent**

105   Where case study organisations had a long-standing relationship with the LSC, in some cases through the National Employer Service, they typically commented on the helpfulness of their account managers and other contacts within the LSC. Nonetheless there were some criticisms that the internal structure of the LSC led to delay in responses.

> 'To get an answer we have to go through so many organisational levels … We asked the LSC about finding match-funding for our Apprenticeship place and it took six months to get to the answer that no funding was available … We can ask a question to one part of the LSC and they will go away to check it and the answer will come back a few weeks later from someone else.'
>
> **West Midlands Police**

106   Organisations that are relatively new to Apprenticeships often begin by finding out how similar organisations got started. Around 5 per cent of

participants considered 'another company' to be a main source of information. The case studies highlighted evidence of local authorities in particular working together to share experiences and information.

> 'We met with other local authorities, and looked at models in use … We found that there were differing approaches to funding and management.'
>
> **Ealing Borough Council**

107   Local authorities are also an important source of information about Apprenticeships for other organisations – with 20 per cent of schools, 11 per cent of public protection organisations and 9 per cent of NHS trusts citing the local authority as an information source about Apprenticeships.

108   The case studies highlighted how some NHS trusts had approached training providers (FE colleges) with whom they had an existing relationship. Research by NHS Yorkshire and the Humber (reported in A. Ackew, *Apprenticeship Opportunities in NHS Organisations across Yorkshire & the Humber. Report on the Scoping Exercise carried out across NHS Trusts*, April/May 2008) has identified a number of reasons why trusts choose to work with FE Colleges centred around the 'lack of resources, funding and capacity within NHS organisations to deliver, meet quality assurance systems and co-ordinate Apprenticeship programmes'.

Is there sufficient support to set up an Apprenticeship programme?

109   The initial phase of setting up Apprenticeships is very time consuming and case study organisations have experienced a number of stumbling blocks.

Securing funding

110   Funding is a significant constraint on participation, particularly among organisations that are looking to expand their involvement. Allocating funds for the employment of apprentices is often difficult. Some organisations identify vacancies that can be used to recruit an apprentice, which means there is no additional cost. This has the added advantage of effectively guaranteeing a substantive post on completion. Another approach is to subsidise the employment cost to the host department, by using other sources of funding, for example Section 106 funding from developments. Preparation of a business case that includes savings which can be made elsewhere can also be effective. For example, at Sheffield Teaching Hospital, the apprentice programme results in savings on agency and recruitment costs, and post-employment training.

'Identifying Entry Level posts for apprentices to fill requires creativity and thinking "out of the box".'   **Kent County Council**
'Success is due to apprentices being used as a major recruitment route, with substantive posts being held against training positions.'   **Sheffield Teaching Hospital**

Sourcing a training provider

111   Organisations' ability to source and negotiate a deal with a training provider appears to be a significant constraint on expansion. Around 38 per cent of non-participants would be more likely to get involved if a training provider contacted them with a bespoke offer.

112   Three-quarters (75 per cent) of current participants use an external training provider for all or some of the provision. Many of the case study organisations had an existing relationship with an external training provider, for example for the delivery of NVQs, who became their first point of call for accessing information about Apprenticeships. In some cases these providers were instrumental in getting the

organisation involved; in other cases, however, it was evident that this relationship acted as a constraint on expansion – for example, the organisation was not typically encouraged to look at the whole of the market and tended to be limited to the existing frameworks offered by the provider.

113   Where organisations did not have an existing relationship or wanted to source alternative provision, the case studies highlighted considerable difficulties. Organisations often feel that they do not have enough information to select a **quality provider** that is able to provide sufficiently tailored training to meet their training requirements. Provider charging structures vary widely, with some charging more to employers who are unable to guarantee economies of scale ('they charge us as much for 6 places as for 12 due to spare capacity') and others placing penalties on the employer for non-completions.

114   Larger organisations, which are able to supply a training provider with a significant number of trainees, have greater scope to negotiate a 'better deal' with a provider. For example, evidence suggests that where economies of scale were achieved, organisations were able to secure cheaper, more flexible and more tailored provision.

> **The Army** has ownership and control of its Apprenticeship programme. Potential training providers undergo a detailed tendering process against Army criteria. This selection procedure enables stronger employer ownership and ensures that the training complements existing military training. The training provider is expected to deliver the Apprenticeship for 90 per cent of the funding received from the LSC, while 3 per cent of the funding is retained centrally to administer the contract. The remaining 7 per cent is reserved for arms and services directorates to spend on educational projects for soldiers, aimed at improving the quality of provision or addressing equality of opportunity issues.

115   Smaller organisations and those with apprentices over a wide range of frameworks and/or a wide geographical area have less capacity to negotiate with a training provider. The initial interviews provided some

evidence that some smaller organisations may be deterred from participating due to concerns that low numbers at any one site would not be viable.

> One central government department used to use the Apprenticeship in customer service. They have since stopped using Apprenticeships and now just offer the NVQ in customer service.
>
> The representative from the department stated that they first got involved with the programme because it was a government initiative and they are a government department and had no choice. The main reason that they decided to stop using Apprenticeships was cost – although they did their training in-house, their offices are all over the country and the apprentices had to travel to undertake the key skills assessments.

116   There are considerable benefits from organisations working together to provide an increased number of places and a forward-planning approach. This often means that the training provider is able to commit to providing resources and more appropriate provision. For example, according to *Apprenticeship Opportunities in NHS Organisations across Yorkshire & the Humber. Report on the scoping Exercise carried out across NHS Trusts* (by A. Ackew, April/May 2008):

> Sheffield Teaching Hospital has a 5 year strategic partnership agreement with Sheffield College and a number of Trusts in the area. Although this agreement covers the wider vocational arena working as a partnership has meant that a larger number of apprentices can be placed and facilitated. The larger numbers and proactive / forward planning approach mean that the training provider and trusts are able commit to providing resources and can provide co-ordination of activities. Smaller Trusts can contribute to the partnership by offering hosting opportunities for apprentices whilst minimising costs and duplication of effort. As adequate numbers of apprentices are taken on the training provider is able to better forward plan resources and commitment. In the authors opinion the Sheffield model has many elements (e.g. central co-ordination of activity, holistic and proactive approach to minimize effort) similar to those suggested by the government for the National Apprenticeship Service, which will be aimed at supporting employers to address capacity and co-ordination issues and make it easier for them to offer more Apprenticeship opportunities.
>
> *Apprenticeship Opportunities in NHS Organisations*

Supporting organisations to deliver training internally

117   There is a high level of demand for Apprenticeship programmes that
        can be delivered internally – a quarter of current participants (31 per
        cent of lapsed participants) deliver all of the Apprenticeship training
        internally. A further 36 per cent use a combination of methods: case
        study organisations frequently used internal provision for their larger
        'core' frameworks, while sub-contracting more 'peripheral' frameworks
        to an external provider. Just over a fifth (21 per cent) of organisations
        that considered participating cited a preference for internal training
        provision.

118   For a number of case study organisations, external delivery was not
        thought to be an option. Internal delivery was considered to be
        essential, in order to ensure that the training meets the needs of the
        organisation and the job role and to provide control over the quality of
        the provision.

> **Durham University** has identified two key benefits of keeping
> training in-house: 'in-house trainers understand the needs and
> culture of the organisation'; and 'it ensures quality of training meets
> the needs of the client department.'

119   Some participants had an established training infrastructure in place
        prior to participation and were able to use the LSC funding to
        subsidise the additional administration and assessment requirements
        of the Apprenticeship programme. In one case (the Royal Navy) the
        funding was used to support wider projects aimed at improving the
        learning environment for the individual.

> 'Keeping overheads low allows surplus LSC funding to be re-
> invested in projects which improve the learning environment for the
> individuals … We have funded a number of projects, for example to
> provide waterfront learning centres which are aimed at providing
> greater access to learning for ship-based personnel.'
>
> **Royal Navy**

120   However, there is evidence to suggest that internal delivery can be difficult. For example, around 14 per cent of health sector organisations ceased to participate because of issues involved in delivering Apprenticeships internally. Case study organisations have identified a number of difficulties. Some organisations spoke of the huge amount of effort required to manage and maintain an Apprenticeship scheme. This was linked to requirements for assessment and verification, and participants felt that internal provision may not be manageable for smaller organisations that are not able to achieve economies of scale. However, these organisations may prefer to use existing internal provision (outside an Apprenticeship), rather than sourcing an external provider, in order to ensure that the training meets the needs of the organisation and the job role.

> 'It takes a huge amount of effort to maintain a scheme … You have to have the right amount of assessors and verifiers, which is hard for a diverse organisation which uses Apprenticeships in a variety of occupational areas. Although certain areas could be sub-contracted to a training provider, this could affect success rates.'
>
> **Royal Air Force**

> 'We employ a training manager, supervisor, clerk, NVQ assessor and two instructors to support around 20 new apprentice starts per year … The fund from the LSC only contributes to a fraction of these overheads.'
>
> **Ministry of Defence, civilian**

121   Some organisations felt that the mechanics of running an LSC contract were overly complex, with too much change. One organisation pointed to issues with the management software.

> 'We have experienced a number of problems with the management software … for example, we will remove people from the database and they reappear. The software also does not cope very well with annual recruitment and expects us to be making changes more frequently.'
>
> **Ministry of Defence, civilian**

> 'When you run an Apprenticeship scheme, you have to have a management system approved by the LSC to track everyone. This has to be accurate and uploaded to the LSC, so the funding comes down at the right time. Yearly the LSC change their funding methodology and coding, which is an administrative nightmare.'
>
> **Royal Air Force**

122   A number of organisations highlighted difficulties in gathering evidence of skills and knowledge for the NVQ.

> 'The diversity of the job made it hard to generate sufficient evidence required for the NVQ assessment, particularly at the quieter stations.'
>
> **Greater Manchester Fire Brigade**

> 'When an acceptable internal training plan is available, more use could be made of Sector Skills Council waivers to avoid the often onerous administrative burden of gathering VQ evidence. The process of applying for dispensation is not readily available to scheme managers.'
>
> **Ministry of Defence, civilian**

123   The ability to ensure that the training is relevant to business needs is particularly important to organisations that choose to deliver Apprenticeships internally. The survey findings highlight this – over a fifth of non-participants stated that they would be more likely to participate if there were greater flexibility in the content of the training and better training provision.

124   However, a number of organisations highlighted considerable difficulties in getting changes to frameworks, as well as a lack of consultation on any changes made.

> '… although it is possible to get changes to frameworks made, it takes time … up to two years in some cases. Sometimes frameworks get changed without sufficient industry consultation by the SSC [Sector Skills Council].'
>
> **Royal Air Force**

> 'The length of the engineering framework has been reduced from four years to three years. However, increasingly different requirements are being added, some of which do not fit with operational training requirements.'
>
> **Ministry of Defence, civilian**

125   All organisations involved in the internal delivery of an Apprenticeship are required to be inspected by Ofsted. There was some suggestion that this assessment process may discourage some organisations who already have an established training programme but are considering developing it into an Apprenticeship.

> 'Lots of large companies are now going down the company accreditation route because they don't want to open themselves up to Ofsted and risk damaging their reputation from getting a negative inspection.'
>
> **Royal Air Force**

126   One case study organisation highlighted more detailed concerns about the connection between funding and certification.

> 'The majority of the funding is tied to completion and all certificates have to be produced to receive the funding … However, it can often take months of chasing to get a college to produce the City & Guilds certificates.'
>
> **Ministry of Defence, civilian**

127   Some organisations will use a combination of methods for a single framework – for example, delivering the technical certificate and NVQ assessment in-house and using an external provider for the key skills. Given the wide range of delivery options available to organisations, support needs to be provided to ensure that organisations are aware of the options available to them and fully understand what is involved.

Providing resources for an Apprenticeship programme manager

128   A dedicated programme co-ordinator is a significant advantage for an organisation in trying to get a scheme started. In Oxfordshire City Council, Trades Union Congress (TUC) funding has enabled the council to employ a part-time project co-ordinator. The role of the co-ordinator includes outreach work in local schools aimed at promoting the Apprenticeship for teaching assistants and bringing together individual schools to share an apprentice. For some smaller organisations this pooling of resources is important, especially given concerns over the time and infrastructure required to run a programme and the availability of mentors.

Guidance on setting the terms and conditions of employment

129   Some participating organisations are confused about the employment status of apprentices ('I didn't know that apprentices could be employed from day one'). Other organisations are uncertain about what terms and conditions of employment need to be offered to an apprentice and who an Apprenticeship is for. New employment regulations on ageism have led some organisations in the past to reconsider their use of Apprenticeships ('We can't just advertise for young people for Apprenticeships, as this is now illegal') and knowledge of funding for over-25s is patchy.

Sharing good practice

130   A number of participating organisations have raised completion rates significantly and have identified a number of success factors and learning points, which they are happy to share with organisations that are new to the programme. There is currently limited sharing of best practice. Organisations new to Apprenticeships would benefit from access to a short document setting out the main issues involved in running and using Apprenticeships, how they have been overcome by other organisations, and an appropriate contact in another

organisation who can talk them through how issues have been overcome. Success factors include the following.

- Some organisations have taken relatively simple steps that have resulted in huge improvements in completion rates. For example, by linking the completion of the apprentice's NVQ task book to their career task book, the Royal Navy has increased completion rates for its engineers from 30 per cent to 65 per cent and rising.
- Some employers see provision of training for supervisors as another success factor.
- Effective pastoral support has been introduced – 'we have introduced a buddy system for our next cohort and the second-year apprentices will be buddy for new trainees for the first month'.
- Some employers have started with a low number of apprentices, as a pilot, to allow a quick response to problems, iron out teething problems, and achieve a high success rate with their first cohort and their managers.
- Apprenticeships have been promoted internally within organisations – for example, at Durham University 'success is celebrated with an Apprentice of the Year Award, where the Vice Chancellor presents certificates'.
- A centralised contract through the National Employer Service has helped the Army to ensure consistency between work-based learning programmes across arms and services directorates. One quality manager works across three or four arms and services directorates to share good practice. The Army has also produced a bank of standard operating procedures, including self-assessment and quality improvement planning tools.

Can sub-contractors be encouraged to offer Apprenticeships?

131   Three-fifths (60 per cent) of public sector organisations sub-contract the delivery of some services to a third party. Over three-quarters (76 per cent) of central government departments, 67 per cent of local

government organisations, 57 per cent of public protection organisations, 56 per cent of health sector organisations and 41 per cent of educational establishments sub-contract the delivery of some services to a third party. The case studies highlighted how, in some parts of the public services, large parts of the work had been transferred to the private sector.

> In 1995 the **Ministry of Defence** employed 2,200 apprentices, but now it employs around 500. Many of the bigger schemes ended because the work was transferred into private industry. For example, the sale of the Defence Aviation and Repair Agency (DARA) to the Canadian company Vector Aerospace was completed in 2008. The MoD ensures that all existing apprentices are transferred across to the private sector. As part of the negotiations for the transfer, the MoD places conditions in the contract surrounding future workforce planning, linked to how the company proposes to deliver its future output. Given that there is a proven business need for engineering apprentices as skilled craftsmen and that technicians are scarce, DARA is expected to continue the programme and meet its contractual commitment for future skills.

132   Through the procurement process 44 per cent of organisations (51 per cent of Apprenticeship programme participants and 42 per cent of non-participants) have tried to encourage sub-contractors to train their staff to a particular standard. Larger organisations appear more likely to do this (53 per cent of those with over 5,000 employees compared to 31 per cent of those with less than 500 employees). Health sector organisations are the most likely to try to influence sub-contractors (53 per cent).

133   Health and safety training is the most common type of training required or encouraged by around 36 per cent of sub-contractors. Under a third (29 per cent) of sub-contractors are required or encouraged to provide induction training for their staff and 27 per cent are required or encouraged to provide opportunities for their staff to undertake NVQs. Around 38 per cent of organisations that have made the Skills Pledge and sub-contract the delivery of services require or encourage their sub-contractors to provide NVQs for their staff.

134   Among organisations that use sub-contractors, 12 per cent have required or encouraged their sub-contractors to use Apprenticeships. This proportion rises to 18 per cent among companies that have made the Skills Pledge. A further 45 per cent of organisations that use sub-contractors feel that it would be possible to influence their suppliers on Apprenticeships in relation to **all** the services which the organisation sub-contracts, suggesting that there is considerable capacity for expansion. Just 12 per cent of organisations feel that it is not possible to influence suppliers on Apprenticeships in any of the services which it sub-contracts. The main sub-contracted services where it was considered that sub-contractors could not be influenced were housekeeping and cleaning (cited by 5 per cent of organisations that use sub-contractors), catering (cited by 3 per cent) and construction (cited by 3 per cent).

135   The health sector has the highest proportion of participants, encouraging its sub-contractors to use NVQs (67 per cent), but has one of the lowest proportions of participants encouraging its sub-contractors to use Apprenticeships (20 per cent). There is considerable potential for greater linkages to be made between the two.

> The **West Midlands SHA** has supported sub-contractors to undertake an NVQ Level 2 in infection control. There is potential to broaden this to an Apprenticeship and joint investment funding can be used to provide Apprenticeship places within sub-contracted areas, if the SHA feels there is a need to invest.

136   The main reasons why organisations have decided to encourage their suppliers to use Apprenticeships are often linked to organisational policy, including the role of the employer as an Investor in People (10 per cent), and the organisation's wider commitment to training and development (8 per cent). Around 17 per cent of organisations cite quality assurance reasons, and a further 25 per cent cite social

reasons, for example 'to provide opportunities for young people' or to 'provide jobs for the unemployed'.

137   The main barriers appear to be related to lack of responsibility in procurement, with 25 per cent of respondents stating that it 'is not our decision'. 'No benefit/it does not matter to us whether suppliers use Apprenticeships' was cited by 15 per cent of respondents, while 8 per cent cited contractual issues (for example 'suppliers with short-term contracts are reluctant to commit to longer-term training') and 7 per cent cited cost issues, agreeing with the statement that 'suppliers with a greater investment in Apprenticeships are more expensive'.

Recommendations

138   Our recommendations are as follows.

- There are significant gaps in awareness, particularly around non-traditional frameworks and Adult Apprenticeships. Non-participants tend to be directed to Train to Gain skills brokers for support – yet just 3 per cent of participants cite Train to Gain skills brokers as an information source. The LSC needs to ensure that if these brokers are used as the primary source of information about the programme, they are adequately equipped to answer detailed questions about how to set up and run an Apprenticeship programme.

- Organisations who want to set up a programme would benefit from talking to a similar organisation that has been through the process. Our discussions with case study organisations highlighted a willingness to share experiences and good practice. The LSC should consider compiling a database of contacts who are willing to discuss their experiences with other organisations.

- Organisations can experience considerable difficulties in sourcing appropriate training provision. The LSC should consider supporting organisations in working together to provide an increased number of places and in taking a forward-planning approach. This may be

best facilitated through a strategic body, for example the SHAs or the Association of Chief Police Officers. Local authorities have been shown to play a key role in engaging schools, and the LSC could consider sharing best practice between local authorities.

- A significant proportion of public sector organisations have a large workforce and therefore the potential to offer economies of scale in Apprenticeship provision. Where an organisation is able to offer a large number of places, the LSC could consider providing some funding to support the post of an Apprenticeship manager who will help to ensure that Apprenticeships are fully optimised across the organisation.

- There do not appear to be any significant barriers to prevent employers requiring or encouraging their sub-contractors to use Apprenticeships. The LSC could consider promoting this further, for example through Union Learning Representatives.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Key conclusions

139   Both the survey and case study evidence supports the view that take-up of Apprenticeships among public sector organisations is patchy. There are wide variations in involvement within different departments of the same organisation and between equivalent organisations in the same service area. There are also significant sectoral differences in take-up – although 62 per cent of local government organisations participate, on average these organisations employ just one apprentice for every 625 employees, which is below the average for the public sector.

140   The majority of public sector organisations have a strong business rationale for choosing to use Apprenticeships, citing recruitment, future workforce planning, funding, or accreditation or legislative requirements. Within organisations this business rationale clearly needs to extend to individual departments and establishments, and individual departmental managers typically require a clear business case for participation.

141   Local authorities, and to a lesser extent public protection organisations, do, however, appear to participate for a broader range of reasons. Apprenticeships are also being used to help support policy targets on worklessness or social inclusion. Political motivations are less common, although they are clearly evident in a number of central government organisations.

142   There appears to be a high level of constrained demand; two-thirds of participants (67 per cent) would have liked to have offered more places over the last 12 months than they were able to. Nearly one in 10 of these employers had asked a training provider or the LSC for

additional apprentices and had been told that this was not possible; over a quarter of participants cited barriers that related to the provision of training – a lack of good local training providers, a lack of appropriate training, a lack of knowledge about suitable training, difficulty finding training providers and a lack of provision.

143   Awareness of Apprenticeships among non-participants could be improved – just a third of non-participants who had never considered using Apprenticeships felt they knew a great deal or a fair amount about the programme. Awareness of traditional frameworks is higher than for the newer frameworks, and less than two-fifths of non-participants were aware of Apprenticeships in administration and professional areas, despite these being the most frequently used frameworks (used by almost three-quarters (71 per cent) of participants). Linked to this were perceptions of Apprenticeships; some case study organisations felt that Apprenticeships were still associated with 'oily rags' work.

144   There is potential for Union Learning Representatives to undertake a greater role in raising awareness of Apprenticeships in their organisations. Union Learning Representatives have been instrumental in planning and implementing new schemes. However, our discussions suggested that their awareness of Apprenticeships is patchy, and some lack detailed knowledge of the content, target audience and potential business benefits of Apprenticeships.

145   A further area of concern relates to the fit between NVQs and Apprenticeships. Although organisations that have made the Skills Pledge are more likely to also undertake Apprenticeships, there is little evidence of cause and effect. Within many organisations there appears to be limited awareness of any wider business benefits derived from, for example, an employee completing an Apprenticeship in business administration compared to undertaking NVQs. In addition, in some organisations there appears to be antipathy towards the use

of Adult Apprenticeships for existing staff, as these are considered to be for 'young, inexperienced recruits', and employers reported that some staff were reluctant to undertake key skills training. The organisational preference for NVQs is often exacerbated by Train to Gain, with brokers (who are expected to be a key information source about Apprenticeships) focusing their advice and support on NVQs. A clear understanding of the advantages of the Apprenticeship model needs to be embedded in the marketing, advice and engagement of new employers.

146   Around two-fifths of non-participants had considered participating in the past. The main reason given for not participating was that the current Apprenticeship frameworks do not meet their needs or fit with the job role. The case studies highlighted the considerable difficulties involved in getting new frameworks introduced or existing frameworks modified. This is not helped by perceptions of how the frameworks fit with their business needs and a general view that changing them is very slow, bureaucratic and costs significant resources.

147   Just under half (47 per cent) of non-participants would be very likely or fairly likely to consider involvement in frameworks that are specific to their sector. This is significantly higher than the proportion of private sector employers that said they would consider participating, according to research carried out by CPC and Ipsos MORI and published by the LSC (*Research into Expanding Apprenticeships*, 2008). Given that these employers represent the largest slice of the market, this is potentially the most significant area into which to expand the programme.

148   The high level of interest that non-participants have expressed in the programme suggests that these organisations are at least open to Apprenticeships. However, there is a long way to go in translating the initial interest into participation, and general marketing will only go so far. The case studies point to the issues faced by employers who have

already taken the decision to participate. However, a number of additional issues are likely to be faced by the employers who, for a number of reasons, still need to be convinced. Our recommendations on how the LSC might respond are set out below.

149   Information, advice and support is an important factor in encouraging non-participants to participate – just over a third of non-participants stated that they would not know where to go for advice if they were interested in participating in the Apprenticeship programme and 14 per cent asked for more information about Apprenticeships and general support to set up a scheme. Around 38 per cent of non-participants would be more likely to get involved if a training provider contacted them with a bespoke offer.

150   Around 15 per cent of organisations had been involved with Apprenticeships in the past. Lapsed employers appeared to be more likely than participants to have participated for business-based reasons – to support recruitment or address skills shortages – and less likely to have participated for social reasons, such as providing young people with qualifications or skills. A large proportion of lapsed employers no longer participate for financial reasons. This is particularly the case in the health sector and is linked to the recent introduction of the Department of Health's *Agenda for Change*, which has increased the costs of employing trainees.

Supporting take-up

151   There are a number of steps that the LSC could take to support the take-up of Apprenticeships across the public services. Improving awareness of Apprenticeships will help expansion, but as recommended for the private sector, the key to achieving this is providing a bespoke offer. Non-participating organisations are less likely to be in contact with the LSC or a training provider and more

likely to receive information through media advertising or indirectly through a professional body.

Providing information and advice

152   The current route to setting up an Apprenticeship programme is convoluted, and organisations that have recently set up a new Apprenticeship scheme have on the whole found the process to be complex and time-consuming. Organisations which have initially approached the LSC for advice have been immediately directed down the Train to Gain route and the evidence suggests that Train to Gain skills brokers do not have sufficient knowledge about Apprenticeships and are not proactive in promoting Apprenticeships – just 3 per cent of participants cite Train to Gain Skills brokers as an information source about Apprenticeships.

153   The LSC should ensure that as soon as an organisation expresses interest in setting up an Apprenticeship scheme, they are directed to a contact who will talk to them about Apprenticeships rather than a broader Train to Gain skills package. The organisation needs prompt answers to a number of common questions, including what funding is available, whether there are any sources of match-funding, how to source an external training provider, what training could be provided in-house and what infrastructure is required.

154   The case studies highlighted a high level of confusion over what could be funded and what could not. Common areas of confusion included whether there was funding for all over-25s on all frameworks, whether Apprenticeships could be used for existing staff, and how prior qualification levels impacted on what funding was available.

155   Within certain sectors, organisations were accessing additional funding streams to support an Apprenticeship programme. The LSC could do more to raise awareness of the potential for match-funding,

for example by providing examples within local government of how Section 106 funding can be used to subsidise wage or other costs. Within deprived areas, certain parts of the public services have linked with social enterprises to recruit disadvantaged young people in return for a subsidy towards the wage costs in the first year.

156   Public sector organisations new to Apprenticeships have a number of other more pragmatic questions, such as how to embed the programme into their own human resource and employment terms and conditions. In some case studies, working out how best to do this could take as long as sourcing and setting up a training provider – for example, one organisation discovered that their lowest pay scale was for people qualified at Level 3 and involvement in the programme required that a new pay grade be created. Neither the LSC nor many training providers would have the necessary expertise to help on such issues. Therefore, the LSC should establish a network of contacts in the public sector who have successfully addressed these issues and who would be willing to share their experience with others.

157   Employers will increasingly want to know the advantages of either the Train to Gain or Apprenticeship model to their organisation. As primary sponsor of both programmes, the LSC needs to consider the strengths of each programme and ensure that brokers and providers are fully consistent, with a clear presentation of the circumstances where either approach would best meet their needs. Feedback from many organisations and providers is that this clarity is not yet available.

Supporting networks to share good practice

158   Take-up is patchy in a number of parts of the public services. For example, some trusts in the health sector use a wide range of frameworks, some use just one, and others are not participating. Some organisations are simply not aware of the range of frameworks available – under a third of current participants have ever been asked

by a training provider or the LSC whether they would be interested in getting involved in a different Apprenticeship framework.

159   Employers who have recently set up Apprenticeship programmes have found advice from other employers invaluable, and most are happy to share experiences, lessons learned and good practice. The LSC should consider supporting such networks and providing interested organisations with contact details of any similar organisations that have experience of setting up an Apprenticeship programme in similar circumstances. Organisations which have used one or two frameworks could be provided with case studies and contact details of similar organisations that have successfully used other frameworks. Sector-specific case studies should be used to market the programme to non-participants.

Linking with organisations at the appropriate level

160   In some cases, approaching organisations at the regional level may not be the most effective way of increasing take-up. For example, it may be more efficient to link with bodies such as the Association of Chief Police Officers, which are in a position to highlight examples and share good practice on the use of Apprenticeships across the regions and local forces. In other sectors, for example health, evidence suggests that the partnerships between the LSC and SHAs through the Joint Investment Framework are starting to play an effective role in mapping take-up across the health sector, highlighting gaps, sharing good practice and supporting expansion. In other sectors, increased co-ordination is required to improve take-up. For example, local authorities have been successful in supporting groups of schools to work together in 'sharing' an apprentice.

Supporting involvement

Providing support in finding and securing external training provision

161   Many case study organisations do not feel equipped with sufficient information to negotiate provision with a training provider and do not have adequate information about the quality of provision. Model agreements could be used to set out the roles and responsibilities of employers and training providers. In some areas, provision does not exist. The LSC could do more to deliver networks between employers, in order to create sufficient economies of scale that will support the development of a new training infrastructure.

Supporting the co-ordination of larger schemes

162   The LSC should consider providing funding for Apprenticeship co-ordinators, especially in organisations where there is the potential for, and interest in, setting up a large-scale Apprenticeship programme. It is clear that where organisations do employ an Apprenticeship co-ordinator or similar, they are instrumental in driving forward Apprenticeships across the organisation. For example, in one county council the TUC provided funding for an Apprenticeship co-ordinator who undertook a gap assessment across the organisation and identified areas where there was a clear business case for Apprenticeship use, presented the business case to senior management and supported the setting up of the scheme. Other organisations with existing training infrastructure have been allowed to use some of the LSC funding to support more innovative types of delivery.

Setting standards for customer service

163   Some participant organisations have reported having to wait up to six months to get an answer to a question from the LSC; the LSC should ensure that questions are answered promptly. Organisations that have used the National Employer Service (NES) have had a more positive

experience. The LSC should ensure that non-NES organisations are provided with a single point of contact and that questions are answered within a set timeframe.

Simplifying the Apprenticeship framework approvals process

164   Some organisations do not use Apprenticeships in certain parts of their organisation because the framework does not exist or is not sufficiently specialised. Under-resourced Sector Skills Councils will often not consider developing new frameworks unless there is a sufficient level of interest that is unlikely to come from a single organisation. When sufficient interest is expressed, the process of introducing a new framework can take over two years. Government proposals to simplify the framework approval process, and to enable the recognition of some Apprenticeship schemes that are run by employers but do not currently meet the requirements of the Sector Skills Council Apprenticeship frameworks, have the potential to provide a positive impact on take-up across the public services.

Annex A: Use of Frameworks

Table A1: Participation by sub-sector

	Total	% currently involved
Health		
NHS foundation trusts	21	47.6%
NHS trusts	90	37.8%
PCTs	59	27.1%
Other NHS bodies	5	*20.0%**
Blood centres	1	*100.0%**
Ambulance trusts	6	*66.7%**
	175	**34.9%**

	Total	% currently involved
Education		
Colleges	101	64.4%
Higher education	17	35.3%
Schools	23	8.7%
	141	**51.8%**

	Total	% currently involved
Central Government		
Other central government bodies	49	22.4%
Non-departmental public bodies	36	8.3%
Government departments	4	*50.0%**
Regional development agencies	2	*50.0%**
	85	**16.5%**

	Total	% currently involved
Total known	**709**	**43.7%**

Other	Total	% currently involved
Probation	19	10.5%
County Courts	1	*100.0%**
Prisons	1	*100.0%**
Cultural and countryside bodies	6	*33.3%**
Transport bodies	4	*25.0%**
Crown Courts	1	*0.0%**
Unknown	0	–
	13	**38.5%**

Local government	Total	% currently involved
Local authorities (county)	18	83.3%
Unitary authorities	13	69.2%
Local authorities (borough)	106	67.0%
City councils	20	65.0%
Local authorities (district)	66	45.5%
	223	**61.9%**

Public Protection	Total	% currently involved
Police	17	29.4%
Fire service	22	18.2%
	39	**23.1%**

*Caution count <10

Source: Ipsos MORI survey of 754 public sector organisations

Table A2: Participation by framework

	Count participating	Employees per apprentice	Mean employees	Mean apprentices	% of organisations using App'ships	Number of organisations offering Apprenticeship framework																
						Admin. and prof.	Agric.	Const.	Customer service, retailing and wholesaling	Eng.	Finance, insurance and real estate	Food and drink	Health and beauty	Health, care and public services	Hosp.	Manuf.	Media and print	Rec. and travel	Transp.	Other	None	Don't know
Ambulance trusts	4	579	3,300	21	67%	3			1	1	1			1	1							
Blood centres	1	100	6,000	60	100%	1			1					1								
City councils	13	1,051	8,981	32	65%	10	2	4	7	2	3	2	2	5	1	1		2				1
Colleges	65	156	581	7	64%	52	6	24	23	27	8	9	17	22	13	3		14				1
County court	1	170	80,000	470	100%	1			1													
Cultural and countryside bodies	2	59	120	2	33%	1															1	
Fire services	4	333	1,703	14	18%	2				2									1			
Government departments	2	–	–	14	50%	2			1													
Higher education	6	789	2,344	6	35%	2		2		2	1											
Local authorities (borough)	71	353	3,931	23	67%	46	10	26	31	14	7	2		16	1		2	2	4	1		6
Local authorities (county)	15	2,628	17,021	27	83%	13	1	4	7	3	1	2		7			2	1	2			1
Local authorities (district)	30	194	1,160	16	45%	22	1	3	8	6	3		1	2	1	1		2	1			4
NHS foundation trusts	10	1,076	3,891	14	48%	7		2		2	1			3	1							
NHS trusts	34	662	4,409	15	38%	21		9	2	4	3	3		13	1				1			1
Non-departmental public bodies	3	411	909	2	8%	2		1	1	1												
Other central government bodies	11	533	9,086	53	22%	4	1	1	3	5										1		1
Other NHS bodies	1	150	828	2	20%	1			0													
Police	5	980	6,144	9	29%	4			1	1												
PCTs	16	714	1,853	6	27%	14			2		2			7								
Prisons	1	–	–	–	100%																	1
Probation	2	75	1,504	10	11%	2								2								
Regional development agencies	1	400	365	1	50%	1																
Schools	2	23	67	10	9%	1																1
Transport bodies	1	67	6,195	15	25%	1		1		1									1			
Unitary authorities	9	301	6,203	34	69%	8	3	4	1	1				4			1		1			
Total	**310**	**513**	**3,765**	**19**	**44%**	**221**	**24**	**81**	**90**	**72**	**30**	**18**	**20**	**83**	**19**	**6**	**4**	**21**	**11**	**1**	**2**	**16**
					% of organisations offering	71%	8%	26%	29%	23%	10%	6%	6%	27%	6%	2%	1%	7%	4%	0%	1%	5%

Annex B: Case Studies

Royal Air Force

The RAF has been using Apprenticeships since the 1960s. Non-commissioned personnel undertake Apprenticeships based on the industry sector in which they are working. The RAF currently has 41,000 personnel working in a variety of areas, including force protection, personnel, medical and medical support, logistics and equipment, communications and intelligence, catering and hospitality, aircrew, air operations support, and engineering and technical.

There are 1,348 LSC-funded learners currently on RAF Apprenticeship programmes in 15 different RAF ground trade groups at 13 RAF ground training schools. Frameworks used include business administration, security, public services, ICT, engineering, air traffic control, and warehousing and storage. Historically the RAF typically has approximately 4,500 apprentices on scheme at any given time. The last three years have seen numbers drop due to a manpower drawdown. Recruiting is now at a high tempo and the steady state is likely to be in the region of 3,500 apprentices on scheme.

The ground training schools run as autonomous units, with strategic direction, advice, guidance and support from the central 22 (Training) Group Apprenticeships Management Team (AMT). They are responsible jointly to their RAF trade sponsor and to 22 (Training) Group. Day-to-day management is carried out by staff in the accreditation centre at each ground training school. They are also responsible for reviewing the policies and procedures for their programmes. There are 160 dedicated accreditation staff involved in the RAF Apprenticeship scheme. Their duties include assessment, verification, administration, management and co-ordination of the relevant Apprenticeship scheme. These staff include 35 Apprenticeship co-ordinators on main operating bases, who support engineering sector learners in particular.

Apprenticeships enable the RAF to accredit existing training programmes. As a representative from the AMT states: 'offering Apprenticeships to new recruits enables us to demonstrate to the young person that we are committed to supporting them throughout their career and provides them with a transferable qualification on leaving the RAF'.

The AMT has outlined a number of challenges and barriers to the successful implementation of an Apprenticeship programme:

- onerous inspection requirements – 'lots of large companies are now going down the company accreditation route because they don't want to open themselves up to Ofsted and risk damaging their reputation from getting a negative inspection';
- the level of resources required to manage a scheme – 'it takes a huge amount

of effort to maintain a scheme … You have to have the right amount of assessors and verifiers, which is hard for a diverse organisation which uses Apprenticeships in a variety of occupational areas. Although certain areas could be sub-contracted to a training provider, this could affect success rates';

- difficulties in getting changes to frameworks – 'although it is possible to get changes to frameworks made it takes time … up to two years in some cases. Sometimes frameworks get changed without sufficient industry consultation by the SSC [Sector Skills Council]'; and

- management requirements – 'when you run an Apprenticeship scheme, you have to have a management system approved by the LSC to track everyone. This has to be accurate and uploaded to the LSC so the funding comes down at the right time. Yearly the LSC change their funding methodology and coding, which is an administrative nightmare.'

The AMT identifies a number of success factors in implementing an Apprenticeship programme.

- Introduce a pay incentive for completing the Apprenticeship, which helps to raise completion rates and times.

- Develop clear progression routes for apprentices – the RAF is currently working on a progression route from airman to warrant officer (the highest non-commissioned rank) to a degree based on the number of units and credits that have been completed.

- Support re-skilling through Apprenticeships – for example, there is the potential within the RAF for a chef who has completed a Level 2 Apprenticeship to re-enrol and complete an engineering Apprenticeship.

- The management system required to run a scheme as large as the RAF's is complex. A full-time post is required to update each training centre on changes in monitoring requirements and to ensure that quality is maintained.

West Midlands SHA

The West Midlands SHA is one of 10 SHAs that are responsible for the strategic development of NHS organisations in the region.

In July 2007 the West Midlands SHA signed the Joint Investment Framework (JIF), setting out its commitment to developing a skilled workforce through high-quality, relevant provision and targeted investment in learning. The JIF supports

the strategic aims of the West Midlands Workforce Deanery and provides a lever to drive improved workforce planning. The JIF provides up to £5 million of funding from the LSC each year over a three-year period from August 2007, which is matched by the SHA. Delivered via the Train to Gain service, the funding can be used for Level 1 and 2 training, including NVQs, and Level 3 through the Level 3 trials for the region. The funding may also be used for Apprenticeships for the under-25s and for Adult Apprenticeships.

The allocation of JIF funds over the three years will be based on workforce information and planning, and on an assessment of the training needs of each of the NHS health employers in the West Midlands. The JIF will inform the Workforce Deanery commissioning plan year on year and will be fed into the SHA workforce planning.

It is felt that the JIF has helped to increase the take-up of NVQs within the health sector in the region. However, the SHA has had to overcome several challenges in linking these to Apprenticeships. Current Apprenticeship take-up across the 44 trusts in the region is patchy – just six trusts are responsible for the 368 Apprenticeship places. The SHA has identified a number of reasons for this low take-up.

- Take-up in PCTs is substantially lower than in acute trusts. PCTs have recently undergone reorganisation and, as a result, cuts have been made. Acute trusts deliver more, as they have a larger workforce and more capacity to train in-house with onsite infrastructure.

- There is currently an oversupply of particular Apprenticeships, for example nursing cadets, as there is currently an oversupply of nurses in the region.

- Some trusts are reluctant to employ apprentices from day one due to the introduction of new wage bands through *Agenda for Change*, which means that apprentices have to be paid substantially more than the LSC requirement of £90 per week.

- For non-clinical routes within the NHS, information on training provision and access to training is thought to be poorer, with less structured career progression routes for staff.

The SHA is working to try to overcome some of these barriers to take-up.

- The JIF provides support for each of the trusts to undertake an organisational needs analysis. Five locality boards across the region then discuss whether training plans are affordable and meet workforce development needs. The SHA has set voluntary targets for take-up of Apprenticeships within each trust, based on their headcount.

- The JIF funding can be used to provide Apprenticeship places within sub-contracted areas, if the SHA feels there is a need to invest. For example, they have supported sub-contractors to undertake an NVQ Level 2 in infection control. There is potential to broaden this to Apprenticeships.

- For areas where there is a requirement for a particular level of qualification, the SHA has tried to link funding for the qualification to an Apprenticeship. For example, dental nurses require a Level 3 qualification. The SHA will fund the Level 3 through the JIF as long as the nurse also completes the Apprenticeship.

- To overcome issues surrounding the cost of employing an apprentice, the SHA is trying to develop more innovative delivery routes, for example by working with social enterprises that will subsidise the salary costs of an apprentice from a deprived area.

Kent County Council

In 2006, the leader of Kent County Council (KCC) set out a vision for the next four years which outlined a very clear commitment to prepare the young people of Kent for employment. The vision includes careers guidance, expanding the 14–16 vocational programme and the introduction of a Kent Apprenticeship programme.

The Apprenticeship programme will manage and facilitate the creation of 1,000 Apprenticeship opportunities across the county, both within KCC itself and in other public and private sector organisations. KCC is driving forward this programme because of 'government focus on the expansion of Apprenticeship training routes and because there are a significant number of 16- to 18-year-olds in the county who are not in education, employment and training' (social inclusion officer).

The social inclusion officer stated that: 'As the largest employer in Kent, KCC has pledged to provide a minimum of 250 Apprenticeship placements to young people by 2010 in an initiative branded as "Kent Success" '. The business case is based on the ageing workforce, and the need to encourage young people into the organisation. The number of Apprenticeships offered is linked to annual turnover rates. 'We did not need to use a broker, as we use the services of our in-house provider.'

Since October 2006, 128 young people have completed their Apprenticeship in one of six frameworks: business and administration; customer service; health and social care; warehousing; hospitality and catering; and early years childcare. The majority of trainees have gained permanent employment with KCC. Now that Apprenticeships are becoming established, consideration will be given to other

frameworks, such as vehicle maintenance, landscape services, and printing.

Managers who are implementing the Apprenticeship programme identify these key success factors:

- communicating with managers in host departments;

- keeping it simple for managers – a comprehensive guide for managers has been issued;

- thinking 'out of the box' when creating Entry Level posts;

- creating a brand – 'Kent Success';

- identifying real employment possibilities at the end of the training period; and

- subsidising the apprentice salary cost for the host department.

KCC is in the early stages of implementing the external programme.
An 'apprentice showcase' event will feature existing apprentices.

London Borough of Ealing

The London Borough of Ealing is a good example of an organisation that has implemented an apprentice programme from scratch in a short timescale.

Launched in 2007, the Apprenticeship programme is an objective of the council's manifesto to improve employment opportunities for young people in the borough. Section 106 funds have been used for pump-priming, with £370,000 set aside for employment and training to help build up the infrastructure. The manifesto had an original target of 100 apprentices in the first year, of whom 20 were to be from the local authority and the remainder to be in local businesses. The London Borough of Ealing would act as broker for the external places.

The Economic Regeneration Team is responsible for implementing the programme. The senior manager acknowledges that it was difficult to find good practical advice about setting up a programme at the start: 'it took sheer determination to make this happen'. Through networking, the team was introduced to Way to Work, a local provider attached to the London Borough of Richmond, which was 'the only provider we met which was employer focused'.

There has been a huge demand for the trainee posts. In the first year, 22 apprentices were appointed on a fixed-term, two-year contract, using frameworks in business administration, IT, customer service, health and social care. Learning from experience, the 20 trainees on the second cohort are on a 12-month contract, as some departments cannot offer Level 3 experience.

The team believes that features of their model which contribute to its success are:

- commitment from the cabinet;

- the manifesto and Skills Pledge;

- that funding was identified at the start;

- the appointment of a full-time apprentice co-ordinator, who has set up marketing, recruitment and general co-ordination within the organisation;

- materials from the provider, for example model contracts;

- that each trainee has a supervisor and a mentor; and

- that the employing department pays only 50 per cent of the trainee's salary cost.

The support from the London West LSC has been really good and the borough now has a good relationship with the Large Employer Unit to support their Skills Pledge commitments.

In February 2008, the London Borough of Ealing set up a brokerage service, with Ealing education business partnership, to help local businesses and the council's supply chain employers and partners to recruit apprentices. The steering group represents all interested parties, including Connexions and Jobcentre Plus. They have run marketing events for Ealing's 'top 40' contractors. They are currently monitoring the success of this, and discussing outcomes with the local LSC.

The team is starting to engage with sub-contractors and arms-length organisations associated with the London Borough of Ealing, to influence the recruitment of apprentices in these partner organisations.

Yorkshire and Humberside SHA

Apprenticeships have been identified as a priority workstream through an existing regional partnership between the SHA, the LSC, NHS trusts, training providers and other stakeholders.

The SHA has undertaken a scoping study to identify Apprenticeship opportunities in NHS organisations in the region, which has identified a number of issues and barriers to using Apprenticeships, as well as highlighting good examples of how trusts working with providers had addressed these.

The scoping exercise found that approximately 305 Apprenticeship opportunities were offered in NHS trusts across Yorkshire and the Humber during the 12 months to May 2008, with 138 of these offered in health and social care. The remainder comprised a diverse range of frameworks, including engineering and plumbing, electricians, horticulture, cleaning, business administration, pharmacy and dental. Potential areas for expansion identified by the SHA include: accountancy; IT; pharmacy; manufacturing; information, advice and guidance; payroll and personnel; information and library services; physiological measurement technology; management; learning and development; and customer service.

Success factors and suggested ways of overcoming barriers to expansion include:

- the need to work in partnership and with increased co-ordination across the healthcare community, for example by supporting joint working with the training provider to reduce previous costs associated with Apprenticeships;
- greater clarity on the costs and benefits of participation and increased support to enable employers to determine whether a business case for participation exists;
- using models where Apprenticeships were working well as a way of providing incentives and ways of working, and increased dialogue on how issues were addressed;
- more clarity on the range of Apprenticeships, definitions, funding and employer commitment;
- raising awareness of alternative sources of funding or options, for example Adult Apprenticeships;
- increasing engagement of, and support from, senior management through clearer articulation of the business case for Apprenticeships and of wider benefits;
- for the partnership to consider and articulate career progression opportunities and progression pathways for apprentices in different parts of the health sector;
- for the partnership to further identify where the gaps are and where the development of new qualifications to support Apprenticeship frameworks could be of benefit, and link with appropriate sector skills councils to progress the development of these; and
- providing NHS trusts with the information and confidence to articulate their training needs and negotiate a contract with a training provider.

Ministry of Defence (civilian)

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has a long history of offering civilian Apprenticeships to enable craft and technician apprentices to learn various trade disciplines. Between 100 and 200 places are offered each year to adults and young people, based upon business need. Apprentices undertake standard-based

training which is designed to provide the MoD with craftsmen/women and the technical officers it requires to carry out its business.

Apprenticeships are offered to all age groups. Adult Apprenticeships are currently being used to upskill the existing workforce: 'We will recruit semi-skilled people and after a couple of years put them through the adult scheme if they show the aptitude.'

The vast majority of apprentices follow the SEMTA (the Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies) engineering framework at Level 3, which covers vehicle repair, technical services, engineering design, aircraft engineering, engineering maintenance and aeronautical engineering.

The on-the-job training provides technicians with the skills required to become a project manager. For craft apprentices the work is more hands-on in a workshop, repairing, modifying or testing equipment. Some technicians have the opportunity to complete a foundation degree or a full degree following completion of their Apprenticeship.

The Apprentice Policy Unit at the MoD has identified a number of challenges in using the Apprenticeship programme to train new and existing staff.

- Although completion rates are high (at around 89 per cent), some recent dropouts by the technicians have been due to people starting and then deciding they want to work with the equipment rather than in an office. It is really important that the job role is fully explained to all new recruits.

- Young people straight from school require additional help and support. One of the reasons why the Apprenticeship Policy Unit was created was because they felt that for young people the standard approach for management does not always apply. 'We need to select the right people to start with, encourage them through the bad times. The standard-based training programme needs to be busy, to meet the right standard and to give the apprentice meaningful work to keep them interested.'

- A great deal of enthusiasm and senior management commitment is required to resource the scheme properly. Managers need to review the performance of the scheme and the views of the external verifiers and to undertake checks of the log books. Skill competitions are used to reward apprentices among their peers.

- In addition to the technical training, administrative support is needed during the recruitment phase to arrange interviews and so on. In smaller units the costs per head can be prohibitive: 'it is only when Apprenticeship numbers grow [that] the cost per head of the administrative support is reasonable'. This is

partially linked to the capacity of the FE colleges to deliver the training: 'the

price provided may be the same for 6 or 12 apprentices, as they have to manage spare capacity'.

- It is also important to provide each apprentice with a mentor, who will provide the linkage between the apprentice and the employer and undertake regular visits to the college and brief the apprentices on what is being done in their particular area. They need to ensure that the apprentices know where to go to for advice and help.

The Defence Support Group at Donnington is the only MoD civilian site that has an in-house training school. The group currently has around 20 starts per year on the engineering framework, with completion rates in excess of 90 per cent. It has identified a number of practical issues in the day-to-day running of an Apprenticeship programme, as the comments below illustrate:

- on the mechanics of running an LSC contract: 'we have experienced a number of problems with the management software … for example, we will remove people from the database and they reappear. The software also does not cope very well with annual recruitment and expects us to be making changes more frequently';

- on the level of infrastructure required to manage the LSC contract: 'we employ a training manager, supervisor, clerk, NVQ assessor and two instructors to support around 20 new apprentice starts per year … The fund from the LSC only contributes to a fraction of these overheads';

- on the connection between funding and certification: 'the majority of the funding is tied to completion and all certificates have to be produced to receive the funding … However, it can often take months of chasing to get a college to produce the City & Guilds certificates';

- on the lack of consultation on framework changes: 'the length of the engineering framework has been reduced from four years to three years. However, increasingly different requirements are being added, some of which do not fit with operational training requirements'; and

- on the alternative approach to gathering evidence of skills and knowledge being applied in the workplace: 'when an acceptable internal training plan is available, more use could be made of sector skills council waivers to avoid the

often onerous administrative burden of gathering VQ evidence. The process of applying for dispensation is not readily available to scheme managers.'

Department for Work and Pensions

Government policy is a key driver for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to pursue Apprenticeships, resulting from Lord Leitch's report (*Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills*, HM Treasury, 2006) and the department's adoption of the Skills Pledge.

The Pathfinder Apprenticeship programme is facilitating the upskilling of the existing workforce. The DWP's chief executive was influential in getting the scheme started. DWP had experience of NVQs, and internal structures to support these. The department set up in-house programme delivery in 2007, at three regional sites, with a contract for 80 starts per annum. The team worked with the awarding body on the production of leaflets and posters, and advertised the programme on the intranet.

The programme is for existing employees; as the organisation is contracting, there are no plans to use apprentices as a recruitment route for young people. Employees self-nominate for this training, but service department needs are taken into account when allocating places. As all DWP apprentices are in substantive posts, there are no additional employment costs, other than release time for training. Apprenticeships are seen as providing a more rounded qualification than NVQs.

Initially, three frameworks were offered (customer service, business administration, management), and a fourth is now on offer (advice and guidance) to DWP employees around the UK. The Apprentice Programme Team is currently negotiating an expansion with the LSC to 1,000 starts over three years for cross-government provision. An additional 10 trainers are being trained, and will be in place by early 2009. DWP will be the in-house provider, but the team may work with some external delivery partners, while continuing to use existing training facilities. The change in funding arrangements, whereby only surplus funding is returned to the Treasury, means that the scale of Apprenticeships can increase significantly.

The apprentice programme manager commented: 'it is hoped that extending provision will have some useful side-effects of improving visibility of the programmes and sharing good practice, especially if cohorts are from differing organisations. Cross-government programmes will also aid smaller departments, which otherwise may have insufficient numbers for a programme.'

Potential barriers to take-up of Apprenticeship places have been addressed:

- release time for trainees – this has been overcome by fully involving line managers, inviting them to the first workshop, and ensuring that they receive regular feedback on progress; and

- duration of programme – it is currently about 15 months, but with the
  introduction of on-screen testing, this should reduce to 9 months.

There are two pilot schemes, in the West Midlands and in London. The apprentice programme manager said that 'these have generated a lot of interest from employees. Participants have benefited from the learning and development; a surprising number of trainees are over 40.'

Durham University

The Apprenticeship programme began in 1999 and the business case is well established. The assistant director of HR states that: 'the University benefits from growing its own workforce, training and developing young people for careers with us. The added benefit is that there are cost savings to the organisation.'

From the outset the university decided to set up internal provision for apprentice training for the business and administration Apprenticeship, because:

- in-house trainers understand the needs and culture of the organisation; and

- this ensures that the quality of training meets the needs of the client
  department.

'We have good awareness of apprentices across the organisation, with several departments being regular users of this recruitment, training and development route. Success is celebrated with an Apprentice of the Year Award, where the Vice Chancellor presents certificates. The business and administration Apprenticeship is the jewel in the crown.'

As job vacancies arise, HR reviews the potential for the post to be offered as an Apprenticeship. Typically, clerical-type jobs that are Grade 3 or below are identified as being potentially suitable for training positions. All apprentices are in full-time trainee positions, and are usually aged 16–19.

The university holds open days, when young people and their parents can find out about possible careers. Demand is high for these positions. Employing departments are provided with CVs from the pool of applicants, and carry out their own recruitment, as for permanent posts. Business and administration apprentices can start at any time during the year; there is capacity for approximately 24 trainees annually.

The apprentice scheme manager does not envisage a change in the number of apprentices: 'we are limited by how many can be accommodated into full-time posts each year, and we are at capacity for provision of the business and administration framework'.

Trainees have full employment status, but with a reduced salary during the

Apprenticeship. The majority of the apprentices are on the business and administration framework. There are also opportunities for apprentices in other disciplines, such as amenity horticulture and engineering, as vacancies arise.

The Training and Development Unit acts as lead contractor for all frameworks. Ofsted wants to see a really close relationship with sub-contractors, but the assistant director of HR says: 'this is tricky to manage because of the low numbers of trainees involved. We appreciate that Ofsted needs to ensure quality of provision, but we are expected to jump through the same hoops as a large commercial provider.'

Richmond Council

The Apprenticeship programme in Richmond Council is managed by Way to Work. Although Way to Work is part of the Education and Children's Services Directorate of the council, it is also a not-for-profit community business receiving funds from the LSC and employers (no funding is provided from Richmond Council) and is able to engage with young people and employers across other parts of London.

Richmond Council first started recruiting apprentices in 1997 and 18 apprentices are currently employed by the council. All the Apprenticeships within the council are participating on business administration or IT frameworks. Key benefits for the council have been identified by Way to Work as helping to tackle the worklessness agenda ('We are recruiting from a pool of young people who may not otherwise achieve their potential') and bringing a fresh dynamic into the organisation.

Way to Work has used a range of methods to promote the take-up of Apprenticeships across the council, including working to set up a youth employment strategy, raising awareness of Apprenticeships among both councillors and heads of service and working with the HR department to ensure that all vacancies below Level 4 are considered to be an 'apprentice vacancy'.

There have been a number of barriers, including departmental targets: 'we used to recruit into warehousing in the council's materials recycling facility … The targets for the facility are now much higher and as a result there is insufficient supervision for an apprentice.'

They are also restricted in what they can offer based on the supplier base: 'There are a few good suppliers locally, but for some of the frameworks we would like to deliver there just isn't the provision'.

The completion rate within the council has risen over the past two years to 80 per cent. Way to Work attributes this success to the careful matching of apprentice and employer and the clear identification of each of their roles and responsibilities. 'We will visit all the employers and undertake a health and safety inspection, write a job description, advertise the vacancy, and ensure employers have agreed to the terms and conditions – to pay £150 per week, with a maximum of 37 hours' working, and 6 hours allowed to work on their qualification … We will have an initial chat over the phone with interested young people and if they are still

interested they are then given a 45-minute interview and go through the vacancies.' The employer will then interview between four and six young people and shortlist two. The shortlisted candidates are then put in the workplace for two hours and given structured tasks. Once selected, the young person will be given an induction by Way to Work. If required, they will be put on an additional learning needs programme with one-to-one tuition.

Somerset County Council

Somerset County Council has been involved in the Apprenticeship programme since 1995. Initially it used frameworks in business skills – administration and finance. In the last two years it has taken on apprentices in customer service, IT and teaching assistants, and currently employs 32 apprentices.

In the past they only took on apprentices aged under 25. The Age Discrimination Act has made them reconsider this, and since 2007 they have also recruited adult apprentices. The council provides all the training in-house, with the exception of finance (they use a local FE college) due to a lack of in-house assessors in this area.

The council has identified a number of benefits from involvement in the Apprenticeship programme:

- retention – last year they took on 32 apprentices on a one-year, fixed-term contract and 90 per cent stayed on in a permanent role (the completion rate was around 95 per cent);

- recruitment – it is felt that Apprenticeships help to attract young people into an ageing workforce;

- the opportunity to mould young people to their ways of working and grow their own talent;

- maintaining a good local reputation; and

- supporting departments as Investors in People.

The council has participated in a number of innovative delivery methods and has been awarded funding from Invest to Save in conjunction with the Voluntary Sector Training Alliance. The Invest to Save award enables the funding of salary costs for 34 apprentices, who will be based in voluntary and community sector organisations. Some of the Apprenticeships will be co-hosted with public sector departments and agencies, which provides the apprentice with access to a broad range of work experience. It is also hoped that the co-hosting arrangement will increase the likelihood of one of the two employers being able to offer a permanent job at the end of the scheme. The additional benefits from the co-hosting arrangement are that, through shared responsibility for the apprentice, partners will improve their understanding of each other and their respective sectors.

West Midlands Police

West Midlands Police is the second-largest police force in the country and the fifth-largest employer in the region, with a total workforce of 14,500. The force has participated in the Apprenticeship programme since 1997.

The director of personnel feels there are a number of benefits from involvement in the Apprenticeship programme: 'Apprenticeships fit with the philosophy of the force as a learning and development organisation and help us to adopt people into the culture of the police service … Managers get to look at people, their performance, attendance and commitment to the organisation and their technical craft, and individuals get to see if the organisation is a career for them.'

In order to determine the number of apprentices they could take on, the force asked each of the operational command units what posts they found hard to fill. 'The harder-to-fill posts this year were in operations centres, customer service, IT and fleet services. We hope to grow our own vehicle technicians – once they are fully trained, they don't leave for 30 years until they retire.'

In the latest year 28 public service and 5 vehicle technician Apprenticeships were created. The places were for 16- to 24-year-olds from within the force area.

The director of personnel has identified a number of factors that have contributed to the success of the Apprenticeship programme:

- to encourage a breadth of applications, Connexions Birmingham and Sutton Coldfield College and Shaw Trust were used as partners to market the programme, as well as the West Midlands Police website;
- all candidates were given assistance with completing application forms, extra time at testing stations and the opportunity to discuss the programme with the force apprentice co-ordinator; and
- in the last intake of 2006–07, 100 per cent of apprentices completed the programme and 63 per cent of candidates moved into substantive roles within West Midlands Police. High completion rates are linked to robust recruitment methods and buy-in from the departmental managers: 'We asked the managers to contribute to 30 per cent of the salary costs for the apprentice, so they have a vested interest in the performance of the apprentice.'

There are, however, a number of barriers to overcome in implementing a successful Apprenticeship programme:

- available support from the LSC – although some individuals within the LSC are good, the complex structure of the LSC, with a number of organisational levels, sometimes means that it is difficult to get a response to a question: 'It took over

six months to get the answer to a question on funding';

- strategic links with the LSC – because of the way the LSC is structured, it cannot work across the whole police service. A potential improvement would be for the LSC to talk to the Association of Chief Police Officers, rather than discussing issues at a regional level;

- information about available funding – the LSC needs to provide organisations with greater clarity on what funding is available: 'You are promised the world, but when you get down to the small print you don't actually qualify'; and

- apprenticeships for existing staff – the majority of staff within the police force already have a Level 2 qualification: 'We would consider offering Apprenticeships to these if funding was available.'

Bristol Council

Bristol Council has been involved in the Apprenticeship programme since 2003. Initially apprentices were not employed. However, in the last year the programme has been re-branded under the heading of 'Building Futures' and changes have been made to ensure that the apprentice is employed from the outset.

The HR manager felt it was important to ensure that the apprentice was employed, to make the position more attractive and to attract the right people: 'it is hard to recruit young people and the previous scheme was not popular as the apprentices were not guaranteed a job'.

The impetus for Building Futures is to increase the number of young people employed by the council and to increase retention. A number of lessons were learned from the previous programme:

- the importance of assigning each young person a mentor and providing line managers with greater HR support;

- marketing the programme as Building Futures, rather than as an Apprenticeship;

- the need to offer a competitive salary: 'we have had considerable interest in the traineeships, as the competitive salary of £12,000 combined with the training makes the position more attractive'; and

- to avoid age discrimination, the council is ensuring that the scheme is open to applicants of all ages, and that recruitment is made on merit, regardless of age. The council has proposed to take steps to encourage young people to apply for

certain posts. This positive action is lawful under regulation 29 of the Age Regulations, as there is evidence that young people experience disadvantage in obtaining jobs in the council. This positive action aims to overcome and/or compensate for that disadvantage.

As part of the Building Futures programme, existing budgeted posts are reviewed either when they fall vacant, or as part of a service review or restructuring, to determine whether they could be realigned as a trainee or junior entry post. Service managers are asked to consider whether some of the existing (agency) administrative or clerical temporary posts in the council should be converted into junior entry posts. Each department or division of the council is asked to identify such posts, which will be targeted at, but will not be exclusive to, school and college leavers.

Through Building Futures, seven business administration apprentices will start in September 2008. The Building Futures programme also covers a wider range of non-apprentice training within the council, including planning and transport traineeships.

Royal Navy

The Royal Navy has a substantial Apprenticeship programme, with 11 different Level 2 schemes across seven establishments and approximately 2,500 new entry personnel per year starting on a scheme appropriate to their chosen specialisation, covering engineering, warfare, logistics and the Royal Marines. The Navy prides itself on being an employer that offers an Apprenticeship programme to all new employees.

The advantage of the Apprenticeship programme is that it provides a recognised civilian qualification that will be valuable to individuals once they have completed their service career. Apprenticeships also provide a foundation stepping stone to allow progression to further qualifications and offer a broad base – work-based learning with an academic structure.

Apprentices follow a structured career path within the Navy. For example, an engineering technician will complete a two-year training programme consisting of initial training at HMS Raleigh followed by specialist training at engineering schools HMS Sultan or HMS Collingwood. This early stage covers core naval training, Apprenticeship key skills, a technical certificate and the employment rights and responsibilities model. On completion of this initial training, work-based learning takes place in an operational context at sea and up to one year is available to complete the NVQ task book. The engineering technician will then spend up to three years working onboard ships worldwide, gaining experience before selection to promotion to a leading engineering technician. As part of their leading engineering technician training they will complete an Advanced Apprenticeship scheme. Approximately five years later they will come back to HMS Sultan as a petty officer and complete a foundation degree. Sea and shore experience will then follow, before selection to chief petty officer. At this stage, the chief petty officer is supported in topping up their foundation degree to an honours

degree at Portsmouth University. The advantage of this career progression shows the Royal Navy's dedication to lifelong learning, as it benefits both the individual and the organisation.

The Royal Navy is in a training partnership with VT Flagship Ltd and does not sub-contract training, so LSC funding is used to administer the Apprenticeship programme and invest in the learner: 'Keeping overheads low allows surplus LSC funding to be re-invested in projects which improve the learning environment for the individuals … We have funded a number of projects, for example to provide waterfront learning centres, which are aimed at providing greater access to learning for ship-based personnel.'

The Navy Command headquarters have identified a number of factors that have contributed to the success of the programme.

- It is essential to get complete buy-in from the hierarchy from day one: 'Apprenticeships were initially pushed from the bottom up, but it is vital to have engagement from senior management … We now have full engagement and continue to work hard to raise awareness of the value of Apprenticeships to both the individual and to the organisation.' Awareness across the fleet has been improved due to commanding officer briefings, ship visits and career progression initiatives.

- Apprenticeships are increasingly being used to attract young people into the Navy. In particular, they are a way of marketing the Navy to the parents of young people: 'Parents want their offspring to have a stable career ... the Apprenticeship demonstrates that we are dedicated to investing in young people and developing them throughout their career.'

- When an Apprenticeship programme is conducted entirely within a training establishment, completions rates are high (over 80 per cent). However, engineering schemes require the work-based learning element to be conducted in naval ships at sea. Often due to operational reasons, the NVQ task book was overlooked, resulting in poor completion rates. However, by fully embedding Apprenticeship skills into career training, the completion of the NVQ goes hand in hand with career progression. Internal public relations, internal verifier visits, briefings and the introduction of a Fleet Reward Scheme all contribute to encouraging the completion of NVQ task books. The reward is aimed at the ship rather than the individual, because it has taken teamwork within the ship to ensure that achievement and the teamwork should be celebrated. Completion rates for engineering frameworks are currently around

65 per cent, with a target of 90 per cent in 2009.

The Command headquarters feels that some changes could be made to simplify the delivery and use of Apprenticeships.

- The system is currently complex, with a large number of stakeholders, including sector skills councils, various standard-setting bodies and training providers. There is scope for simplification and standardisation.

- Many parts of the public services will need to sub-contract parts of the delivery to a training provider. Organisations require greater support in selecting a training provider to ensure that quality is maintained and sufficiently tailored to meet training needs.

- The funding and tracking process remains complex, although recent changes are welcomed. Funding is, however, still biased towards those aged 16–18, despite the costs of delivery being equivalent to that of older age groups.

Greater Manchester Fire Brigade

Greater Manchester Fire Brigade employs 2,500 firefighters and takes on approximately 100 new recruits each year. In 1998 the fire brigade introduced NVQs for all new firefighters. In 2002 this was expanded to give those aged 18–23 the opportunity to undertake a full Apprenticeship. The rationale for the original involvement in the Apprenticeship programme was to provide young people with a nationally recognised qualification.

In 2005 the fire brigade stopped their involvement in Apprenticeships and in 2006 stopped using NVQs. They cited a number of reasons behind their decision to withdraw from the scheme, including:

- the content of the framework did not fit with the needs of the brigade – the BTEC in particular was felt to be too academic and not sufficiently practical;

- recruits have a wide range of backgrounds and academic ability, so getting them to complete the technical certificate and key skills was felt to be a struggle; and

- the level of resources required to deliver the NVQs – the diversity of the job made it hard to generate sufficient evidence required for the NVQ assessment, particularly at the quieter stations. It was hard to justify to their auditors why so many resources were being spent on assessment and verification – up to April 2002, 380 members of staff had been trained as assessors and 53 as internal

verifiers across 41 fire stations.

The fire brigade now uses an internal training programme, whereby all new recruits undertake a 16-week course and then three years on-the-job training with a final competency test at the end. The training includes technical knowledge, although this does have a practical basis, for example dealing with fires and flooding, and use of ladder, pump and cutting equipment.

South Yorkshire Fire Service

South Yorkshire Fire Service commenced its Apprenticeship programme in 2004, following the assent of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The service uses the fire and rescue framework, which has had low take-up nationally. Other brigades have ceased to participate, or have decided not to participate, as the technical certificate is thought to be too difficult. The rationale for adopting the programme is to equip new entrants for the needs of the modern-day fire service.

The workforce development advisor comments that: 'the role of the firefighter has changed dramatically in recent years, with the emphasis changing from fighting fires, to prevention. There are fewer fires, and less loss of life than previously.' There is a team approach when attending incidents; firefighters work closely with other emergency services. Also: 'the service is looking for a different type of firefighter, with different skills and personal attributes. Fire officers spend more time in the community, and on prevention, which requires verbal and written communication skills.'

The training programme is for all recruits, but only those who are under 25 currently receive funding. Annual recruitment is significant, due to the retirement profile of the service. All new entrants are classified as trainees, but the under-25s are grouped together as apprentices. The Apprenticeships fit within the integrated personal development system, and include a BTEC and an NVQ (Operations in the Community Level 3). The system has three phases:

- induction – a three-month residential course, which covers the BTEC

  certificate;

- demonstration – proves competency; and

- maintenance – maintains competency.

In order to deliver the BTEC, the workforce development team reorganised the course content and brought it up to date. Trainees are allowed to take up to two years to complete the BTEC award. A trial has begun to use e-learning to deliver the assessment in phase 2; it is externally hosted.

The service is in partnership with Manchester Solutions, which provides guidance and support with regard to accessing LSC funding for firefighters under the age of 25. Manchester Solutions produces the audit trail of evidence required to fulfil the requirements of the programme.

The service is preparing proposals to expand the existing Apprenticeship programme to include all trainees in phases 1 and 2. They will be applying for funding for trainees over 25. The organisation is also considering Apprenticeships for non-uniformed roles, such as vehicle mechanics, customer service and administration.

The vocational standards group was formed to be the mandatory body for implementation of National Occupational Standards. However, brigades are not using the National Standard – instead they have found other ways to meet the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Services Act. A member of the group comments: 'organisations lack knowledge on funding; if the brigades worked together nationally, they could potentially access funding streams to develop programmes. Could the Government do more to publicise Apprenticeships and funding?'

Chichester College

Chichester College has a long tradition of involvement with Apprenticeships. This FE college offers a wide range of courses for 1,000 apprentices locally, and recruits 10 to 15 in-house apprentices annually on a rolling programme. In-house apprentices follow a variety of courses: business administration, childcare, horticulture, vehicle maintenance. The majority of trainees follow the early years childcare framework, working in the nursery which is run on a commercial basis for the children of staff and students. The organisation benefits from being able to utilise its Department of Studies for Work Based Learning, which manages all aspects of the college provision of Apprenticeships for its in-house programme.

The rationale for offering Apprenticeships is:

- succession planning;

- as a learning organisation, it gives the college an opportunity to be recognised as a responsible employer; and

- it provides young people with an appropriate range of transferable skills.

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Typically, apprentices are in the 16–17 age group, and are appointed into trainee positions, which are supernumerary. Trainees are allowed six weeks' job experience before the programme starts formally. During this period, they are paid £85 per week, while they experience the job skills element and get an appreciation of what the programme offers. The organisation does not experience problems in employing young in-house apprentices who have student friends attending the college.

Currently, individuals are attached to one department. The head of HR comments: 'we are considering a change to the business administration apprentice work experience, whereby trainees will move around different service areas to get wider experience'.

Towards the end of their training, apprentices need to apply for advertised

vacancies, where they may be in competition with external applicants. If there are no suitable jobs available, and if the college wants to retain them, qualified trainees move on to a college training contract, pending a permanent job offer.

The head of HR identifies the principal barrier to expansion of Apprenticeships as being employment cost: 'The college is planning a capital build project and needs to reduce operating costs to fund interest charges. We are starting to review staffing budgets, and looking at ways to reduce cost without affecting the service. This may result in fewer apprentices overall.'

The Army

The Army has a long tradition of using Apprenticeships to train its soldiers – an Army Apprentice College has been in operation in one form or another since the 1950s. In 2007–08, 5,044 (LSC target: 4,800) soldiers within the Army gained an Apprenticeship. There are 9,700 apprentices at any one time. The Army's framework achievement rate is 74 per cent, which compares very favourably with the national average of 62.7 per cent (2007–08). Its timeliness rate is 61 per cent against the national average of 44.9 per cent, despite the impact of high levels of operational commitments on soldiers' learning.

The Army's Directorate of Educational and Training Services (DETS(A)) aims 'to provide Apprenticeship opportunities at an appropriate level in support of arms and services directorates' whole-life development strategies'. The mission statement is for 'every soldier who remains in service to complete and achieve their Apprenticeship qualification'. DETS(A) is currently working to ensure that Apprenticeships are 'fully optimised' across each of the arms and services directorates.

Education and training within the Army is based around the soldier's whole-life development – to provide for their professional career as a soldier as well as to facilitate their personal development. The Arms and Services Directorate is the functional lead for the soldier's career path – from the outset to when they leave the Army. The Apprenticeship is one component of the soldier's professional development. It is up to the arms and services director to provide a whole strategy for the development of their soldiers, to ensure that they have sufficient, motivated and capable personnel to meet the needs of the service. A soldier will complete a work-based Apprenticeship, which invariably builds upon a technical certificate gained through their military trade training. This provides the technical underpinning for the soldier's trade.

The Army's training programme provides all recruits with the necessary functional military skills they require to fulfil their role. The additional funding from the LSC allows the Army to address the gap between the military skill requirements and the requirements of the sector qualification framework and provides the young person with a nationally recognised qualification. Thus, the Apprenticeship qualification allows the Army to provide young people with the accredited qualifications they need to develop their military career and to enable a future employer to recognise the economic contribution that ex-soldiers can make to companies and to the UK on leaving the Army.

Apprenticeships are currently used across 11 of the arms and services

directorates and a wide range of frameworks are covered, including hospitality and catering at the Defence Food Services School, storage and warehousing in the Royal Logistic Corps, engineering in the Royal Artillery and Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, and IT user (ITQ) at the Army Foundation College.

DETS(A) has identified a number of factors that have supported the expansion of Apprenticeships within the Army:

- A centralised contract through the National Employer Service has helped the Army to ensure consistency between work-based learning programmes across arms and services directorates. One quality manager works across three or four arms and services directorates to share good practice. The Army has also produced a bank of standard operating procedures, including self-assessment and quality improvement planning tools.

- In some directorates, for example the Royal Logistic Corps, the apprentice is required to progress to the unsupervised working level. They have incorporated the requirement for completion of some modules of the NVQ into the process for upgrading from Trade Class 3 to Class 2.

- The Army has ownership and control of the Apprenticeship programme. Potential training providers undergo a detailed tendering process against Army criteria. This selection procedure enables stronger employer ownership and ensures that the training complements existing military training. The training provider is expected to deliver the Apprenticeship for 90 per cent of the funding received from the LSC, while 3 per cent of the funding is retained centrally to administer the contract. The remaining 7 per cent is reserved for arms and services directorates to spend on educational projects for soldiers, aimed at improving the quality of provision or addressing equality of opportunity issues. For example, an arms and services directorate with 100 funded learners on an Apprenticeship may use the 7 per cent funding to fund more learners on a non-LSC programme using priorities set across the Royal Navy, the Army and the RAF.

- DETS(A) has recently launched Apprenticeships with the Army Air Corps and the Staff and Personnel Services Branch. It is looking to expand coverage to other functional areas, for example the Royal Military Police through Skills for Justice in policing and the Corps of Army Musicians through creative and cultural skills.

Sheffield Teaching Hospital

Sheffield Teaching Hospital has been proactive in the use and promotion of Apprenticeships for several years. Strong vision, coupled with a drive to implement the programme, has led to significant numbers of apprentices (around 100 per annum). Success is due to apprentices being used as a major recruitment route, with substantive posts being held against training positions. Departments receive a 50 per cent wage subsidy. The business case argues that apprentices are a cost-effective way to fill vacancies, and is built on the following factors.

- At the end of their training period, apprentices are ready to work – they understand the ethos, and have appropriate Entry Level qualifications.

- The programme reduces agency costs and recruitment costs.

The vocational education lead identifies that: 'appointing apprentices gives added benefits of fulfilling social and corporate responsibility, adds to the economy of Sheffield, and employs people from deprived wards who can walk to work'.

Until three years ago, the hospital was an accredited centre, but was experiencing problems, including a significant deficit. The hospital entered into a five-year strategic partnership with Sheffield College. After one year, the outputs were positive, with 60 healthcare apprentices, a good retention rate, and costs reduced by £150,000 per annum. Since then, frameworks have been extended to include business and administration, trades in estates, and pharmacy. The hospital now has 110 apprentices a year, typically in the 16–17 age group, but they can be up to age 25.

The vocational education lead comments: 'some managers needed convincing about using Apprenticeships as a major recruitment route'. Factors that have helped buy-in and success of the programme include the wage subsidy, supervisory training and a buddy system.

For the past three years, the hospital has run a successful employability programme, sponsored by Yorkshire Forward, for which funding has now ended. The scheme was evaluated positively by Leeds Metropolitan University. The hospital has negotiated £50,000 funding from Sheffield Work and Skills Council for a pilot. There is a cohort of 20, who are trained for a six- to eight-week period, delivered by the local college. The vocational education lead explains: 'The employability programme has a social inclusion agenda, and provides candidates who are job-ready. Participants start to get used to NHS terminology and learn key skills, customer care, and our philosophy. They are guaranteed an interview at the end of the course, and 90 per cent are successful in gaining employment.'

Herefordshire PCT

Herefordshire PCT was formed in 2000 and employs around 1,600 people. It is responsible for planning, providing and purchasing health services for people

registered with a Herefordshire GP.

The PCT has a contract with the local LSC to provide Apprenticeships and had been involved in both using and delivering Apprenticeships for 10 years. The PCT initially used business administration and customer service frameworks and then expanded to include more specialist frameworks, including childcare, learning and development, health and social care, health, pharmacy and dental nursing.

Training is provided by the trust's training centre. The training centre provides work-based and other training for employees of the trust and other organisations that operate mainly in the health and social care sectors, such as dental practices, nursing homes, residential care homes and early years settings.

A number of challenges have been identified in relation to expanding Apprenticeships across the health sector.

- Trainee pay scales under *Agenda for Change* have made it hard to promote Apprenticeships. The training centre has developed a cadet course that enables school leavers with no formal qualifications to prepare for higher education nurse training by fast-tracking the Apprenticeship programme. These trainees receive the Education Maintenance Allowance. However, it is felt that their non-employed status has contributed to a high level of non-completions.

- There is a significant difference in the take-up of the health and social care framework between acute and non-acute settings. Non-acute settings, such as care homes, are vocal in wanting training due to the care sector requirements for 50 per cent of the workforce to be trained to Level 2. In these settings it is possible to link the Apprenticeship to this requirement for Level 2 training. In acute settings where there is no requirement, it is harder to engage departmental heads. Where training is undertaken, it tends to be an NVQ rather than an Apprenticeship, and off-the-job training is done in staff's own time.

- The PCT feels that there is potential to expand Apprenticeships to other areas, such as a support services framework for cleaners, kitchen assistants and porters.

Kidderminster College

Kidderminster College is an FE college offering a wide range of courses for apprentices in the locality. It is a relatively small college, with 170 employees, of whom 70 are in administration and support roles. The college has 120 students on Apprenticeship courses. The programme is on a small scale, with three or four in-

house apprentices at any time, but is seen as being very successful. Currently, trainees are in business administration, IT, and customer service.

In recent years, Kidderminster College has developed its business by changing the courses it offers. A strategic decision was made to increase the number of courses that would attract young learners, and reduce the number of courses for adults. The business case is built on:

- the desire to recruit younger employees, to match the youth of the client base;

- succession planning – the profile indicates an ageing workforce;

- the need to build expertise in service areas that are expanding, for example IT;

- Apprenticeships only being offered where there are vacancies; and

- the desire to train new employees in how the organisation wants them to work, rather than to 'unlearn bad habits'.

The external contracts manager comments: 'the programme gives the college an opportunity to be recognised as a responsible employer, taking action for the future'.

The Kidderminster College model is that apprentices are only recruited against vacancies for permanent posts. The director of curriculum strategy and business development says: 'It has been an uphill struggle to persuade managers to consider an apprentice. I was surprised at how much resistance there was initially, but there is now a greater understanding of the benefits to the organisation. We have recruited some very good staff on completion of their Apprenticeships. Some managers now ask for an apprentice when a vacancy arises in their department.'

The director of curriculum strategy and business development adds: 'Signing the Skills Pledge has enabled discussions about Apprenticeships to take place at the senior management team level. We are now looking at our recruitment policy and opportunities to expand the programme.' Growth will come from service areas that have seen the successes in other departments and are now willing to adopt the model and additional frameworks, for example early years childcare.
If there is a business need for frameworks which the college does not deliver, then the college subcontracts with another provider (as it does for IT). There is no practical upper limit, because, as a provider, the college has sufficient capacity to be able to increase the in-house Apprenticeship places.

In addition to training and development initiatives for employees, the college offers free access to qualifications for employees and discounts on courses that do not lead to qualifications. It has not thought about offering Apprenticeships to existing staff, although NVQs are offered. An obvious problem with existing employees is that they would retain their full salary, but would need to be absent from work for the off-the-job technical input.

Annex C: Technical Annex

This section contains the technical details of the telephone survey conducted among 754 public sector employers during August and September 2008.

Sample design

Ipsos MORI compiled a list of public sector bodies using a number of publicly available sources, such as government organisation websites, local authority and college listings, and databases such as Edubase, which lists all public schools in England.

The survey comprises a census of all public sector bodies with the exception of schools, where a random sample of 500 schools were selected to minimise the burden on schools. The final sample comprises 2,202 public sector bodies (Table B1). Where recruitment was managed centrally, as in the case of county courts and crown courts, blood banks and prisons, **only** the site with responsibility for recruitment was included in the sample.

Response rates

Overall, 34 per cent of the organisations listed in the sample completed an interview. Table B2 gives a breakdown of the sample outcomes and Table B3 gives a more detailed breakdown of the sample by sector. Given the diversity of organisations in the sample and the lack of profile information about them, the survey data is reported unweighted.

Table B1: Response rate

	Number	%	Number	%	Response rate
Central government	211	8%	101	13%	48%
Education	968	37%	150	20%	16%
Health	462	18%	194	26%	42%
Local government	386	15%	232	31%	60%
Public protection	118	5%	42	6%	36%
Other	57	2%	35	5%	61%
Total	**2,202**		**754**		**34%**

Table B2: Final sample status

Sample outcome	Frequency	%
Number of public sector bodies	2,202	100
Achieved interviews	754	34
Unavailable during fieldwork period	567	26
Respondent refusal/quit during interview	96	4
No reply/reached maximum number of calls	785	36

Table B3: Breakdown of the sample by sector

Sector description	Aggregate description	Sample (N)
Ambulance trust	Health	12
Blood banks	Health	1
City council	Local government	37
Colleges	Education	370
County court	Other	1
Crown court	Other	1
Cultural and countryside	Other	10
Fire service	Public protection	45
Government departments	Central government	21
Higher education	Education	98
Local authority (borough)	Local government	168
Local authority (county)	Local government	35
Local authority (district)	Local government	126
Local health boards	Health	1
NHS foundation trusts	Health	52
NHS trusts	Health	211
Non-departmental public bodies	Central government	100
Other central government bodies	Central government	90
Other NHS bodies	Health	36
Police	Public protection	37
Police authorities	Public protection	36
Primary care trusts	Health	149
Prisons	Other	1
Probation	Other	38
Schools	Education	500
Transport bodies	Other	6
Unitary	Local government	20
Total		**2,202**

Fieldwork

The telephone survey was conducted by Ipsos MORI Telephone Surveys, which is a member of the Interviewer Quality Control Scheme and has Market Research Quality Standards Association quality accreditation. In accordance with this, the field supervisor listened in to at least 10 per cent of the interviews and checked the data entry on screen. All interviews were conducted using the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. Prior to starting fieldwork, interviewers were fully briefed by the Ipsos MORI project team. They also received full written instructions about all aspects of the survey.

An advance letter was sent to employers in the sample prior to fieldwork, providing them with information about the survey.

Fieldwork took place between 14 August and 12 September 2008.