

# Apprenticeships

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**'I knew I wanted  
to be a part of this  
ancient craft'**

# Apprenticeships

## Inside

**Page 4 Education without debt**  
Why degrees don't have to come with a massive price tag

**Page 5 Both sides of the story**  
An Environment Agency apprentice and his teacher tell us how it works

**Page 7 Unearth a gem**  
Apprenticeship opportunities are varied, so research is essential

**Page 8 Beyond the orthodox**  
From glassblowing to vineyard operative, there are apprenticeships for everyone

**Page 11 Get creative**  
Design and media apprenticeships can get you into some of the UK's most desirable companies

**Page 12 First steps in health**  
The NHS leads the way in health apprenticeships - but others follow

**Page 14 Management/Europe**  
How apprenticeships moved into business; plus lessons from the continent

COVER PHOTOGRAPH:  
JOEL REDMAN FOR THE GUARDIAN

## Introduction Sarah Jewell



*'The levy has opened up new training options'*

**T**he government's apprenticeship scheme closed 2017 in a state of ill health, with a 27% year-on-year drop in the number of people taking up trainee posts. Critics are blaming the complexity of the apprenticeship levy - a 0.5% payroll charge on all big employers that was introduced last year and is seen as too bureaucratic and costly.

However, the government remains committed to its aim of creating 3m apprenticeships by 2020 - and in this supplement we hear from employers, and apprentices who have undertaken training programmes.

Louie Schofield, who is doing an apprenticeship at the Environment Agency, has no regrets: "My apprenticeship is all about hands-on learning and I'll get a level 2 diploma in environment conservation."

We look at what to consider when choosing an apprenticeship, as well as the breadth of opportunities opened up by the apprenticeship levy - covering everything from automotive clay modeller to glassblower and computer games tester. There is also information on salaries, funding, employers and course providers.

*'Critics say the drop in new trainees is down to the complexity of the apprenticeship levy'*

# A qualification to suit every sector

New-style apprenticeships take their cues from industry, but are school leavers buying into their potential?

Neil Merrick

**A**pprenticeships are among the oldest qualifications in the world - but they are now getting a 21st-century makeover. Instead of mostly being targeted at young people learning a trade, apprenticeships are being seen as the best way of training people of all ages to learn skills across a huge range of professions.

Perhaps the most significant change is the increasing number of degree apprenticeships available, which enable students to earn money while in higher education. "I have the best of both worlds,"

says Chloe Williams, 19, who works at financial services firm Mattioli Woods while studying part-time at De Montfort University, Leicester.

Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, sees the growth of degree apprenticeships as a "massive game changer" that should help the government hit its target of 3 million people in England starting an apprenticeship between 2015 and 2020. "You have got no student debt and you are being paid," says Dawe. "You learn employability skills and resilience, and get a full degree at the end of it."

However, government figures show the number of people starting an apprenticeship in England between May and July 2017 slumped by 59% year on year.

Supporters of the scheme put this down to employer caution and the switch to new-style apprenticeships. For them, provisional figures for August to October 2017 - showing starts down by just 27% year on

year - point to signs of a tentative recovery. For critics, however, merely slowing down a runaway train does not amount to success.

But what of the apprentices themselves? Williams, who started her degree apprenticeship in business and management (equivalent to a three-year bachelor's degree) 18 months ago is satisfied with her training. "The lectures teach me things I can apply at work, and all the assignments relate to the company."

She spends most days at work, where she is employed as a client relationship manager, but once every eight weeks she spends two days at university.

Studying alongside other apprentices, including two from KFC, enables her to manage clients with increased confidence and to understand organisational strategy.

The expansion of apprenticeships at lower and higher levels incorporates training for lawyers, teachers and accountants, as well as jobs more usually associated with apprenticeships. New-style apprenticeships are based on revised standards drawn up by employer groups. To date, standards have been approved for more than 200, with a further 300 in the pipeline.

The expansion is being funded almost entirely by employers. Since last April, those with an annual pay bill exceeding £3m pay a monthly levy. This money is stored in a digital account for the employer to spend over the next two years.

Lindsey Parr, general manager of the Sherwood Manor pub in Nottingham, gained a level 4 apprenticeship in leadership and hospitality (equivalent to a foundation degree) last year. She completed her level 3 apprenticeship 13 years ago, at a time when they were not available at higher levels.

Parr, one of thousands of Greene King employees who take apprenticeships annually, hopes to take a level 5 qualification within the next six months. In the pub she manages, it is not unusual to find chefs, bar staff and front-of-house staff working towards apprenticeship qualifications - with

Standards for more than 200 new-style apprenticeships have already been approved; a further 300 are in the pipeline

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY



*'We are seeing clients taking up apprenticeships that didn't have programmes before'*

Alex Khan  
CEO, Lifetime Training

Parr's full support. "I love it," she says. "I never wanted just a job. I wanted to be the best general manager and make a career out of it."

Alex Khan, chief executive of Lifetime Training, an independent provider, is seeing more interest in apprenticeships at higher levels, with particularly "strong appetite"

for leadership training. And, he points out, it's not just because large employers that have traditionally run apprenticeship schemes want to recoup money they have paid through the levy. "We are seeing clients taking up apprenticeships that didn't have programmes before," he says.

The government is banking on levy-paying employers not spending all the money in their digital accounts immediately. Instead, part of the money raised is used to give employers that pay the levy a further 10% top-up when they buy training.

Training is available through colleges, universities and independent providers. Smaller employers beneath the levy threshold get at least 90% of apprenticeship costs paid by the government, but,

says Khan, they are still sometimes reluctant to cover the remaining 10%, which must be paid upfront.

Neil Carberry, managing director of people and infrastructure at the CBI, welcomes "the rehabilitation of apprenticeships", but would like employers to have greater flexibility when it comes to pooling money from the levy for joint training.

For while the levy is compulsory for larger employers, and there is strong government pressure on the public sector to back the target, training is still a matter of choice.

Therefore, adds Carberry, it is important that apprenticeships are widely regarded as valid and relevant to work, rather than just a government initiative. "We need to persuade more companies to get involved," he says.

**3 million**

The number of people the government wants to have started apprenticeships in England between 2015 and 2020

**90%**

The minimum share of apprenticeship costs paid by the government to employers beneath the levy threshold

# 'The default should not just be university'

Skills minister Anne Milton explains the vital role apprenticeships can play

Neil Merrick

Anne Milton is passionate about apprenticeships and struggles to see why anyone would think differently. "It's on-the-job training. What's not to like?" says the skills minister, who is also a qualified nurse.

At the time Milton became a nurse, there was no expectation that entrants to the profession would hold a degree. Although she is keen to stress that she is not anti-

higher education, she rails against "intellectual snobbery" that can put unfair pressure on young people to choose higher education.

Apprenticeships, she says, give people the opportunity to "sail ahead of their peers" who embark on a full-time degree (and incur significant debt). "The default should not just be university," says Milton. "No matter how bright you are, there are other options out there."

Having become skills minister last June, Milton is responsible for ensuring the government hits its target of 3 million apprenticeships that starts in England over a five-year period ending in 2020. She hopes that the likelihood of hitting this



*'It's important trainers, employers and apprentices have confidence in the system'*

Anne Milton  
Minister for skills

target will be boosted by an influx of apprentices from the public sector - in which employers with 250 or more staff are expected to have 2.3% of staff (including existing workers) starting an apprenticeship each year.

"The public sector wants nurses, teachers and police men and women," she adds. "There is a shortage of people coming through."

Following last summer's 59% drop in the number of people starting apprenticeships, she is confident numbers will rise, but declines to

say when or how rapidly. Employers that pay the apprenticeship levy need time to decide how they spend money accumulated in their accounts, she says.

In 2018-19, levy-paying employers will be able to transfer 10% of funds in their account to another employer, including employers in their supply chain. By 2020, meanwhile, she expects standards for new-style apprenticeships to be available wherever employers want them. "We will meet employer demand," she promises.

Other teething problems included last year's awarding of contracts for training involving employers that do not pay the levy. The Department for Education was forced to rerun the procurement process after seriously underestimating how many training providers would make bids.

But Milton is unapologetic, insisting the DfE "got it right" second time around. "It's important trainers, employers and apprentices have confidence in the system," she adds.

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# A degree-level education with none of the debt

For school leavers who want to earn, or older career changers, apprenticeships cover all the bases

Neil Merrick

Later this month, Buckinghamshire New University will welcome about 50 students who have chosen to study for a nursing degree via the apprenticeship route.

Based in High Wycombe, the university is one of a handful offering a degree apprenticeship in registered nursing for NHS trusts that not only have to recruit more nurses, but are keen to spend the money they pay each month through the apprenticeship levy.

Steve Dewhurst, director of apprenticeships at Bucks New, says there is no reason why degree apprenticeships should not be



◀ A range of traditional crafts are covered by apprenticeships  
PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY

viewed as equal to traditional degrees, given they take a similar amount of time and even have the added asset of work experience.

He says the differences are that apprentices already have a job contract, earn money as they study and avoid a student loan. For Bucks New, which generally specialises in vocational degrees, and also offers degree apprenticeships in management, engineering and digital technology, it's "evolution not revolution", says Dewhurst.

Apprenticeships take between one and five years to complete, with at least 20% of training taking place "off the job" - at a university, college or other training provider, or in the workplace, but away from the apprentice's normal job.

Since last year, new-style apprenticeships designed to better reflect job roles have been available for numerous occupations. Based on revised standards drawn up by the employers themselves, they include a final test or assessment, which has not always been the case.

Standards must be approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships. Sir Gerry Berragan, its chief executive, says the new apprenticeships should give employers greater confidence, given that they are more rigorous than old-style apprenticeships, which are being phased out. They include an assessment plan,

which shows that an apprentice can perform identified tasks or functions. "It's focused on achievement," he says.

He points out that 216 standards have been approved - ranging from level 2 (equivalent to GCSE) to level 7 (master's degree). For now, you are more likely to find a level 7 apprenticeship in management than in manufacturing, but, with a further 314 standards in the pipeline, the variety of courses available gets ever greater.

Patrick Bailey, deputy vice-chancellor at London South Bank University, advises against young people taking the apprenticeship route simply to avoid a student loan, but says they are a good option for those "who enjoy being around a job and learning at the same time".

Further education colleges also offer apprenticeships and, in some cases, collaborate with universities. Teresa Frith, senior skills policy manager at the Association of Colleges, sees one of their main benefits as allowing people to develop new skills, rather than just rubber-stamping what they already do.

"Apprenticeships are absolutely pertinent to work because you are learning in work," says Frith. "They provide a particular way of getting skills and behaviours you need to progress during your career."



## 'It's been a pleasure to see Louie progress'

What's it like to be an apprentice? We meet the teenager learning to prevent flood disasters, and the man teaching him how

Liz Lightfoot

The Environment Agency (EA) employs nearly 11,000 people throughout England in a wide range of roles, from scientists, engineers and geologists to policy advisers and enforcement officers. It also offers a number of apprenticeships. Here, we talk to Louie Schofield, an apprentice in its flood and coastal risk management area operations field team, based in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, and his manager, Tony Lunn.

**Louie Schofield, flood and coastal risk management apprentice**  
I've never been much of an indoor person, so this job outdoors is ideal. I was near the end of a two-year apprenticeship in environmental management at North Nottinghamshire College when my

teacher showed me the advert for the apprenticeship with the EA and said he thought it would be a good fit for me. I sent off my CV and got a phone call and now I'm getting up at 6.30am to come here! In the morning our team meets up at the depot in Gainsborough to discuss what we are going to do with the day and sort out the equipment. Every day is different and you don't know what might crop up - and I like that.

Our work is to maintain the river and flood defences, such as sluice gates, make sure the vegetation is healthy, and respond to any flood or pollution incidents. I think we're doing a very important job, maintaining the rivers and banks to protect communities. Our village was flooded in 2007, so I know what the consequences can be.

There's a lot to learn and I always work with someone more experienced; they never leave me on my own because safety is a very important part of the job and they want me to do things properly.

I think apprenticeships are brilliant because they give you another sort of education while providing pay at the same time - I get the apprenticeship rate. It's all about hands-on learning and I'll get a level 2 diploma in environmental conservation at the end.

**'I think we're doing an important job. Our village was flooded in 2007, so I know what the consequences can be'**

**Louie Schofield**  
Environment Agency apprentice

▲ The chainsawer's apprentice: Louie Schofield (right) and field team leader Tony Lunn  
PHOTOGRAPH: FABIO DE PAOLA FOR THE GUARDIAN

I took the driving theory test when I was 17 and the EA then paid for me to take driving lessons. I passed first time, so now I can drive to work and drive work vehicles. I live in a little village outside Retford and used to have to get buses. Getting into your own car opens up another world.

What I really like is the way they look after you; they always treat you right. There's always health and safety in mind. It's never just: "Do that!" It's always: "Are you wearing the right personal protective equipment?" Or: "Are you confident about doing it?" Tony is always there to talk to and he guides me and makes sure everything is going OK.

I'm applying for a full-time job with the team now and hope I get it, because I really enjoy working for the EA.

**Tony Lunn, field team leader, Gainsborough operations field team**  
Louie is training on the job but we also send him on courses for specific tasks, such as using chainsaws, winching and pesticide control. He also goes to college for classroom-based training in core subjects, maths and English.

My ultimate goal is to ensure that Louie is trained and has confidence in carrying out the tasks - always

with health and safety in mind. That is paramount. I always make sure that whatever he is doing he is working with someone skilled and experienced in that area. I see him on a regular basis to discuss his progress and give him any support he needs. I encourage him to speak out if he does not feel confident and wants a bit of help.

Louie is doing very well; he interacts well with the team and shows a real commitment to the work. It's been a pleasure to see him develop and progress. We are a government agency and have to be efficient and effective, so we need competent and keen people to work with us. The apprenticeship system is a very good way for people to learn how to do a job safely and efficiently - not just from those of us who do it every day but also via specialised training in the key areas.

There are good prospects for our apprentices. For example, one of the young women who came in on another training scheme is now managing a team. Jobs are advertised in an open competition, but once someone has successfully completed an apprenticeship with us we have more information about them and the way they work and interact with the team. That gives them a headstart.

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◀ Speaking to someone who's been through the programme will tell you a lot about what the apprenticeship is like

PHOTOGRAPH: HERO IMAGES INC

## Money in the bank and a boost to your career potential

Apprenticeships pay - but the precise amount varies considerably. Before you go splashing the cash, don't forget your living costs

David Benady

Apprenticeships offer a salary while you study and, unlike going to university, your employer pays the training fees. So there is no need to take out a huge loan to cover the cost of tuition and end up tens of thousands of pounds in debt.

But you still need to support yourself through the apprenticeship, which is at least 12 months long and could be as long as five years. The pay may be low, and varies greatly from scheme to scheme. From April, the national minimum wage for apprentices will be £3.70 an hour for anyone under 19 (or over 19 and in the first year of the scheme). This may sound like a decent wage to school leavers living at home, but much of it can be eaten up in travel expenses.

Check your contract to see if you can get help with travel costs, not only to the job but also to the training centre. Will the employer help pay for tools, clothing and training equipment? The contract will also provide information on statutory holiday pay and sick leave - some may even include a pension scheme, offer of a car, or help with relocation and leisure opportunities.

Government research into apprenticeship pay shows that in 2016, the average for a level 2 or 3 apprenticeship - equivalent to GCSEs and A-levels, respectively - was nearly £7 an hour. The lowest-paid apprenticeships were in hairdressing - a median of £3.47 an hour (when the national minimum wage for apprenticeships was £2.73) and childcare. The highest paid were in management; customer service; health, social care and sport; and retail. Some apprenticeships pay a lot more. For example, starting pay for Transport for London apprenticeships is £17,802 a year.

You won't be entitled to student discounts, but the National Union of Students has an apprentice extra card, and you may also be eligible for transport discounts. London apprentices can get an Apprentice Oyster photocard, which gives them 30% off certain journeys.

Mark Dawe, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, says the new degree-level apprenticeships can pay almost as much as a normal wage. But with apprentices not qualifying for government loans, they may struggle to live anywhere but at home, limiting them to local opportunities.

▼ Don't be afraid to ring round local employers to ask about apprenticeships

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY



## Unearth a gem: how to find the apprenticeship course for you

promising, the first thing to consider is the quality of the training on offer, says Peter Marples, group chief executive of training provider 3aaa Apprenticeships. "Does the training provider have any delivery centres? Do they have classrooms where that teaching can take place? Ask them where they are going to deliver the teaching - if it's the workplace, that's a big red flag for me." That could mean the training is simply a box-ticking exercise without adequate depth, he warns. That said, for some jobs, such as healthcare assistant, training while working will be important.

Marples also advises candidates to inquire about the qualifications on offer. Under new rules, apprenticeships are not obliged to offer qualifications at the end.

Meanwhile, Janet Clark, policy adviser at the National Education Union, says: "To really look out for good-quality training, focus on the training plan where the young person, the training provider and the employer all agree a training plan for the programme. If the young person is under 18, I would also get the parents or guardians to sign it off, and involve any unions that are active in the workplace."

She adds that, if possible, it is worth

talking to other apprentices who have been through a scheme to find out about their experiences.

If a young person knows the kind of career they are after, it is often good to find a big company with a long-established apprenticeship scheme, says Richard Marsh, apprenticeship partnerships director at business training company Kaplan. Those young people without a clear career ambition should ask a training provider or further education college about the apprenticeship opportunities on offer.

It is important to find out from an employer what percentage of participants starting a scheme actually complete their apprenticeship. "People don't usually fail an apprenticeship, but they may drop out," says Marsh. "The record of completion tells you if people have remained motivated, encouraged and supported throughout the programme."

It is worth asking the training provider or employer about the retention of apprentices, and how many go on to work for the company or get other jobs in the industry.

And it could be worth checking the online sites that rate apprenticeships, such as [ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk](http://ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk), where apprentices give marks out of 10 for their schemes, looking at the quality of training and support, and whether the employer offers help in career development.

Working conditions are also important, and pay rates and benefits can vary greatly. Apprentices should carefully scrutinise the work contract for conditions, hours and benefits.

There are plenty of excellent apprenticeships on offer. The time you put in to finding the right course will help you make the best of this learning opportunity - rather than ending up on an unsuitable apprenticeship and crashing out after a few months.

Dig deep with your research and chat to employers big and small to find the right match for your career

David Benady

With thousands of opportunities available, tracking down a great apprenticeship that offers both high-quality training and excellent working conditions can be a daunting experience.

Half of the apprenticeships graded by Ofsted in 2016 were found to be good or outstanding. But the other half required improvement or were inadequate. So how do you make sure an apprenticeship scheme will give your career prospects a boost, provide a decent living for a year or two, and be a positive overall experience?

Young apprentices will typically live at home so you'll want to track down local opportunities - and different areas tend to specialise in different sectors. Manufacturing and engineering, for example, will be more abundant in the Midlands, whereas London will have more places in banking, accountancy and media. It's worth ringing round local employers to find out what they provide. In England, you can start off by searching the government's Find an Apprenticeship website.

When you've found an apprenticeship that looks

### Just one more question ... Things to ask potential employers

**How many people drop out before the course finishes?** A high completion rate points to apprentices finding the course valuable and enjoyable.

**How many apprentices are kept on at the end of the scheme? How many find jobs elsewhere?** Somebody at each company should be able to give you these figures. Compare and contrast.

**What are the working conditions like? How does the pay stack up against competitors?** If the apprenticeship is well paid, the employer probably takes it seriously and will invest in the programme.

**What do people say about the apprenticeship? Has it been rated by Ofsted or an online rating site? Can you speak to any previous apprentices?** Second opinions on the value and success of the apprenticeship might be less positive than an official line.



## Meet Cara

Meet Cara, your insider on the EY Degree Apprenticeship in Digital Innovation. She went to school in Essex where her favourite subjects were Engineering, Chemistry and Drama. Now, she's a Degree Apprentice based in London, helping ambitious businesses transform through new technology.

### What's the EY apprenticeship experience really like?

"There's a real buzz here around technology. With such a digital revolution taking place in business as well as our personal lives, it's exciting to work somewhere that's at the cutting edge of all this change. One of the most surprising things for me has been how friendly and helpful the people are in this firm. From the assessment centre until now, I've felt totally supported and really enjoyed the experience."

### What's been your highlight so far?

"The first one came on my second day, when I met all my new Technology Consulting colleagues at a big departmental meeting. They gave me such a warm welcome - I instantly felt like part of the family. Since then, I've met people from so many different backgrounds, both inside EY and on our ADA technology college course. It's been really enriching to share perspectives and learn from each other."

### What are your top tips for others looking at apprenticeships?

"Pick an area that interests you and you'll always find new things to discover, improve yourself and stay engaged. A 'try anything' attitude will be your greatest friend. I've found great opportunities through putting myself out of my comfort zone to network and get involved in things that interest me. Don't shy away from what you want to achieve, there's every chance you'll succeed."

### Find out more and apply to the EY Degree Apprenticeship in Digital Innovation at:

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# Open the door to a new world of jobs

Interested in becoming a vineyard operative? It's just one of the more unusual apprenticeships on offer

Liz Lightfoot

Want to try something different? Apprenticeships are a way into unusual careers that you may not have heard of. Employers in niche parts of the economy are looking for people prepared to break the mould and step into their sometimes very different worlds. And you don't have to be a school leaver. Career changers, too, can become apprentices and learn whole new skills.

Take the wine industry, for example. England has 502 vineyards and 133 wineries according to the Wine Standards Board and it's a growing industry. If you have a taste for the finer things in life and want the chance to work outdoors, then training to run a vineyard might be the one for you. The chance to work the land attracted Lucy Walker when she saw an advert for an apprentice

**'It will be a struggle financially, but I'm getting paid to learn and I should be able to get a well-paid job in the end'**

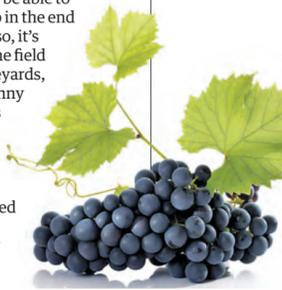
Lucy Walker  
Apprentice vineyard operative

vineyard operative. "I had an administrative job in an English language college," she says, "and then went to Egypt to teach English. While I was there, I volunteered at a sustainable farm in the Sinai and started to think about growing things and living off the land and ecology."

She is now at Plumpton College, East Sussex, on the two-year apprenticeship, working alongside a former apprentice who now has a full-time job at the vineyard. The college offers a range of courses linked to the wine industry and has its own vineyards, producing 40,000 bottles of wine a year.

"There are a lot of vineyards around here and they do need workers," says Lucy, 39, who lives in Hove. "And once I have qualified, I will be able to get work and potentially become a vineyard manager. I studied French and Spanish at university and that might come in useful if I want to work in different parts of the world, such as the south of France or northern Spain."

"It's a change of lifestyle for sure. I've given up a salary of £26,000 a year to live on £5,60 an hour for a 37-hour week. Next year, it will go up to £7,50 an hour. It will be a struggle financially but I'm getting paid to learn and I should be able to get a well-paid job in the end so it's worth it. Also, it's nice to be out in the field in the college vineyards, especially on a sunny day, and it pleases my dad! He has a huge wine cellar and while my mother was worried about my pay cut, he said: 'It's really interesting, go for it,'" she adds.



▲ Apprentices in automotive clay modelling get to transform design drawings into full-size models

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY

# 'It was hypnotic; I fell in love with it'

Tyron Sheppard, 23, was working as a cleaner before he embarked on a two-year apprenticeship as a glassblower. It led to his dream job

Interview by Liz Lightfoot

I fell into glassmaking really, like most glassmakers. Now I couldn't think of doing anything else. I like to come into work because I enjoy my job. There's something different every single day and no matter how long you have been making glass, you will always be learning something new.

Before joining Bristol Blue Glass as an apprentice, I did a two-year diploma at City of Bristol College and then another two-year diploma in video games design to eventually become a concept artist. I was also working as a cleaner to get money to live off. My friend Reece studied business for two years and worked at Blue Glass in Bristol, learning how the business works. He found his way into the workshop and got very good at glassblowing. He would come back with pictures of what he had made and I knew that I wanted to be a part of this ancient craft.

I went in to take photographs and it was hypnotic, in a sense, watching people work the molten material, and I just fell in love with it. A vacancy came up for an assistant glassblower and I got the apprenticeship. They put me on a course at Bridgwater and Taunton College and the tutor used to come here once a month to see me, because it was a long way for me to travel to the college by train. I was getting paid £6.95 an hour and it was a lot better than cleaning, plus I got a level 3 diploma in craft skills for creative industries/advanced level apprenticeship in creative craft practitioner.

When the two years were up in December, I was taken on as an assistant to the maestro, David Barry, who is in charge of the hot floor. Every glassmaker works slightly differently and each piece is like a fingerprint because makers have their own style. Of course, we measure with calipers to make sure we get the sizes correct, but we work in the style called free blowing so everything is unique and 100% handmade, and that's what I love about it. The temperature of glass in the furnace is 1080C, the same as an erupting volcano, and it has to be cooled slowly, over 18 hours in an oven at 510C. It's going to take a lifetime to master the skills for this craft but I wouldn't have it any other way.

**'No matter how long you have been making glass, you will always be learning something new'**

Tyron Sheppard  
Assistant glassblower



PHOTOGRAPH: JOEL REDMAN FOR THE GUARDIAN

## Unusual apprenticeships

There are lots of unorthodox apprenticeships around. Here's a taster:

**▲ Automotive clay modeller**  
Today's cars are designed with the use of sophisticated computer technology, but when it comes to a model of the finished product they turn to old-fashioned clay. Modellers transform the design drawings into quarter or full-size 3D models.

**Farrier**  
Blacksmiths can make horseshoes but, by law, only registered farriers and their apprentices or qualified veterinary surgeons are allowed to fit them. It's an ancient craft but it is unlikely to be taken over by technology.

**Radio pluggger**  
You might think that hit singles get to the top on pure merit. Think again. Behind the scenes is an army of radio "pluggers" employed by artists and labels to lobby radio stations and get on their playlists. It can be a lucrative career, but not one for the fainthearted.

**Stable hand**  
If you love riding, then this is a way to make your passion your career. You train to manage the yard, which means responsibility for the



overall welfare of horses. But you will also deal with trainers and vets, so you've got to like people as well.

**Computer games tester**  
A dream job for gamers, but it could be a test of your patience. Testers need to check different levels, detect and find the cause of faults, compare games with others on the market and even check the spelling.

**Beekeeper**  
You've heard of dairy farming and pig farming but what about bee farming? The UK produces only 14% of the honey it consumes compared with the European average



of 60%. Bee farmers are taking on apprentices to help them improve crop yields, so this could be a growth area post-Brexit.

**Diamond moulder**  
Once you've mastered the skills of jewellery making, you can take a leap into the luxury market through an advanced level apprenticeship in diamond mounting. You will be handling valuable stones and, one day, you might be able to afford them.

**Trainee spy**  
Get an insight into the hidden world of national security and help keep the country safe. Learn to code break, build electronic equipment and run telephone interceptions.

# Beyond hard hats and oily overalls

Apprenticeships are moving out of their traditional blue-collar territory into sectors as diverse as finance and food and drink

Richard Doughty

It is too early to say if the apprenticeship levy - a tax placed last April on large UK employers with a wage bill of £3m-plus - will affect the traditional popularity rankings for apprenticeships across all industry sectors. Much will depend on how employers spend the levy funds they claw back from the government to support apprenticeship provision.

Government figures for 2016-17 show the public sector (including health, public services and care) in first place. Other popular sectors include business, administration and law; retail and commercial enterprise; engineering and manufacturing; and construction.

Why are some sectors more popular than others? Traditionally, apprenticeships in engineering and construction have been recognised as solid career progression routes. Ann Watson, CEO of Semta - the engineering sector's employer-led skills body - says engineering apprenticeships have long been a "tried and tested, employer-backed and valued route into a rewarding and enjoyable career".

At its annual skills awards in March, young apprentice Pippa Dressler-Pearson won the Best of British Engineering award; she now promotes the apprenticeship route. "You won't be an apprentice forever, but when you come out the other side, you will really feel you have achieved so much," she says.

Watson adds that a preliminary survey of engineering apprentices last year showed 98% were happy with their career choice. She cites TUC research that 86% of engineering apprentices stay in the sector for at least five years after finishing - proof that employers really trust their apprentices and value the skills they have gained.

"Engineering apprenticeships are not stigmatised," says Teresa Frith, senior skills policy manager at the Association of Colleges (AoC). "You get really good buy-in from companies as there is a strong collaborative partnership between employers and providers in developing apprenticeships."

Andy Cheshire, managing director of independent

▼ Pippa Dressler-Pearson, winner of Semta's Best of British Engineering award

training provider CQM Training & Consultancy, says the food and drinks industry, which accounts for about 85% of his company's client base, "has really embraced the new-style apprenticeships as a way to breed future talent in factories and supply chains."

"Within two or three years, young apprentices, starting at 18, can be technical operators, changing over production lines, monitoring all the throughputs, driving performance. It's a tremendous responsibility."

CQM, which won the 2017 Training Programme of the Year title at the Food Manufacture Excellence Awards with its client, Bakkavor Hitchen Foods, has picked up a string of Young Talent of the Year awards over the years. Its secret? "We challenge our apprentices to make substantial improvements to the businesses they work in. We also work really hard to enable our employer clients to see us as an extension of their operation."

But it's not just the traditionally apprentice-friendly sectors that are embracing them. Radical changes both to how apprenticeships are funded, through the levy, and

**'Employers ask how they can get their levy back and start looking at their whole recruitment strategy'**

Mark Dawe  
CEO, AELP

employers' sway over training standards have encouraged more apprenticeships to be created.

In fact, the range of apprenticeships on offer is mushrooming, given that only 15% of levy payers were taking on apprentices before the apprenticeship levy came into force, according to Mark Dawe, CEO of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers.

"Employers ask how they can get their levy back through funding and start looking at their whole recruitment strategy. Could their new recruits and/or existing staff become apprentices?"

The finance sector is a case in point. "It had no apprenticeship tradition and yet has really worked together as a sector to develop a range of standards for different employment situations," says Frith.

Ben Murphy, head of Barclays' programme management for apprentices, points out that the bank has 700 apprentices, and records an 86% retention rate among its higher apprentices once qualified.

"We want to create a pathway to progression," he says. "We have a suite of apprenticeship programmes and aim to create a structure of succession planning within our apprenticeship community and also for internal colleagues. We want to offer equal opportunities for all."



PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY

# Superdrug Apprenticeships

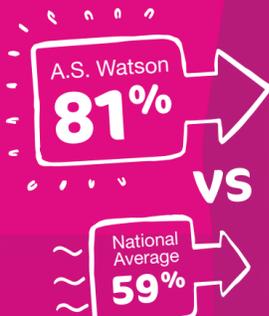
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## Media makeover: how TV turned to apprenticeships

Creativity is big business in the UK - and the key players are turning to apprentices to find their new talent

Liz Lightfoot

The traditional view of the apprentice has been transformed in recent years, as design and art studios, media companies, record labels, music promoters, fashion houses or photography services vie to spot new talent. There are apprenticeships for school leavers at 16 and 18, for graduates, and even for career changers who want to join the creative industries - a sector that brought in £91.8bn to the UK economy in 2016 - or £10.5m an hour - according to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Young people should "look behind the camera" to find the many different roles in the creative industries, says Nicole Suter, standards associate at Creative Skillset, an organisation that supports talent in the screen-based industries. "If you study the credits that come up after a film or television programme, you will get some idea of all the different roles that contribute to a production - and there are even more opportunities behind the scenes," she says. Now is an exciting time for

apprenticeships, says Laura Boswell, an industry talent specialist at Channel 4. "Attitudes to apprenticeships generally have changed quite a lot, and for the better. We are taking on more apprentices than ever before - 17 last year - and, alongside other broadcasters, we're offering new opportunities, such as in digital marketing and cybersecurity," she says.

Other creative industries are also getting in on the act. Walk into any local pharmacy and you're likely to be looking at Tilly Greer's handiwork. As an artwork operator with GSK, the global pharmaceuticals company, Greer is part of the team that designs packaging for its consumer healthcare products.

Although only 21 years old, Greer has an interesting job with a competitive salary and exciting prospects - all of which came about as a result of her on-the-job training on the company's design apprenticeship scheme.

James Barry left school after taking AS-levels and enrolled on Channel 4's apprenticeship programme. "I didn't go on to do A-levels because I knew university wasn't for me - it doesn't suit my learning style. But when I was 16, apprenticeships weren't as promoted as they are now, so I went into the sixth form," he says.

Barry became a digital and creative media apprentice in 2014, and now has a permanent role with its All 4 team, helping to arrange photoshoots and liaising with

production companies. "I always knew TV was something I wanted to work in but I had no idea about the jobs and opportunities, and I'm still learning now about jobs I never knew existed," he says.

Alim Jalloh, 22, who was one of the first cadre to be recruited to the new junior content producer apprenticeship last November, dropped out from a media and public relations course at university after his first year. "I'd done a lot of media internships and what I was struggling with at university was the theory. In my first month I had to do an essay on Marxism and the proletariat and bourgeoisie, and I found it hard to relate that to public relations."

"In the first week of my apprenticeship at Channel 4, I was heading a campaign for C4 Simpsons Day, encouraging more people to watch it and getting viewers to tweet about their favourite characters. Every day I learn something new and take on new responsibilities," he says.

Although the apprenticeships offered by the creative industries are becoming more plentiful, there could be many more if the scheme were more flexible, says Seetha Kumar, chief executive of Creative Skillset. "As our sector has a high proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises and extensive project-based and freelance working, we need flexibilities - such as apprentice sharing and transferable digital training vouchers - if we want to increase take-up and benefits," she says.

Meanwhile Greer, who has three A-levels and two AS-levels and turned down two unconditional university offers for GSK's artwork and design apprenticeship, has no regrets. "I wanted to start earning but I also wanted to continue to learn. At GSK I have been able to do both. The company paid for me to attend college one day a week to study new techniques and gain qualifications. It was the best decision I have ever made."

► The big media companies run a variety of apprenticeships  
PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY



Where do I sign up?

Want to join the creative industries? Here are some examples of the apprenticeships on offer:

The BBC offers a range of apprenticeships for school leavers, including broadcast operation, business management and software engineering. Applications opened on 5 March for its 22-month digital journalist apprenticeships, starting in September. Applicants need five GCSEs, including maths and English, at grades A-C.

ITV opens its apprenticeship vacancies in June for a September start. It offers opportunities across the UK in apprenticeships that include newsroom assistant, junior journalist, talent co-ordinator, business services and business services.

Channel 4 offers apprenticeships in London, Manchester and Glasgow. Apprenticeships include press and publicity, commissioning, 4 Creative, and audience technology and insight. Applications for September close on 30 March.

The Royal Opera House starts to recruit in May for backstage apprentices. The apprenticeships, which start in September, include costume tailoring, wigs and makeup, prop making, scenic art, carpentry and metalwork and technical theatre.

Arch Apprentices is a training provider that places apprentices with employers and provides the back-up training. It places young people in creative jobs with both global companies small creative and digital businesses.

UK Music is an industry-funded body for the producers of recorded, published and live music in the UK. It administers a music apprentice scheme with employers across the UK. The range of apprenticeships available includes promotions and management, logistics and distribution, brands account assistant, and communications and digital assistant.

Creative Skillset works with the UK's screen-based creative industry to develop skills and talent. It supports apprenticeships and helps to establish the standards of training received by apprentices.

Creative and Cultural Skills promotes work and learning for young people in the creative industries, and helps draw up apprenticeship training standards, in conjunction with employers. The organisation also works with further education colleges across the UK to help them deliver new apprenticeships.

▼ Boom times: the creative industries are worth nearly £100bn a year  
PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY



# First steps in health and care

Apprenticeships have always been a key supply line for the NHS - but now a broader range of care providers are getting in on the act

David Benady

The health and care sectors offer a wide range of apprenticeships spanning careers such as nursing, working in a pharmacy, dental nursing, healthcare technician or clinical healthcare support worker. Then there are social care apprenticeships - which involve learning to care for adults with learning disabilities, autism, dementia, or drug dependency, or working with homeless people or those at the end of their life.

Apprenticeships in the National Health Service (NHS) have

been given a boost with a new government target that public bodies should have 2.3% of their workforce on apprenticeships. There is also a new nursing degree apprenticeship so nurses can qualify while earning a wage.

Sandwell and Birmingham hospital trust takes on apprentices in a range of roles, from nursing and theatre assistants to medical engineering and business

*'Coming in as an apprentice gives them that live experience out on the wards, getting a taste of what it is really like'*

Maxine Griffiths  
Widening participation manager, NHS

administration. Maxine Griffiths, manager of widening participation at the trust, says most apprentices are looking to get some practical experience of nursing.

"An apprenticeship gives them a taste of what the NHS is all about. A lot of young people are aspiring to be nurses and they don't want to go straight down the university route. Coming in as an apprentice healthcare support worker or healthcare assistant gives them that live experience out on the wards, working with patients, getting a taste of what it is really like."

The trust is a training provider, so offers training in-house, but also works with external training companies. One of the ways it is aiming to meet the target of having 2.3% of workers as apprentices is by looking at some of the routine jobs in the trust that can be turned into more specialist roles.

Health and care is a huge and expanding sector, with plenty of jobs on offer - not only in the NHS but also at local authorities, private care providers and voluntary organisations. Peter Barron, a project manager at training organisation Skills for Care, says adult social care has the largest proportion of apprenticeship starts across the economy, plus a high completion rate, with many ex-apprentices finding work in the sector. "There



▲ Apprenticeships in the health and social care industry cover everything from working in a pharmacy to helping people with autism

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY

are an estimated 1.58m jobs in this sector, and lots of opportunities all over the country."

Eden Futures, which runs care centres for people with learning disabilities and autism, offers an apprenticeship course that leads to a diploma in health and social care.

Human resources director Tuesday Wilmott says: "It is a really varied, challenging role at times, but people can really get a lot out of the work we are doing."

The company works with training provider Lifetime, which assigns an assessor to each apprentice to work with them on their diploma. Each assessor will have regular meetings with their apprentices, assessing their practices while they are on shift and getting feedback from their managers as to how they are

progressing and whether they are satisfying the diploma's criteria.

"We offer a blended approach, with e-learning, face-to-face learning, on-the-job mentoring and coaching. We run bespoke training in autism, managing mental health, diabetes, epilepsy, managing challenging behaviour and positive behaviour support, which is about how staff learn the skills to support people who may at times be challenging," says Wilmott. She believes this is good preparation for the careers that await: "It gives people who may be new to health and social care a really broad understanding of the needs of the people that they will be supporting."

Many early-stage apprenticeships in health and care pay the minimum wage or slightly above, although pay increases for higher-level apprenticeships. But, perhaps more importantly, the health and social care sector offers plenty of opportunities for people with the right values to launch successful careers that could take them all the way up to director level.

## Health checks What you need to know

### Leading the field

Health, public services and care was the biggest area for new apprenticeships in 2016/17, with 138,000 courses started - up 7,000 from the year before. Other major apprenticeships sectors, such as business, retail and engineering, all recorded declines.

### Demographics and demand

The need for nurses, healthcare assistants and social care staff is growing strongly. There is an increasing number of elderly people in need of care as the population lives longer. Skills For Care says there are, on an average day, 90,000 unfilled vacancies for social care jobs in England, predicting the sector may need between 350,000 and 700,000 new starters by 2030. The NHS has more than 15,000 vacancies on its website.

### Don't take my word for it

There are plenty of excellent opportunities for apprentices in hospitals and with care providers, but somebody has to be top dog. Apprenticeship comparison site ratemyapprenticeship.com puts Anchor Trust - a not-for-profit group providing housing, care and support to people over 55 - in pole position.

### Made-to-measure training

The new standards, which set out what an apprenticeship should cover, are developed by employers and replace the old system of "frameworks". In health and social care, the body responsible for overseeing standards is Skills for Health. It has created standards for roles such as adult care worker, healthcare science assistant and healthcare support worker. There are also non-clinical or care roles related to the health sector, such as business administrator, hospitality manager and data analyst.

*'You learn skills you can take anywhere'*

*'You need to have a strong stomach, be very understanding and have good listening skills'*

Justine Smith  
Health and social care apprentice



Justine Smith's time as a health and social care apprentice helped her make some key career decisions

Interview by David Benady

I took a level 2 apprenticeship in health and social care based on a ward at Sandwell hospital in West Bromwich. It lasted a year, finishing in February. When you first start, you have the basic training, such as life support and handling, so you know how to move a patient's bed correctly. I was mentored by a qualified healthcare assistant. I stayed by their side and they taught me the day-to-day role. I would shadow them to find out how they do things, then take those skills out into the big bad world on my own.

I worked on the assessment unit where we assessed the patients and allocated them to the specialist wards. I was doing a lot of basic hygiene - I'd come in and help patients get washed and changed and make their beds, making sure they were fresh for their breakfast. Then throughout the day I took their blood pressure, respiratory rates and heart rates, and gave that information to the nurses. Every day is different on the ward. It is a 37½ hour working week with shifts of either 7½ hours or 11½ hours.

This opportunity came to me through my mum, because she is a nurse. To get on the course you need the basic English, maths and science GCSEs and you qualify after a year with a level 2 qualification in health and social care.

I would say that you need to be very strong willed and you have to be very talkative, because you need to be able to speak when you don't

▲ Justine Smith on the ward at Sandwell Hospital in West Bromwich

PHOTOGRAPH: JONATHAN CHERRY FOR THE GUARDIAN

understand something. You need a very strong stomach too, and you need to be very understanding and have good listening skills.

I did want to be a nurse but this has changed my mind a little, because it is something that I don't believe I could do - it is very emotional. When a patient passes away that is the biggest thing for me - anything else I can deal with, but every time a patient passes away it cuts me very deeply. I will stay on the agency side of things and work as a healthcare assistant part-time.

But the experience and training will help in other careers because you learn skills that you can take anywhere, such as safeguarding, conflict resolution and basic life support. I'd like to go into a teaching role and those skills will be really helpful dealing with the kids.

The support you get in the training is something you can take with you anywhere.

Do you want to utilise low cost apprenticeship training for your business?

## Degree Apprenticeships at the University of Greenwich

The Faculty of Engineering & Science currently offers the following apprenticeships:

### Engineering

Chemical Engineering  
Civil Engineering  
Digital Technology Solutions  
Embedded Electronics Systems  
Manufacturing Engineering  
Product Design and Development

### Science

Chemistry  
Pharmaceutical Science

### Contact:

FES-courseinfo@gre.ac.uk for more information.



# Levy creates spike in management apprentices

Barclays and Boots among businesses to benefit from graduates' skills and training

Richard Doughty

The start of this academic year saw a massive 424% increase in the number of management apprenticeships at level 4 and above, according to figures from the Department for Education. Numbers rocketed from 740 in August to 3,880 in September. Why so many?

A key reason is the level 6 chartered management degree apprenticeship, launched in 2015 and funded via the apprenticeship levy from May last year. "It's getting [students] the best of all worlds," says Petra Wilton, director of strategy and external affairs

at the Chartered Management Institute. You get a full degree from a recognised university, work-based learning from an employer and the chance to have a practical impact on your workplace, plus professional recognition through the degree's chartered status - three in one. Plus you're getting fully paid to do the degree at the same time as working."

Widening access to the degree course, now available at 31 UK universities, is increasingly attracting employers and potential recruits alike. The latest count by the institute reveals 1,200 registered apprentices, rising to an estimated 3,000 by the end of the year.

Wilton says the practical nature of the programme has many advantages, particularly for women. "You're not being pulled out of the workplace to upskill or reskill; it's a great way to build confidence and credibility for women in middle

Management apprenticeships are especially popular with women  
PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY



**'It's allowed me to start a career early with lots of support, and get on the property ladder at 21'**

Bethany Barnes  
Graduate apprentice

new ways of thinking into the workplace," says Emma Metcalf, the company's senior apprenticeships and education manager.

"Our existing workforce get to share their experience at the same time, and contribute to the success of the apprentice."

One question that has been raised is whether employers will start to use the bulk of levy funds to develop staff through degree apprenticeships at £27,000 a shot, rather than spend the money on much cheaper, but far more labour-intensive, level 2 and level 3 apprenticeships. The latter can be seen as risky, because the younger learners who enrol on these courses are more likely to opt out of the course or change career path soon after they qualify.

Wilton dismisses these concerns: "Only 2% of the entire levy pot has so far been used to fund degree apprenticeships."

management by doing learning in a supported way. In fact, women returning to work see it as a way of rebooting their careers. It's also tackling a huge deficit in management training."

Barclays' first cohort of 24 apprentices graduates this autumn. Among them is Bethany Barnes, 21, who gave up a traditional university place at Swansea for a more practical approach to learning.

"It's allowed me to study, work and get a professional qualification in one go, and have no debt at the end of it - a huge incentive. To have a career, start it early, be on a clear career track with loads of support - and get on the property ladder at 21 ... I'd never have done it otherwise."

Meanwhile, Boots has taken 20 degree management apprentices since 2016. "They help to create a motivated workforce by bringing



German employers work closely with local government, unions and chambers of commerce on their apprenticeships  
PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY

# A European rite of passage

Why do some countries embrace apprenticeships more readily than the UK?

Richard Doughty

Germany's strong manufacturing base owes a debt of gratitude to an apprenticeship system that is the envy of Europe. Austria and Switzerland, too, have vocational training programmes that allow them to punch above their industrial weight. So what can the UK learn?

One big difference between Germany and the UK lies in the perceived role of an apprenticeship, says Ulrich Hoppe, director general of the London-based German-British Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

In Germany, apprenticeships are seen more as a rite of passage - part of a young person's education. Employers see themselves as educators and think long-term. They are expected to provide a high standard of training for their apprentices who, in many ways, are treated more like students than young workers. Employers work very closely with local government, unions, schools and chambers of commerce (which coordinate the apprenticeships in their area).

Apprentices' wages are typically pretty low - starting at between €450 and €800 (£400-£700) a month - which means smaller companies can afford to take on apprentices and get good value from the arrangement. In return, employers respect their apprentices and go the extra mile to ensure they pass their final exams and gain a proper job.

At international transportation

company Logwin in Bremerhaven, for instance, training manager Biagio Aprile says the firm takes on two apprentices a year (10% of the workforce) who will then spend two mornings a week at vocational college (in Austria, where the company also operates, this can be one three-month block of study instead). Logwin, at its own expense, puts on extra training sessions to help answer any queries before the apprentices take their exams.

"As a small company, we cannot guarantee to take our apprentices on after qualifying - it depends on our needs - but we help them find work elsewhere," says Aprile. And if no other Logwin branch has a vacancy, he will recommend them to rival companies.

This is accepted by apprentices themselves. "The branch I work in is not big, so I can't imagine they would take on all their apprentices," says Elisa Mehrrens, 22, a forwarding agent apprentice at Logwin.

**'We know that 94% of all graduates are being employed at the level of skilled labour or above'**

Thomas Mahr  
Director of IBW, Austria

In the UK, Hoppe finds young people view apprenticeships more as salaried jobs with training - and may move on in the jobs market if an employer does not deliver. There is peer pressure regarding pay, while higher salaries mean fewer companies can offer apprenticeships - so there is less choice in training.

However, other continental ideas could be more easily adopted.

In Austria, where membership of the local chamber of commerce is mandatory for all employers, a visit to one of several special careers advice centres across the country is obligatory for pupils aged 14.

These centres offer aptitude tests, information and advice, and run through all the career options.

A student's home region will often determine the path a school-leaver takes towards work. According to Thomas Mahr, director of IBW, a national research body focusing on education and the economy, half the brightest students living in Austria's western regions, which are heavily influenced by the handcraft and tourism industries, do apprenticeships; university is more popular in urban areas.

Retention rates are sky high in a country where about 40% of 16-year-olds choose apprenticeships, says Mahr. "We know 94% of all apprenticeship graduates are being employed at the level of skilled labour or above."

As in Germany, apprenticeships are accepted by parents as a recognised alternative to university. In fact, Maurice Taylor, 19, an apprentice joiner with high-end furniture-maker Interior-ID in Riegersberg, says he wants to finish his apprenticeship (while studying part-time for his final school exams), tack on a one-year master's-level apprenticeship and then study interior design at university.

The fact that Taylor wants to go to university does not worry company co-owner Bernd Radaschitz, who accepts that this goes with the territory. "Ideally we'd like to take on our apprentices after they finish," he says, "but half of them move on to a different firm, while a quarter will follow a related career in, say, architecture or design."

In Germany, apprenticeships are accepted as a recognised alternative to university  
PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN GALLUP/GETTY

Apprenticeships with more  
Vanessa Knowles



*'Our apprentices have raised £110,000 for community-based project work'*

Whenever there's a major focus on apprenticeship programmes, especially during the annual National Apprenticeship Week in March, most publicity is about what's in it for employers, why they

should get involved and how apprentices are benefiting.

But at Anglia Ruskin, we've added a new dimension by "triangulating" our offer: for the first year of our chartered manager degree apprenticeship programme, launched in October 2015, we run a module called entrepreneurship and enterprise realities (EER), which involves community-based project work.

For the past two years all our first-year students from Barclays have been supporting Rainbows Hospice, Loughborough, the region's only centre for life-limited children and young adults aged 18 to 30. Their management task has been to come up with sustainable ways of funding Rainbows, while at the same time raising money and publicising the hospice's work beyond its core supporters to the wider community. So far, our apprentices have raised an amazing £110,000.

Our students talk of a truly motivating experience that allows them to use their newly gained skills to help people in real need.

To reflect the values of Coop Food, another client, whose first cohort of 32 mature staff members began their degree last September, the EER module is focused on finding solutions to community issues. These include creating local forums to help solve problems such as how to revitalise the high street and engage disadvantaged young

people into thinking about life skills. Other initiatives include producing healthy-eating recipes for students (linking up with the NUS), and visiting primary schools during the annual Fair Trade fortnight in February/March to help educate children about ethical and fair trading - a subject covered in the key stage 2 curriculum. It's been a fascinating journey, with the government push to boost apprenticeships, the introduction of the apprenticeship levy and the explosion in management degrees at the start of this academic year.

I'm seeing an impressive output from the apprentices: among the first Barclays group of 60, graduating in October, 38 experienced staff, aged up to their mid-40s, will be completing a fast-track degree apprenticeship in just two years. The remaining 22 school-leavers and others new to the business, who enrolled in 2015, will have taken more than a year longer.

An added bonus is that many of the apprentices are on track for 2:1 and first-class honours, and some have already taken up positions such as assistant or branch manager that they will continue after graduating.

It's all thanks to the degree apprenticeship programme, devised through close cooperation between ourselves and our employer partners. Degree apprentices graduate with a recognised degree as well as professionally accredited chartered management status, a CV showing often remarkable progression during three full years of relevant workplace experience, and - that final jewel in the crown - a debt-free future. A no-brainer, surely?

Vanessa Knowles is director of corporate programmes at Anglia Ruskin University. She was interviewed by Richard Doughty

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### **Our Engineers don't just make things – we *make things possible*.**

Get a head start on your career in Goldman Sachs engineering while earning a degree in computer science. In partnership with Queen Mary University of London, the Goldman Sachs Degree Apprenticeship Programme combines higher education with vocational training to offer a fee-free alternative to the traditional University route. Launched in 2016, the programme has been named Overall Winner of the Top 100 Employers for School Leavers and recognized on the RateMyApprenticeship Top 100 Employers Table.

The Degree Apprenticeship Programme will allow participants to complete an apprenticeship within Goldman Sachs' Technology division while studying for a degree at Queen Mary University of London. After the four-year programme, participants will graduate with a bachelor's degree in Digital and Technology Solutions, with the potential opportunity for a full time position with Goldman Sachs.

This programme is suited to students currently pursuing a university degree to commence in Autumn 2018, and possessing a keen interest in building solutions to complex problems. Applicants will be required to meet the minimum entry requirements of Queen Mary University of London. Given government requirements, only European Economic Area nationals are eligible for this programme.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: **18 March 2018**

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