

Apprenticeship Reforms and the Future

If your son or daughter is considering taking an apprenticeship then there has never been a better time. Recent reforms have made apprenticeships a more attractive option and increasing numbers of employers are offering apprenticeship programmes to a growing number of school leavers.

The 2020 vision

The Government's vision is to increase the quantity of apprenticeships in England - reaching 3 million starting one by 2020 - and to improve the quality of apprenticeships, making them more relevant to industry. Record numbers of young people are becoming apprentices, with nearly 900,000 participating on an apprenticeship in 2015 to 2016 – the largest number since records began. This trend looks set to continue.

Apprenticeship reforms

Apprenticeship reforms have been underway since October 2013. Groups of employers, known as 'Trailblazers', have been working together to design new world-class apprenticeship standards that respond to the needs of their industries. The standards show what an apprentice will be doing and the skill required of them, by job role.

More than 2,600 large and small employers are involved in designing the new apprenticeship standards in a wide variety of industry sectors; there have been 270 apprenticeship standards published so far. From April 2017 all new apprenticeships will be based on the modern standards with the old frameworks phased out.

The quality of apprenticeships will be improved through higher expectations of English and maths, more rigorous testing to ensure the apprentice is fully competent, and raising aspirations for apprentices by introducing grading at the end of their apprenticeship.

The new apprenticeships are in a broad range of sectors from banking to law, fashion, nuclear and defence. Around 4,300 apprentices have started on the new standards in occupations such as software developer and aerospace engineer with the first recruits starting back in September 2014.

Why apprenticeships are working

The apprenticeships programme provides proven benefits to both employers and apprentices. For apprentices, it can equip them with the skills, knowledge and experience needed to pursue a successful career. For employers, it can provide a highly effective means of developing the skills within the workforce.

Recent statistics from the **Skills Funding Agency*** show:

- After finishing, 77% of apprentices stay with the same employer.
- 46% of apprentices had received a pay rise since completing their apprenticeship.
- 36% of higher apprentices report getting a promotion after completing their apprenticeship.
- 89% of apprentices were satisfied with their apprenticeship overall and 72% were very satisfied.

The future for apprenticeships

The recent reforms have made apprenticeships an increasingly popular career choice, with 1,656,680 online apprenticeship applications made in 2015 to 2016. Apprenticeships offer a genuine alternative to going to university and, through higher and degree apprenticeships, the opportunity to combine an apprenticeship with higher education.

There are currently 100 higher and degree apprenticeships available, with more in development, including foundation degrees, HNDs and full honours degrees. These include job roles ranging from legal services to banking, nursing and engineering.

Apprenticeships are seen as key to delivering the technical and professional skilled workforce that employers need, so every apprenticeship will be a high quality opportunity that delivers the skills, knowledge and behaviours that employers are looking for.

The apprenticeship reforms will support an increase in the quality and quantity of apprenticeships so that more individuals can benefit from apprenticeship programmes in the future. The future for apprenticeships looks bright!

Where can I find out more?

There are different levels of apprenticeships covering 1,500 occupations in 170 industries. You can read about what types of industries and companies offer apprenticeships in our article [‘Who offers Apprenticeships?’](#). For more general information about apprenticeships take a look at our articles [‘Apprenticeships and Traineeships’](#) and [‘Higher Apprenticeships’](#). All these articles contain links to useful websites where you can find out more about apprenticeships and apprenticeship opportunities.

For more detailed information about the reforms and facts about apprenticeships, see:

[Key facts about apprenticeships](#)

[English Apprenticeships: Our 2020 Vision](#)

[Apprenticeship standards: list of occupations available](#)

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