

## career paths of former apprentices



## making work-based learning work series 2

Rossana  
Perez-del-Aguila  
Helen Monteiro  
Maria Hughes







Leading learning and skills



Apprenticeships

learning  
and skills  
development  
agency

# career paths of former apprentices

making  
work-based  
learning  
work  
**series 2**

Rossana  
Perez-del-Aguila  
Helen Monteiro  
Maria Hughes

Published by the Learning and Skills Network

[www.lsneducation.org.uk](http://www.lsneducation.org.uk)

LSN is committed to providing publications that are accessible to all. To request additional copies of this publication or a different format, please contact:

Information Services  
Learning and Skills Network  
Regent Arcade House  
19-25 Argyll Street  
London W1F 7LS  
Tel 020 7297 9144  
Fax 020 7297 9242  
[enquiries@lsneducation.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lsneducation.org.uk)

Registered with the Charity Commissioners

Copy editor: Susannah Wight

Cover design/image: David Shaw

Printer: Hobbs the Printers Ltd

Printed in the UK

052336RS/04/2006/4000

1-84572-407-0

©Learning and Skills Development Agency 2006

You are welcome to copy this publication for internal use within your organisation. Otherwise, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electric, chemical, optical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Further information

For further information about the Learning and Skills Council, visit: [www.LSC.gov.uk](http://www.LSC.gov.uk)

**This publication results from the Learning and Skills Development Agency's strategic programme of research and development, funded by the Learning and Skills Council, the organisation that exists to make England better skilled and more competitive.**

## Contents

Acknowledgements .....	3
Executive summary .....	4
Background and methodology.....	9
Research findings.....	12
Destinations on completion of an apprenticeship .....	12
Contribution of apprenticeship to career progression .....	20
Access to career planning and support.....	24
Participation in further education and training .....	27
Additional activity supporting progression .....	32
Conclusions.....	35
Recommendations .....	38
Commitment of employers.....	38
Progression into further learning.....	38
‘Fit for purpose’ apprenticeship programmes .....	38
Additional elements.....	39
Information, advice and guidance.....	39
Business acumen .....	39
Appendix 1. Employers responding to the survey .....	40
Appendix 2. Providers responding to the survey .....	42
Appendix 3. Description of former apprentices taking part in interviews.....	44
Appendix 4. Analysis of <i>Labour Force Survey</i> Data .....	46
Bibliography .....	69



## **Acknowledgements**

The Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) wishes to thank the providers, employers and current and former apprentices who took part in this research project and acknowledge the contribution of project researcher Rossana Perez-del-Aguila and project administrator Kate Taylor.

## Executive summary

### Background

LSDA has been investigating the career paths taken by apprentices after they complete their training, and the extent to which the method of learning in apprenticeships has been influential in their future success. This was a small-scale investigation conducted in 2004/05, which concentrated on the views of people who had generally had good experiences of apprenticeship training and career progression. Nevertheless, the research suggests that apprenticeship training can lead to many positive outcomes in terms of career progression, which could be usefully explored in a larger study.

### Key findings

#### ***Destinations on completion of an apprenticeship***

##### *Length of stay*

The majority of former apprentices remained in employment with the organisation that sponsored their training. This was true for newly qualified staff and those who had completed their training over a decade ago.

##### *Valuing loyalty and skills*

Employers encouraged their qualified apprentices to stay with the organisation and rewarded their loyalty through internal promotion opportunities. Consequently, former apprentices are in post at all levels in some organisations, notably at senior levels.

##### *Longer-term reasons for training apprenticeships offer*

Employers in large companies and in some sectors offered apprenticeships not only to address immediate skills needs in a particular role but also to equip their younger employees to progress to other roles at a later stage.

##### *Differences in progression opportunities*

As may be expected, more opportunities for progression are available in larger organisations and in some sectors. Differences in career progression pathways are also apparent across different sectors. It is common practice in retail, for example, for staff wanting to progress in careers in retail to move between outlets and different-sized companies, whereas in engineering, progression is possible within one organisation. Some sectors have sub-sectors with earlier progression opportunities, especially where there is a greater focus on management.

The majority of former apprentices stay within their original sector with some frameworks, enabling progression within the sector, for example within care into nursing. There is some difference by sector supported by the generic characteristics of some frameworks.

Some sectors, such as hair and beauty therapy, offer more flexible working for women with childcare responsibilities, enabling better retention of the skills base.

##### *Transition to self-employment*

LSDA analysis of the *Labour Force Survey*<sup>1</sup> indicated that former apprentices were more likely to become self-employed than their non-apprentice peers.

---

<sup>1</sup> The *Labour Force Survey* is a quarterly sample survey of 60,000 households living at private addresses in Great Britain. It provides information on the UK labour market that can then be used to develop, manage, evaluate and report on labour market policies. The questionnaire design, sample selection and interviewing are carried out by the Office for National Statistics. More information is available at [www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Source.asp?vlnk=358&More=Y](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Source.asp?vlnk=358&More=Y)



## ***Contribution of apprenticeship to career progression***

### ***Apprenticeship components***

Providers, employers, and current and former apprentices thought that the rigour, coverage and transferability of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) provided a basis for skills development, further learning and career progression.

Technical Certificates (or their earlier equivalents) were valued because they provided underpinning knowledge and a theoretical basis for further learning.

Communication was thought to be the most important key skill, providing increased confidence and access to further learning. Older employees who lack key skills were seen to have fewer career or further training opportunities.

### ***Apprenticeship approach – a package of skills and experience***

The mix of on-the-job and off-the-job learning, combining theoretical and competence-based components through practical experience in the workplace, was seen to be invaluable in the development of apprentices and their access to later career opportunities.

Hands-on experience was highly valued, and the practice of placing apprentices alongside more experienced colleagues was seen to be an important way for them to develop technical and social skills.

The main factor linking apprenticeships to later career success was the level of involvement of the employer in the design and delivery of the training.

The quality of training was important, however, as high-quality training creates engaged learners who may then go on and broaden their knowledge.

## ***Access to career planning and support***

### ***The value of information provided within a school context***

Current apprentices valued the information provided within a school context by learning providers and employers about the possible careers that could be entered via an apprenticeship on leaving education. However, providers often remarked on the difficulty of being able to get into schools to give this information.

### ***Building relationships***

Providers and employers in the research were seeking to build a relationship between apprentices and employers, to help match learners' aspirations to future employment opportunities. This was seen to encourage apprentices to remain with their employer on completion of their apprenticeship, enabling a return on the employers' investment in training while helping learners to achieve future success in the sector.

### ***Having ready access to training opportunities***

Former apprentices employed within organisations with structured continuing professional development (CPD) processes appeared to have more ready access to training opportunities provided within and external to their workplace. This had enabled structured career progression within their chosen sectors.

## ***Participation in further education and training***

### ***Development of a training mindset***

Apprenticeship training was seen by providers, employers and current and former apprentices to create the desire for further learning and the ability to undertake it.

### *Progression in further education*

Progression to higher-level education and training was evident in some cases, as was taking occupationally-specific qualifications at the same level to develop a rounded skills base.

### *Support for progression*

Support for progression varied by the size of employer. Large organisations were less likely to see completion of an Advanced Apprenticeship as an end-point, encouraging progression into further and higher education. Small businesses are not routinely able to support apprentices financially to undertake further education or training, or to support them by allowing them more time away from the workplace.

Support for participation in further learning varied by occupational sector, with some sectors less willing or able to accommodate access to continued study due, for example, to shift patterns or irregular patterns of work.

### *Barriers to progression*

Barriers to participation in further learning included:

- lack of the availability of further or higher education and training in some geographical areas
- lack of appropriate provision in some sectors
- lack of flexibility in working patterns and learning provision
- the gap between competency-based and academic programmes being too large for former apprentices to bridge; this included the qualifications required for entry to higher education and the style of learning and assessment favoured within academia.

### ***Additional support for progression***

Some employers were providing additional activity to support the trainee's future career progression, such as:

- matching progression through the framework(s) with management training
- enabling apprentices to gain chartered status on completion of their technician-level programme
- ensuring apprentices experience a wide range of roles within their training
- mentoring by senior colleagues and the practice of senior colleagues taking apprentices under their wing and training them as their successors
- placing emphasis on interpersonal skills development, including team building exercises, mentoring, activity weekends, etc
- embedding apprentices firmly in the employment structure.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Commitment of employers***

- The full and active support of employers to apprenticeship training is key to ensuring that trainees go on to achieve full and interesting careers. Employers' commitment may be increased by promoting the long-term advantages that apprenticeship training can bring to their organisations, such as employee loyalty, staff retention and a motivated workforce, as well as occupational competence and skills development.
- The Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA), Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), Association of Learning Providers (ALP) and Association of Colleges (AoC) should work together to get this message across.

- The support and example of employers and their colleagues is extremely important in enhancing the employability of apprentices and their access to career progression. However, training for people taking on this supporting role was rarely available.
- The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and LSC could support this development further, and encourage providers to ensure that training and support materials are routinely available to those taking on the role of mentor, to ensure that it is effectively fulfilled to the benefit of the apprentice and wider organisation.

#### ***Progression into further learning***

- Many apprentices in the research progressed to further learning supported by their employers. However, the lack of suitable provision at Level 4, and the difficulty of bridging the occupational competency and academic programme divide, were said to limit progression in some circumstances. Access to existing provision could also be problematic for a full-time employee when delivered according to a traditional timetable.
- Articulation between the qualifications gained during apprenticeship training and other qualifications needs to be secured to improve progression routes. The LSC, SSCs, and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) should work together to ensure appropriate provision with flexible delivery.

#### ***'Fit for purpose' apprenticeship programmes***

- One of the major ways of increasing employer commitment to apprenticeships is to ensure that the programmes are 'fit for purpose', and meet employers' needs, both in terms of content and delivery. This is also likely, in turn, to improve retention, achievement and success rates. The SSDA and SSCs should ensure that the components of the apprenticeship are appropriate, and delivered in the most effective way.
- Career progression and engagement in further learning is influenced by the quality of training experience during the apprenticeship. Continued efforts must therefore be made and supported by LSC, SSDA, ALI, ALP, AoC and other key stakeholders to increase quality in work-based learning (WBL).

#### ***Additional elements***

- The importance of the development of interpersonal and social skills within apprenticeship training should be recognised by providers and employers and supported where possible, for example by encouraging the establishment of apprenticeship forums or team building activities.
- There is a need to ensure that apprenticeships are recognised as a model of formation training that takes time – apprentices need to mature, practise their skills and gain work experience. Too much emphasis can be placed within the current system on making sure apprentices are productive workers as quickly as possible. This research shows that long-term gains can accrue from a more patient approach.

#### ***Information, advice and guidance***

- Information, advice and guidance should be used more effectively to inform young people of the range of options available to them, including the potential career benefits of engaging in an apprenticeship. It is therefore crucial to ensure

that young people have access to informed and impartial information. Making sure that young people are taking the most appropriate option given their ambitions, interests and abilities may also decrease the number of 'false starts'. It is recommended that Connexions and Careers Services work in partnership with SSSDA and the individual SSCs to map potential career paths stemming from apprenticeships. This information should then be communicated to young people within schools and colleges, and given the same status as information on other available pathways.

***Business acumen***

- Self-employment was often considered to be a desirable but sometimes daunting option by former and current apprentices. The inclusion of entrepreneurship within the school curriculum and apprenticeship training could help young people develop some necessary business acumen to allow them to realise any ambitions of self-employment. It would also enable them to contribute to the 'bottom line' of any company through having a better understanding of business processes.

## Background and methodology

### Background

The government's Skills Strategy<sup>2</sup> emphasises the importance of ensuring that apprenticeships offer an effective and high-quality route to young people. Apprenticeships should raise the technical qualifications and skills available in the labour force and enable trainees to gain access to fulfilling employment and further learning.

People who took part in apprenticeships over the past decade are now likely to be well established in the workforce, operating in many different roles and levels of responsibility. Some may still be working for the company that sponsored their apprenticeship. Others may have moved on in quite unexpected directions, perhaps changing occupation, moving into higher education or running a business.

LSDA has been investigating the career opportunities available to apprentices after they complete their training, and whether the method of learning in apprenticeships has been influential in their future success.

The experiences of former apprentices could provide valuable insight into the long-term effect of this learning route on career and life chances. Prospective apprentices, their parents, providers and employers may benefit from finding out about these experiences and the pluses and minuses of apprenticeships as a basis for career development.

The project investigated:

- what careers apprenticeship training secures access to
- whether the method and quality of the learning experience in apprenticeships supports employability and access to future careers.

### Methodology

There is a lack of reliable, nationally held information about destinations and progression routes from apprenticeship training, and so identifying a sample of former apprentices to survey proved to be very difficult. Initially, contact was made with providers and employers, who in turn provided contacts with former apprentices. The *Labour Force Survey* was also interrogated to identify data and possible trends about the career trajectories of people who had completed apprenticeships. While the project findings need to be seen in this modest context, they provide some insight into the possibilities that apprenticeships provide and are an indication of what further research needs to be undertaken in this area.

### Survey

It was decided to select a sample of providers and employers who were likely to demonstrate good practice in the delivery of apprenticeships, and to investigate what former apprentices could achieve working in a supportive environment. A questionnaire was sent to a sample of 164 WBL providers and employers with some involvement in apprenticeship programmes to gather information on the career paths of apprentices. The sample was drawn from firms who had been involved in the National Training Awards, and from previous studies investigating good practice in apprenticeships.

---

<sup>2</sup> DfES (2003). *21st century skills: realising our potential*. London: Department for Education and Skills.

The employers were asked to comment on the career paths of employees who had previously completed an apprenticeship within their company, their current position in the organisational structure, progression opportunities and access to further learning through work. They were also asked to comment on the career paths of employees who had been recruited after completing an apprenticeship elsewhere.

The WBL providers were asked about their experience of the career progression of former learners, whether they had any career planning processes in place for learners, short-term and longer-term destinations (if known) and whether and why contact was retained with former apprentices.

Completed questionnaires were returned from 19 employers and 14 providers, although these roles were not always distinctive, with some employers with a training arm completing both sections. The employers ranged in sector and size, with four small, four medium and 11 large companies responding. Providers responded from across a range of sectors. (See Appendices 1 and 2 for full details of the respondents.)

### **Interviews**

On the basis of the responses to the questionnaire, 12 interviews were carried out with providers and employers demonstrating interesting or innovative practice in supporting the career progression of people who had formerly undertaken an apprenticeship. There was a focus on apprenticeships completed since the introduction of the Modern Apprenticeship in 1994. The majority of the interviews were face-to-face and lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

In addition to the likelihood of discovering good practice, occupational sector, company size and location were taken into account when selecting the organisations to visit.

Face-to-face interviews and focus groups were held with 22 former apprentices and 27 current apprentices within the organisations visited. The interviews explored views on the contribution of the apprenticeship to career progression, the level of support available for progression and their aspirations for their future careers.

It was important to establish when the interviewees had completed their apprenticeships. If completed before 1994, when the Modern Apprenticeship system was introduced, it was necessary to find out what the training programme had included and how it was delivered in order to assess its comparability with the current apprenticeship system. It was also important to establish the level of programme undertaken. The majority of interviewees had completed an Advanced Modern Apprenticeship (AMA) or equivalent. (See Appendix 3 for further details of the respondents.)

### **The Labour Force Survey**

A thorough search was made of databases. The *Labour Force Survey* proved to be the most complete source of information to provide a broad level analysis of the current labour market position of people who have previously completed an apprenticeship, examining their employment status, pay and working conditions, occupational area, and so on. Data analysis was conducted using selected variables from the *Labour Force Survey 2001–2004*.<sup>3</sup> The analysis was also able to take into account the career paths of people who are at different stages of their career following the completion of an apprenticeship and to compare this progression to other peer groups, including those who have not undertaken any form of apprenticeship, or those with Level 2 qualifications and below, or Level 3 qualifications and above.

---

<sup>3</sup> See note 1.

Age bands for the analysis were used to distinguish former apprentices who would have undertaken a Modern Apprenticeship<sup>4</sup> and those who would have undertaken their apprenticeship before the introduction of Modern Apprenticeships in 1994. The age bands were then further subdivided to allow an analysis of any difference between age group in relation to career trajectory (Table 1).

Programme type	Years covered	Age band
Modern Apprenticeship or apprenticeship	1997-2005	16-24
Modern Apprenticeship	1994-1996	25-27
Trade apprenticeship	1986-1993	28-35
Trade apprenticeship	1980-1985	36-41
Trade apprenticeship	Before 1979	42+

**Table 1. Types of apprenticeship, by years covered and age range**

Source: *Labour Force Survey 2001-2004*

It should be noted that some respondents to the survey may have been on various forms of government-supported youth training before 1994 but may have interpreted this as being on an apprenticeship programme. This may also apply to respondents on training schemes after 1994 as the introduction of the Modern Apprenticeship was phased in over a period of several years, for example, at Level 2, from Youth Training to National Traineeship in 1996, and then to Foundation Modern Apprenticeship in 1997; at Level 3, the Modern Apprenticeship was introduced in 1994, becoming the Advanced Modern Apprenticeship in 1997. However, some high-quality youth training programmes resembled traditional apprenticeships in that they required employer commitment, opportunities to study at college, well-structured and monitored on-the-job training and employee status.

---

<sup>4</sup> Following the reforms in May 2004, the Modern Apprenticeships underwent a change in terminology. The Foundation Modern Apprenticeships (FMAs) were renamed 'Apprenticeships (at Level 2)' and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships (AMAs) were renamed Advanced Apprenticeships. With regard to the data analysis and interviews with former apprentices the former terms normally apply, while the new terminology applies for current apprentices.

## Research findings

### Destinations on completion of an apprenticeship

#### *Length of time with original employer*

Key findings about destinations on completion of an apprenticeship:

- Most former apprentices stay with their original employer.
- Former apprentices are seen by employers to be appropriately qualified for their specific organisation.
- Former apprentices exhibited loyalty to their original employer and this was encouraged and rewarded by internal promotion opportunities.
- The initial motivation or rationale behind an offer or the commencement of training affected career progression.
- There was a difference in length of stay with original employer by sector. For example, in retail there is a practice of apprentices moving between outlets and different-sized employers to progress their careers; in engineering, stability and progression is possible within one organisation.
- There was a difference by size of employer regarding former apprentice length of stay, with more opportunities available for progression in larger organisations.

#### ***View of apprenticeships as a long-term investment***

The majority of former apprentices within the research had stayed with the organisation that had sponsored their training. This was the case for both newly qualified staff and those who had been with the same company for 12 years or more. This finding is supported by the LSDA analysis of the *Labour Force Survey*, which revealed that former apprentices were more likely to have been with their current employer for more than five years than their peers who had not undertaken apprenticeship training.

Employers were quick to recognise the importance of retaining their trainees, and often provided opportunities for progression to ensure that this came about, particularly if the apprenticeship programme had been delivered in-house. Benefits of the training included that the former apprentice was now appropriately qualified to a company standard, which could not be guaranteed if the training was delivered elsewhere. Employers who were committed to apprenticeships saw this as a long-term investment for the company and the individual.

A large motor vehicle manufacturing company (E18) ensures that all its trainees use 'product supportive material' enabling learners to be trained on brand new vehicles and state-of-the-art material. This focused training using their own resources 'equips them [apprentices] to do the job'. This is said to be a 'true measurable currency of training' making the investment of time and money in the apprenticeship training worthwhile. An outside provider is not seen to be able to provide this level of quality, as the training is delivered directly for the company with no profit margins. There is also total commitment to the learners, as the employer wants them to finish their training for the benefit of the company. They seek to retain their apprentices and hold a graduation ceremony to recognise and encourage completion.

This view of apprenticeships as a long-term investment was echoed within another large company, which had initially offered apprenticeships to improve the competence and interpersonal skills of young employees. The company also offered apprenticeships 'because we are looking for potential stars of the future'. Taking on trainees was a chance to 'preview' their work, reliability and level of commitment to the company, while



equipping the young person with skills vital for working effectively in an office environment. In this way the training allowed the employer to identify trainees with long-term career potential and at the same time equipped the younger workforce with necessary skills.

#### ***Place of apprentices within organisational structure***

The practice of retaining and promoting former apprentices meant that they were often in posts at every level of an organisation, in a diverse range of departments and always at senior levels. In one medium-sized electrical contractor visited, three of the company directors were former apprentices, having been trained in the 1980s.

The transition into management was common for the majority of former apprentices in a large international engineering company and in a local government organisation:

*(There is) a strong mix (of former apprentices) at all levels, however many have moved into leadership and management roles. Indeed, more than 60% of the senior management team are ex-apprentices, including the senior vice president for manufacture.*

(E2)

*Some come to do an apprenticeship, they are trained, and they are now elevated to a position where they are managing somebody else. They manage a person that for a period has been their mentor. To be honest, to do that is quite something, I think.*

(E16)

Good career progression opportunities were also available to apprentices who had trained within smaller and medium-sized companies. Apprentices often became multi-skilled, and many moved into supervisory or management roles.

*E14 is a family-owned company and it is their policy to get people in from the bottom and build and reward loyalty – they have never hired anyone in at a top level. From the first interview at 16 a long-term career progression plan is laid out to the trainee by the manager in terms of this is where you will be in x years. A former apprentice commented that joining the company was like joining a family.*

(Contracts director at E14, a former electrical engineering apprentice, who began training in early to mid-1980s)

The LSDA analysis of the *Labour Force Survey* indicated that apprentices of all ages who received their training pre-1994 and post-1994 are more likely to be in management, foreman or supervisory positions than their non-apprenticeship peers. While former Modern Apprentices are less likely to be managers but more likely to be foremen or supervisors, this may be because they are at a relatively young age and at an early stage in their career.

#### ***Factors supporting apprentices' decision to stay with employer***

Most former apprentices with large employers had remained with their employer since completing their training because of the size of the company and the opportunities this provided to broaden their experience base and diversify into other work roles. It was common practice among the organisations involved in the research to advertise internal vacancies on a notice board or via the company intranet to highlight opportunities. This was said to support staff retention and encourage the diversification of staff expertise. In some large companies career maps were available to download from the intranet showing different stages in career paths, for example, the qualifications and job roles that could lead to becoming a team leader in engineering.

The practice of internal promotion provided a good reason for former and current apprentices to stay with their employers. It was often recognised that the apprenticeship had equipped them with the skills to gather knowledge and experience, and so enabled further progression. Internal promotion also meant that there were numerous role models within the companies for the current apprentices to aspire to, and to enable them to see how others with similar educational and training experience had achieved success.

Performance and salary reviews, particularly when conducted near to completion of training, also appear to aid retention. One college-based provider encouraged employers to undertake such reviews, which are by no means common practice in all organisations, and ensured that early discussions were held with the company to ascertain the wage structure and support for training that was in place. In one motor vehicle manufacturing network it was recognised that failing to acknowledge the new status of recently qualified trainees by increasing their salary left them open to being poached by other companies who valued the quality of the training but did not necessarily want to commit to doing it themselves.

### ***Loyalty to employer***

Former apprentices noted reasons other than opportunities for career progression and financial reward for staying with their original employer. Many had joined their organisation straight from school and expressed feelings of comfort and stability in their current location. Many had also built up long-standing friendships with those they had trained alongside. Employers and apprentices, both former and current, mentioned loyalty time and time again. Former apprentices were often strongly loyal to their employer who had supported them through their training and 'wanted to pay the company back' for the time and energy that had been invested in them.

### ***Impact of company rationale for training on career progression***

Certainly in the short term, career progression appears to vary by sector, size of employer and the employers' original reason for taking on the apprentice. Providers commented that in some smaller companies employers saw the apprenticeship as equipping the young person to fulfil a particular role, such as sales assistant or nursing home carer. In these circumstances, there may be little opportunity to broaden the role, diversify into other areas or progress up the career ladder. Some small employers simply could not provide apprentices with the opportunity to progress, as other roles were already filled.

Some employers, mostly larger ones, were taking a more innovative approach. They saw the apprenticeship as addressing immediate skills shortages in a particular role, but also equipping the trainee with a wider portfolio of skills to enable progression at a later stage.

### ***Advantages of retaining former apprentices***

As stated by an employer of a large meat processing company (E3) within the engineering sector, the advantages of employing former apprentices included that they:

- already knew the company and were aware of its needs
- were likely to be loyal
- had already established a working relationship with the company.

A hairdressing employer and trainer echoed this, commenting that former apprentices:

*Tend to know the operating methods of an organisation, they have built relationships with customers and can identify that an organisation that has trained them is more likely to re-commit to continued development.*

(E7/P5)

A large office supplies employer (E12) thought the advantages of retaining former apprentices were threefold:

- You know that they have done some learning and development since leaving school or college.
- They have hopefully completed their qualification and achieved a national standard.
- It helps to develop a good attitude and approach to work.

A housing group stated that the short-term advantages of employing apprentices trained within the organisation and their inherent suitability to their jobs was because:

*They understand the businesses strategy, aims and objectives, as well as specialist systems and working methods so reducing the amount of training time for the new manager. They know the business structure and the staff and can 'hit the ground running' almost straight away. They will already have been trained to (our) standards.*  
(E19)

A minority of employers thought that there could be disadvantages in employing former apprentices, in that they may:

- have become entrenched into a set culture that may not reflect how their employer wants to operate (they would then also find it difficult to move successfully to a new a employer)
- become apathetic, taking the employer for granted
- be complacent.

### **Retention and progression within sectors**

Key findings about retention and progression within sectors:

- Although most apprentices continue to work in their original sector this is not the case universally. Notably, retail apprentices may go on to work in the hospitality sector. However, this move is supported by the generic characteristics of the retail framework.
- Some frameworks, for instance the care sector, enable progression within the sector, for example into nursing.
- Some sectors have sub-sectors with earlier progression opportunities, especially where there is a greater focus on management.
- Some sectors may offer more flexible working for women with childcare responsibilities, enabling better retention of the skills base.
- LSDA analysis of the *Labour Force Survey* indicated that former apprentices were more likely to become self-employed than their non-apprentice peers.

### **Career progression within sectors**

The evidence from the study suggests that most apprentices continue to be employed within their original sector. This may be due to apprentices, providers and employers believing in the wide potential for career progression offered by apprenticeship training, which put in place a firm foundation of skills.

This was evidenced both by the number of former apprentices holding management positions and by the diverse range of roles held by former apprentices. Providers supported this perception by advertising frameworks as entry points to long-term careers and showing induction videos outlining opportunities available.

Examples of tangential progression included:

- apprenticeship training in care providing an entry point to nursing
- hairdressing apprentices whose career paths included teaching, fashion styling and management, and former apprentices becoming self-employed, working in a variety of diverse contexts, including television and on cruise liners.

In retail in particular, employees may stay in the sector but move to different firms. It was said within retail that if the trainee stayed in the sector for a year there was a strong possibility the employee would remain in the sector for life. Former apprentices, however, were seen to change jobs a lot, especially between different sizes of store in order to progress their career, as fewer opportunities for progression exist within smaller stores. This had led to a 'zigzagging' pattern, with former apprentices and their ambitious non-apprentice peers moving from the shop floor in a large store to line management and supervisory positions in a small store, then back to supervisor level in a large store before going on to manage a small store.

Former retail apprentices were also seen to need to be geographically mobile to progress to their best advantage. This was also true within other sectors including the print sector, where a predominance of small companies across a disparate geographic area meant that local opportunities were restricted.

While it was thought that there was currently little difference in progression between former apprentices and their peers in retail, apprentices in some larger stores had been fast-tracked to management positions as the apprenticeship training had expanded their abilities and flexibility. A large food retailer had reported to their SSC that the apprenticeship framework equips the individual with 70% of the skills needed to progress to management.

This was also seen in the motor vehicle customer service sub-sector, which had a fast progression path because of the desirability of staff at higher levels within the organisation holding certain core capacities:

*Parts advisors are 'hard to get hold of'. Not many learners apply to undertake this training and when they do start the programme they tend to become very good at the job quite quickly and progress through to parts manager. There are opportunities to progress to management level, and this is supported by the training. For example, the framework includes IT and management-based units. Technicians, on the other hand, tend to stay in this role and refine their skills for some time.*

(E18)

### **Movement across sectors**

The study identified some movement of former apprentices from business administration moving across to customer service, probably because their core skills apply across sectors and contexts. The director of a training company commented that she recommended young people who were undecided about their career choice to do a business administration or customer services apprenticeship, as this provided the skills needed in many occupations. This demonstrates that these programmes are valued for their flexibility, as those taking them can then move on to a diverse range of future occupations:

*I think that it opens many routes in general office work as it has built up my knowledge on communication, how to work well in a team, how to prioritise my work and come up with systems of working.*

(Recent business administration apprentice)

A degree of 'poaching' of qualified apprentices was thought to be taking place from the retail sector to other parts of the service sector, such as hospitality, banking and automotive retail. This was again thought to be because of the highly desired transferable skills base of the apprentices. Within hospitality it was said to be relatively usual for former retail apprentices to move into the pub trade at management levels.

Former and current apprentices were recognising this opportunity for flexibility. A couple of former apprentices who had undertaken an electrical apprenticeship in the 1980s had done so because their families had advised them that apprenticeship training as an electrician was a good basis for working in other trades, as the skills were transferable. Current engineering and business administration apprentices gave similar reasons for their choice of sector.

The LSDA analysis of the *Labour Force Survey* showed that former apprentices of all ages from 16 to retirement were more likely to be based within skilled trade occupations compared with non-apprentices. Supporting this, Table 2 displays the 10 most common occupations in England for *Labour Force Survey* respondents who have completed an apprenticeship and their non-apprenticeship peers. The most common occupation for former apprentices is electrician or electrical fitter, while for their non-apprentice peers it is sales and retail assistant. The results would imply that former apprentices continue to develop a career within their chosen trade, applying the skills gained during their training.

Most common occupations for former apprentices (both pre-1994 and post-1994)	Percentage in occupation	Most common occupations for individuals without an apprenticeship	Percentage in occupation
Electricians, electrical fitters	4.49	Sales and retail assistants	4.69
Carpenters and joiners	4.11	General office assistants or clerks	2.60
Metal working production and maintenance fitter	4.05	Accounts wages clerk, bookkeeper	2.36
Production works and maintenance managers	3.64	Cleaners, domestics	2.25
Motor mechanics, auto engineers	3.06	Care assistants and home carers	2.19
Plumbing, heating and ventilating engineers	2.90	Marketing and sales managers	2.06
Managers in construction	2.35	Nurses	1.92
Hairdressers, barbers	2.20	Personal assistants and other secretaries	1.60
Construction trades	2.06	Other goods handling and storage occupations	1.60
Marketing and sales managers	1.95	Secondary education teaching professionals	1.54

**Table 2. The 10 most common occupations in England**

Source: *Labour Force Survey* 2001–2004

### **Choice of sector and employer**

Apprentices recognised that some sectors provide more long-term opportunities and a stable career path, and some organisations were better at offering this than others. This had led to some former and current apprentices entering a particular sector and a particular company. Knowledge of the potential for career progression was gained from family members who may have had some experience within the sector, and from the media, whether via the news or from programmes such as *The Apprentice* offering role models in certain sectors.

Employers and providers thought that this form of recruitment attracts young people with clear goals and good levels of prior achievement who are looking for an alternative route rather than the academic path to success, but indeed would consider later access to higher education through a work route if deemed necessary and beneficial.

Former and current apprentices recognised the importance of experience in order to get ahead. Apprenticeships were thought to be better than degrees in this respect, as they provide genuine work experience and develop a portfolio of skills that are clearly listed within the framework. Experience was believed to be very important, as even graduates were known to have difficulties in getting jobs. This perception had been gained through the media and job adverts that indicated the importance of experience that a graduate would not have. Those with apprenticeships were able to distinguish themselves from other applicants and to increase their chances in the labour market by ensuring they were getting training that was relevant to business needs:

*There is a girl in finance right now. She got 10 GCSEs A to C. You would probably expect that she would go to do A-levels, and probably go to university. Instead she decided to get a job with us and to do a traineeship in our finance team. Her view is that rather than come out from university with maybe a maths or accountancy degree, she would rather work and do her qualification at the same time as actually being paid by us. So first of all she's doing an apprenticeship (in finance) but she's also going to be doing accountancy exams. She will go on to do ACCA [the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants exams]. More and more young people are making a lifestyle choice. That is: I don't want necessarily go away and have a massive overdraft and do a history degree for 3 years. A degree is not a passport to jobs as it used to be. They would prefer getting into industry, getting into business, learning about business first-hand and getting a qualification and at the same time being paid.*

(E12)

### **Flexible working**

Some sectors could offer more flexible working than others, for example within hairdressing, retail and care, enabling former apprentices to progress their careers after starting a family. While in hairdressing pregnancy and maternity leave still present a barrier to progression during training, this can be overcome once qualified, as part-time and flexible working is the norm across the sector. However, this is less likely to be the case in traditionally male-oriented sectors, such as engineering or construction.

### **Progression into trainer or assessor roles**

It was not unusual to find former apprentices who had progressed into the role of NVQ trainer and assessor, particularly from within hairdressing, business administration and electrical engineering. It was thought that the apprenticeship training provided an ability and readiness to learn and take on board new challenges alongside an intimate understanding of what NVQs involve:

*A tutor/assessor who completed her business administration apprenticeship two years ago now has a supervisory role of current apprentices and a work experience learner from a local school doing an administration NVQ. She believes that aspects of her Advanced Apprenticeship enhance her effectiveness in the tutor and assessor positions. After having experienced this role as an apprentice she knows where others may need guidance most and can pass on experience to new apprentices. Supervisory skills were gained through observation of peers and units within her business administration NVQ3 on supervision, delegation. She is now looking to consolidate and develop her current role and gain the Internal Verifier status. She expects to attain further formal qualifications and increase her status and standing in the organisation.*

(E1/P1, recent former business administration apprentice)

### **Transition into self-employment**

Self-employment was rare among the former apprentices spoken to in the study, although the *Labour Force Survey* suggests that self-employment is a likely destination from the apprenticeship route. The difference between the *Labour Force Survey* findings and LSDA's may be due to the composition of the LSDA research sample, which included a greater number of respondents in medium to large organisations.

Reasons given for not pursuing self-employment by more experienced former apprentices included:

- the need for further experience
- uncertainty in the business environment
- increased pressures and no possibility of delegation
- lack of market or opportunity.

However, providers in the study suggested that self-employment appeared to be more common in some sectors than others. A provider within retail cited an example of an apprentice who had lacked confidence about herself and her abilities throughout the retail apprenticeship but had since set up her own business selling crafts and was doing very well.

A large construction provider had similar examples and charted the path of the individual from apprentice to self-employed status:

*Many (former apprentices) progress to become team leaders, managing a small team. Some progress towards becoming site managers or project coordinators (office-based). A popular choice is to eventually set up their own businesses.*

(P2)

Self-employment was often seen to be a long-term ambition but a lack of business acumen sometimes meant that former apprentices who took this direction eventually went back to employee status.

The LSDA analysis of the *Labour Force Survey* indicated that former apprentices were generally more likely to be self-employed than non-former apprentices. This was true for apprentices' trained pre-1994 and post-1994. However, at ages 25–27 former apprentices were almost three times more likely to have their own business compared with their non-former apprenticeship peers (18.3% compared with 6.29%). Former apprentices are also more likely to work more than 40 hours per week than their non-apprentice peers, perhaps indicating that apprenticeship training develops the self-discipline to work longer hours, which is often required by the self-employed.

## Contribution of apprenticeship to career progression

Key findings about the contribution of apprenticeships to career progression:

- NVQs are believed to provide a basis for further learning. Their rigour, comprehensive coverage and national recognition are also thought to support transferability.
- Technical Certificates are seen to provide a theoretical basis for further learning.
- Communication was thought to be the most important key skill. It can give confidence and access to further learning. Older employees who lack key skills are seen to have fewer career or further training opportunities.
- The mode of delivery of the component parts of the framework is crucial, with hands-on experience highly valued.
- The practice of working alongside more experienced colleagues was seen to be an important way for apprentices to develop both technical and social skills.
- The quality of training is important as high-quality training creates engaged learners who may then go on and broaden their knowledge.
- The main factor linking to the later career success of apprentices was the level of involvement of the employer with the design and delivery of the training.
- The disparity between the high level of skills developed by apprenticeship training and the lower skills requirements of jobs taken after completing training is a barrier to progression.

### **NVQs**

NVQs were seen by the providers, employers and current and former apprentices to provide a basis for skills, further learning and career progression through their rigour, coverage and transferability.

### ***Currency of NVQ***

The employers in the study recognised the worth of NVQs particularly as an indicator of occupational competence and were therefore supporting their apprentices to complete the qualification. Mirroring this view, both former and current apprentices recognised the value of possessing clear evidence of occupational competence. The NVQ provided them with currency and transferability across contexts and helped them when they wanted to change jobs. The importance of the technical level of knowledge and experience was also recognised as providing the foundation for a later career while giving an immediate insight that could be applied in their current work context.

### ***NVQ structure enabling progression***

Providers and current apprentices thought that the components and structure of apprenticeship frameworks enabled learners to map their progression and see possible directions for their future career. One hairdressing employer who was also a provider doubted that the same career progression could be achieved without the apprenticeship. The structure of the training was seen to provide a 'motivation factor', enabling the learner to see how and why the units applied to their occupation.

A college WBL provider thought that NVQs are essential to the positive career path of former apprentices in printing. The printing trainee has to follow certain procedures, carry out tasks at particular times and apply elements such as health and safety and customer service. This enables the apprentices to make progress and achieve in ways that would be hard for a non-apprentice. This was seen to be particularly true when the training was delivered entirely in the workplace, as the apprentices are not only learning how to do the job but actually applying knowledge and gaining real experience:



*For me it is the combination of theory and practice because you can get an individual who is very clever, who knows the theory but it's not in the real world. The thing about the apprenticeship is to be in the real world from day one. And they can see how to apply the theory, and they are building the portfolio, they have to get the evidence.*

(E16)

A number of the engineering apprentices had a very pragmatic view of NVQs as representing a stepping-stone towards further educational achievements and career progression. For engineering apprentices who had left school at 16, the NVQ was seen as the next stage of their development, enabling them to improve their educational profile. But generally, the apprentices saw the qualifications as a necessary part of their training of which the goal at the end was the career, and not the qualification.

### **Technical Certificates**

While it is too soon to judge the impact of the newly implemented Technical Certificates on career progression, additional qualifications of some sort have traditionally been part of apprenticeship training. A number of the former apprentices in engineering had undertaken the BTEC National or other vocational qualifications that provided underpinning knowledge to their occupationally-specific qualification. These respondents, and other former apprentices who had completed their training 10 or more years ago, were sometimes unclear about the qualifications taken as part of their apprenticeship. However, regardless of the qualification taken in the form of a Technical Certificate, the former and current apprentices valued the underpinning knowledge that was given.

The engineering apprentices interviewed had little understanding of what the Technical Certificate was. They had all recently completed the Level 2 Technical Certificate and said they had not since used any of the knowledge gained, but were 'trusting it will apply' in the future. They observed that they 'must be doing it for a reason' but did not know what that reason was. They did, however, think that it provided them with background knowledge to their occupation, and acted as an induction into the company in which they were all planning to stay.

One college had adapted the content and delivery of the Technical Certificates in order to get the best out of them for the learner. The content of the qualification was converted into a practical format, and the outcomes assessed by means of written question papers. The learners then undertook mock tests before completing the exam online. The college reported great success from this form of assessment and the immediate feedback was creating positive attitudes and motivating learners to progress further with their training.<sup>5</sup>

### **Key skills**

Communication skills were generally seen by former apprentices to be the most beneficial key skill in terms of their value in later careers. A former apprentice in business administration who is now a WBL tutor/assessor observed that she uses the developed communication skills to deliver training.

It was generally agreed that key skills were more useful the higher the level that they were undertaken; notably, higher levels of numeracy were valuable in engineering and communications in business administration. This reflects comments made by current and former apprentices about the perceived worth of Level 2 key skills and the need to see their relevance. However, some providers thought that, despite the negative opinions of current and former apprentices, the key skills learnt were being applied but capacity to do so was not necessarily attributed to the training.

---

<sup>5</sup> This was also found in LSDA's research into assessment, see LSDA (2005) *'The impact of different modes of assessment on achievement and progress in the learning and skills sector'*.

One of the employers interviewed said that key skills can give apprentices confidence and enable them to access further learning. In contrast, some older employees who lack key skills may feel less confident or able to take up further learning opportunities that could benefit their careers.

### ***Delivery linking to progression***

Many modes of delivery had been or were being experienced by the people taking part in the study. These included:

- a mix of in-house and external training
- training delivered in-house under the guidance of a local college with day release to college one day a week
- entirely external training, managed by an external provider who delivered all elements of the programme, including key skills, NVQ and Technical Certificates
- all training delivered in-house (mostly large employers or training providers with apprentices as staff members)
- first 9 months off-the-job training delivered at a local training centre with twice weekly visits by the employer, followed by remainder of the programme on-site
- all off-the-job training contracted out to a local college while on-site training and assessment done within the company by a training arm.

The main factor linking to the later career success of apprentices was the level of involvement of the employer with the design and delivery of the training. This was particularly evident in companies that had their own training subsidiary or training arm, which had greater success in progressing their apprentices through the full framework, and were committed to establishing a learning culture throughout the rest of the organisation. The existence of a learning culture provided a supportive atmosphere for training and ensured that the apprentice was fully embedded within the organisation and its career structure.

Given that the providers and employers included in the study were demonstrating good practice in the delivery of apprenticeships, it was not surprising that the employers visited were very committed to training and the providers were using what they considered to be the best methods of securing maximum success for both the apprentice and the employer. Reasons given for delivering training by means of a combination of in-house training and off-the-job elements delivered at a college or WBL provider were to ensure that apprentices were being moulded to the company requirements, but also achieving transferable skills. A number of apprentices thought that this mode of delivery was right for them, as it gave hands-on experience with the opportunity to apply theoretical learning immediately, rather than having knowledge conveyed solely through a classroom-based experience, which they had previously found difficult.

### ***Apprenticeship 'approach' – a package of skills and experience***

#### *Experience of shop floor up*

The mix of on-the-job and off-the-job learning, combining theoretical and competence-based components through practical experience in the workplace, was seen by all those interviewed to be invaluable in the development of the apprentice and their access to later career opportunities. Many references were made to the benefits of building knowledge and experience from the shop floor up:

*X and Y, who are ex-apprentices, who have done FE and become managers and assistant directors, they know how to talk to people. They know how to treat people. They respect people. Their attitude is different. They are building respect from other*

*people and they are very much respected by other people because they have walked in their shoes.*

(E16)

#### *Support within apprenticeship framework*

The overall approach to apprenticeships, including the package of training and support, was valued and recognised by employers, providers and current and former apprentices. When one nationwide apprenticeship provider was asked what it was about the apprenticeship that enables access to management and self-employment (a career route she had just identified), she replied:

*The intense support that they get throughout their apprenticeship and the targeting of the individual to achieve set objectives. There are a number of learners who have not done well at school. We give them the confidence through the apprenticeship to improve their numeracy and communication skills, the key skills, the technical requirement for the jobs and the vocational experience and qualification that makes the whole apprenticeship and it gives them the confidence. They gain self-esteem that they can go on and do things that they wouldn't perhaps have considered previously.*

(P11)

A large office supplies employer further said:

*As a general observation, those people who have gained a qualification are exposed to new ideas and new thinking and new experiences, which is going to make them a more rounded individual than somebody who has not done an NVQ or Apprenticeship programme.*

(E12)

#### *Placement alongside experienced colleagues*

The practice of working alongside more experienced colleagues was seen to be an important way for apprentices to develop technical and social skills. Alongside the hands-on experience, this was the most valued element of apprenticeship training, and thought to contribute to career progression and greater self-confidence by developing increased technical competence through observation and experience and interpersonal skills through interacting with people on all levels. This was true for apprentices who had started their training before the 1994 introduction of Modern Apprenticeships and more recent apprentices:

*I was a quite shy individual at the early stage but having that getting to know people and working with the trade helped me.*

(Assistant director E16, former apprentice joiner mid-1980s)

A former apprentice, now a director of an electrical contractor and a director in the company's newly established training arm, believes that he would not have been able to achieve his current position without the apprenticeship training and in particular his early placement alongside older, senior peers. This practical experience gives the learner an opportunity to learn the ropes of the business from the bottom up, to build self-esteem, to increase employability and to adjust to working life. He did, however, feel that this practice was not so evident now, with fewer older former apprentices alongside whom to place new recruits, and more time pressures on the training.

#### *Quality of delivery*

The quality of delivery of the apprenticeship was very important in its effect on later participation in education and training and career progression. When speaking to a

former apprentice who had undertaken a Level 3 Apprenticeship in warehouse and distribution, the inspiration provided by their trainer was what was remembered in relation to the quality and method of training:

*I owe everything to my very last training consultant. The training consultant that I had before came and did what he needed to do and then went. He must have enjoyed his job, and what he got he wanted to pass on to me. Everything he knew he wanted to give me.*

(Recent former apprentice, now training consultant)

The mode of delivery and any additional practice to enhance the training often reflected the long-term or short-term view of the employer towards the training. Within two large engineering and manufacture companies the focus was on training staff and progressing them up the organisational structure through continual investment in development and training. Delivery methods supporting this included 'cross-training', where apprentices were able to experience elements from related training programmes and other sectors, and diversify into other roles.

#### *Personal aptitudes and the apprenticeship*

Possessing an apprenticeship alone was not enough to ensure progression – employers also looked for personal aptitudes and further willingness to engage in training and development. A training and development director at a large employer thought there was an equation in terms of the contribution of the training towards later career progression:

*Was it the NVQ and key skills or was it the practical experience [that developed the apprentices' suitability of their job]? You would have to say:*

*positive person + NVQ + work experience = suitable person*

(E12)

Some jobs require a necessary level of maturity and life experience that cannot be taught, for example managing a care home. However, sometimes those with the relevant NVQs to pursue these or other top-level jobs lack appropriate supervisory experience. It was thought by providers within this sector that there is a need for consolidation of experience with possibly guided support and mentoring.

Completion of apprenticeships or at the very least their core components was vital in some sectors for employees to even operate on site. In other cases it proved important for career progression. As one large manufacturer stated:

*Evidence of apprenticeship needs to be provided for fitters to progress to a primary operator and/or a team leader and then on to managers.*

(E2)

### **Access to career planning and support**

Key findings about the importance of access to career planning and support:

- Good IAG before entry to apprenticeship programmes can help foster a long-term career plan.
- During apprenticeship training there is a need to build a relationship between the apprentice and the employer, to help match aspirations to opportunities.
- Clearly laid out progression plans for different occupations can enable and support career development.
- For optimum progression within their chosen career, support needs to be provided to former apprentices via processes within their workplace.

- There can be barriers to career progression, including inadequate guidance, before entry to occupational training, variability of support and CPD by employer and provider during and after completion.

### **Before training**

#### *Importance of pre-16 information, advice and guidance*

Employers, providers and apprentices were keen to stress the importance of gaining information about the apprenticeship, what it would involve, and potential progression paths, before starting the programme. This could enable a long-term view to be developed and a further personal and company investment in the process as seeing long-term gains and setting career goals.

As other studies have shown,<sup>6</sup> careers information often focuses on short-term transitions into school sixth form and university, and is more concentrated on providing information on 'traditional' academic pathways. For some former and current apprentices spoken to this had led a few to start out on a career path that did not match their personal aptitudes, abilities and career goals.

An example was given by a current apprentice who had followed the traditional route of sixth form and then university but found the method of learning increasingly unsuitable for her. She dropped out of the first year of university when for the first time she received advice on apprenticeships from the university advisory service. An electrical contractor was also increasingly finding that they were taking on apprentices who had completed a year in sixth form before deciding this was unsuitable given their needs and objectives.

#### *Apprenticeship information sources*

School careers guidance websites were thought to be inadequate for exploring potential career paths entered through diverse routes and the current apprentices had often initiated their own Google internet searches. These had proved useful with a broad range of information available on entrance to WBL. However, many of the sites only offered advice on the practicalities of apprenticeship training with an immediate focus on what apprenticeships involve and the qualifications to which they led. There was no long-term information available, for example, about the diverse careers possible at the end of training. Some employers' websites were found to be useful in this respect. None of the apprentices were aware of the Sector Skills Councils or their website resources.

Current apprentices and former apprentices had found that presentations to them at school by providers and employers had provided useful information. This had led a number of apprentices to take proactive steps, for example approaching the presenters outside school to gain further information. However, providers observed that it could be difficult for them to get into schools to provide this kind of information. The reason for this was said to be because schools with sixth forms needed to retain a large proportion of their leaving cohort, or because of the perceived inferiority of the vocational route.<sup>7</sup>

### **During training**

#### *Review process*

Many of the providers interviewed referred to the regular reviews held between provider, employer and apprentices to consider future progression and career goals, and how these can be met. This process can help build a relationship between the employer and apprentice and articulate the aspirations and expectations of both parties. The review process requires full engagement of the employer and their commitment to retaining and

---

<sup>6</sup> Hughes M, Monteiro H (2005). *Effective entry to work based learning*. London: LSDA.

<sup>7</sup> The same issues were identified in Little B, Connor H (2004). *Vocational ladders or crazy paving? Making your way to higher levels*. London: LSDA.

further developing the employee on completion of their apprenticeship. This can encourage the apprentice to remain within the sector and possibly gain access to a more fulfilling career by being able to strive for goals in a supportive environment.

One small hairdressing firm with its own training provision analyses the career direction in which the apprentice is interested during the review process. The training can then be slightly adapted to help to lead to this goal. Apprentices begin to specialise at the end of their training, once they have received a good basic grounding and completed the mandatory NVQ units. At the end of their training the majority of apprentices within this salon remain with the organisation and are integrated as qualified stylists.

Some of the providers spoken to, particularly colleges, said that employers did not always take a full part in these reviews. In these instances, the providers did their best to explore the personal objectives of learners during exit interviews, when they considered how further learning opportunities could accommodate these goals, or whether a move to another employer may be more appropriate.

### ***After training***

#### *Employer CPD process*

The extent of the provision of information, advice and guidance about future career progression and other opportunities after the completion of apprenticeships varied considerably, even in organisations that otherwise demonstrated good practice. Usually former apprentices entered straight into the company's continuing professional development (CPD) process. The longer-term retention of apprentices and certainly their access to further education and training depended on the extent to which these considerations were embedded within the company's CPD or appraisal process.

Training and development of former apprentices employed by the hairdressing SME mentioned above continued to be guided by a review process for all staff. This consisted of an annual review of performance with the employee, salon manager and director. The review may identify further industrial training and qualifications. The manager concerned estimates that perhaps 30% of other employers have this review process in place. He feels that a lot of employers are 'not up to speed' in dealing with employees.

An example of a typical CPD process includes that of a county council whose CPD process recommences every April following the publication of their business plan. All staff have a performance and development review, which includes a personal discussion with their manager and an overview of where the organisation is going. The employee also gets feedback on managers' views on how they are performing and how their department can be developed to meet targets better. This includes identifying appropriate training. There is a further progress review of this after 6 months.

A medium-sized electrical contractor with its own training provider had no CPD process in place and no annual review. The reason for this was in part attributed to the fragmented nature of the workforce across multiple (and changing) work sites. There was little guidance available at the end of apprenticeship training other than on the process to become an approved electrician, which effectively meant that apprentices could stay working for the organisation. There was little training following on from this. The employer and provider said that few employees continue with training once they have achieved qualified electrician status, as there are no rewards to do so in this industry.

#### *Provider contact post-apprenticeship*

Providers said that it was hard to monitor what CPD or IAG was in place for former apprentices, particularly if they moved to a different company. Good links with current employers enabled providers to keep in touch with former apprentices, especially if

training was under way with a new cohort in the same firm. Providers could offer careers advice to the employee and guidance to their employer during subsequent visits to new trainees, and this offer was usually well received. It was also seen as an opportunity for the provider to market further training and other products. However, the employer had to approve of the career progression providers will offer.

Some providers maintained contact with former apprentices and invited them to award ceremonies and to take part in promotional events such as career exhibitions; sometimes they 'used' them as case studies to promote WBL in schools. As stated earlier by current apprentices, this function was welcomed by those it targeted – if not by the schools.

#### *Embedding ongoing career planning*

The study appears to indicate that former apprentices do not regularly review their careers and make decisions about their further development. Former apprentices demonstrated different levels of career planning. Some were taking a structured approach, following what they had originally identified as their goal, while others said they had achieved their current position by chance.

In some cases, decisions had been reactive, caused by a change of home or work circumstances. There was recognition of the impact that market forces could have on any planning process, with some arguing you can never really tell where you will end up. Within the media design industry there was a particular lack of career planning because of rapid changes in technology. The industry has been badly affected by some of these changes, including there being a decline in 'standard' jobs. In one organisation the move to digitalisation led to a decrease from 44 employees to 9 over the last couple of years. This makes any long-term career planning for the individual very difficult. Changes to organisational structures and downsizing have also led to roles being combined, whereas previously they would have represented different occupations with separate training, for example designer and printer.

However, this could provide a stronger rationale for careers guidance being an integral part of working life, enabling employees to be better able to cope with change – whether brought on by external forces or not. It also highlights the importance of continually reassessing training needs, particularly within business administration and management, to enable managers to be able to look ahead and plan for the future.

### **Participation in further education and training**

Key findings about the importance of participation in further education and training:

- Apprenticeship training was seen to create the desire and capability for further learning.
- Progression to higher-level education and training was fairly common, as was taking occupationally-specific qualifications at the same level to develop a rounded skills base.
- Participation in further learning varied by organisation, especially by size.
- Participation in further learning varied by sector, particularly in sectors such as retail, where flat hierarchy can negate the need for higher qualifications.
- Barriers to participation in further learning took the form of the availability and applicability of further or higher education and training in given geographical area and sector, the lack of flexibility in working patterns and learning provision to enable access and the glass ceiling between competency-based and academic programmes.

### **Apprenticeships leading to development of training mindset**

Apprenticeship training was seen by all interviewed to stimulate a 'training mindset'. As one provider stated, former apprentices often progress into further and higher education because 'they have had their ability to learn re-awakened'. A retail provider commented:

*Because they've got into that mindset of studying, of learning, of achieving, of research, sitting tests and putting themselves onto higher awards... They realise what this can do for them and what they can continue to do. It's not just a one-off where they can stop their learning. We want to promote the ethos of lifelong learning and to encourage people to carry on.*

(P11)

A former apprentice echoed the above, adding:

*What encouraged me to continue [in education and training]? Probably just the desire to learn. And the sort of methodology of the apprenticeship. The process of having both the practical experience and the academic experience.*

(Assistant director E14, former apprentice joiner mid-1980s)

One provider estimated that approximately 70% of their apprentices progress into further learning. This may involve progressing from Level 2 to Level 3, undertaking occupationally-specific qualifications at a similar level to build a rounded skills base or pursuing higher-level qualifications such as a Higher National Certificate (HNC), a degree or a Master of Business Administration (MBA).<sup>8</sup> The LSDA analysis of the *Labour Force Survey* from December 2004 to February 2005 also supports this view, stating that 13% of former apprentices aged 16–24 had completed NVQ Level 4 qualifications and above. The same was true for 38% of former apprentices aged 25–27.

### **Industry-specific training**

Employees at a hairdressing SME, including former apprentices, were often sent on industry-specific courses as refreshers or to provide motivation. As a relatively large salon, they have good contracts with hairdressing suppliers such as l'Oréal. As part of their negotiated contract, suppliers provide a certain amount of courses within their 'academies'. However, the employer noted that funding further qualifications and industry-specific updating could be hard for smaller salons, as they do not have the same negotiating power as larger salons have with suppliers to gain free access to industry courses. These external courses can thus be very expensive.

A large engineering company provided an example of how the support of the employer can further encourage progression and help apprentices to reach their full potential. This company 'expects' their apprentices to undertake the NVQ Level 4 and HNC after completion of the Advanced Apprenticeship. They expected all of the seven AMAs supported in 2005 to have the capability to progress through this route, but are aware of the possibility that they may not want to continue their education. However, this would mean that former apprentices would take longer to progress in their careers.

Another large engineering company provided a further example. An engineering manufacturing apprentice had decided on completion of his framework that he would like to study mechanical engineering full time at university. This was his personal choice, but the company sponsored him throughout his degree and there was no obligation on him to go back and work for the company – although he did. The company paid him £1500 each year during his degree and gave him paid employment during the summer. The former apprentice valued his degree experience but argued that had he gone into engineering after following the academic path from school he would not have the background

---

<sup>8</sup> Few of those interviewed mentioned foundation degrees.



knowledge of the sector and the practical experience that enabled him to carry out his job more effectively than if he had not taken the apprenticeship path.

### **Support for training**

Providers across the sectors commented on the difference between the support for progression to further education or training that large and small employers could offer for progression. Big organisations were thought to want their employees to progress, and Level 3 was not necessarily seen as an end-point, with some organisations expecting progression beyond this level. In contrast, small companies are more likely to want a return on their investment after trainees have finished, or are even nearing the end of, their apprenticeships. The small firm may support the apprentice to undertake further studies, but is likely to want to wait some time before so doing.

Small employers may instead contract with a new apprentice(s) to start the training process again to ensure that they have a pool of labour and for any succession planning. This does not necessarily end the career progression of the former apprentice, and the break from formal study may have benefits in allowing them to consolidate and apply their experience. It is, however, important to maintain the momentum for learning, as some former apprentices noted that once out of a learning routine it could be difficult to return to education.

A large employer provider offering engineering and retail apprenticeships in the motor vehicle context saw the importance of maintaining the former apprentices' thirst for learning. The employer had a career and training plan in place to motivate staff and former apprentices to progress in their education and training. This had the additional benefit to the company of helping it realise a return on its investment in the apprenticeship training through increased staff retention:

*The programme aims to place the apprentices on a development path after achieving the Level 3 NVQ onto ILM [Institute of Leadership and Management] programmes and Level 4 Technical Certificate programmes providing a 5–6-year development programme, ensuring retention within the dealers and the training programme.*

(P7)

### **Progression into management training**

A number of the employers recognised the need to match technical competence with management training as former apprentices progress 'through the ranks'. This indicates that career progression is no longer just based on time served but on occupational competence and management ability – something that the apprenticeship training develops when effectively delivered.

*X was an apprentice joiner. He won Apprentice of the Year. At the back of this building we have the joinery workshop where they manufacture windows and doors and cupboards, etc. What happened with X, and has happened to a lot of the apprentices that have come through the scheme, is that for them the next role in the department will be as a team leader, so X became a team leader and then manager of the joiner shop. He had his NVQ Level 3 as a qualified joiner, in terms of his technical ability he's there. So the next thing that we look for would be people's management skills. And that is when he actually went on to do the Institute of Leadership and Management qualification and then the Certificate in Management Studies and the Diploma in Management Studies, which the organisation funded.*

(E16)

### **Recognition of need for further training**

Many current and former apprentices recognised the need for more qualifications to enable them to progress and were open to this possibility having developed a thirst for learning and developed the necessary abilities to undertake it.

*The certification, the actual achievement... something that remains and in 10 years' time, I can say I did this... I am doing now another NVQ Level 3 Customer Services... to improve my job role at the training centre... to work more effectively.*

(Former apprentice: P11)

*I do miss the tools but I consciously made the decision to go up because at the time when I get to 55-60 years old I don't want to be with machines on the floor, working shifts. So I did consciously take the decision to take the opportunities but having said that I enjoyed being on the floor.*

(Maintenance manager, former apprentice electrician 1995: P12)

The opportunity to undertake further education or training also proved an incentive for the recently qualified. The former apprentices recognised that access to free training, often while at work, increased the likelihood of them staying at the company as it allowed them to develop their skills and progress in their career. It also enhanced their employability should they decide to work elsewhere. According to the LSDA analysis of the *Labour Force Survey*, former Modern Apprentices, many of whom have gone on to take further qualifications, earn more than peers who are qualified at Level 2 and below.

### **Barriers to further education and training**

#### *Time away from the workplace*

A number of employers studied in the research had a less formal approach to CPD through which the needs of employees were identified and addressed to ensure optimum business effectiveness. In a company that did not have an annual review process in place, training needs tended to be identified reactively, often led by requirements of legislation rather than individual needs, for example health and safety, first aid, scaffolding and so on. Training is also often related to immediate business needs and tends to be sector-specific – fire safety courses rather than management training. There is little progression to Level 4 qualifications within this organisation. One or two individuals may undertake further study on their own initiative but may need a day off each week to do so. As with many other employers, the company can be reluctant to pay for such training, and employees have to make up the time they spend on it.

The shortage of staff in certain sectors such as care, or being tied to contract work, can present difficulties, especially to small employers, to release staff for further training. Shift patterns may also make further study more difficult. Such circumstances can reduce the progression routes available to former apprentices, and if employers are not prepared to offer some flexibility in work patterns, staff retention may suffer as employees seek more challenging opportunities elsewhere.

The need for some flexibility in working relationships is also reflected in the LSDA analysis of the *Labour Force Survey*, which suggests that former apprentices are more likely to be engaged in part-time education at university or college than their non-apprentice peers, but less likely to engage in full-time study. Former apprentices are also more likely to take part in Open University and other correspondence courses. However, former apprentices are marginally more likely to have enrolled in a course that they are not attending than non-apprentice peers.

#### *Availability of sector-specific higher-level qualifications*

Within a number of sectors, progression to Level 4 qualifications can mean a further shift towards management, building on the supervisory experience gained through NVQ Level 3 units – this shift may not be possible or desirable for the individual or the organisation. For example, within the hairdressing or motor vehicle sectors Level 4 courses are more geared towards general management or teaching, and not always sector-relevant.

A contrasting example was given in the print industry, where former apprentices at technician level were not progressing to foundation degrees in areas such as graphic design. Progression into areas such as business administration and business studies is more highly valued in this industry. Foundation degrees in graphic design are not seen as a step forward, as they develop apprentices' practical experience rather than benefiting the business through the development of business acumen.

Within retail there was a difficulty in securing apprentices' routine progression to Level 3 and beyond. The Advanced Apprenticeship is pitched at line management level, but in retail not all apprentices are able to gain the form of job necessary to demonstrate the occupational competence required at this level. This can be a particular issue within micro-enterprises, and could contribute to staff turnover. It may also account for the fact that most retail apprenticeships are undertaken in medium to large companies with multiple outlets. The SSC is addressing this by developing an additional Level 3 apprenticeship in brand specialisation, which is more technical than managerial. This will also be integrated at Level 2.

#### *NVQs facilitating access to further education*

There is concern about whether the Advanced Apprenticeship provides the necessary entry requirements necessary to study at degree level. Within retail, it has been found that former apprentices may have to take an access course to become eligible for entrance to undergraduate programmes. The retail SSC is considering what steps can be taken to ensure that progression within education and training is possible, including examining the two foundation degrees currently available.

Despite ensuring that progression to higher-level education and training is possible, there will also need to be evidence of demand and a business case made for progression. The retail SSC is addressing this by piloting an online progression map with employers to try to get their support for a progression pathway for apprentices. The aim is to make employers aware of how they can put the progression pathways in place and how this will improve staff recruitment and retention.

However, the structure of the retail sector offers little demand for qualifications beyond Level 3, and there is little difference between the skills and qualification required between levels. There is a relatively flat hierarchy in retail with approximately four levels:

- shop floor
- first line management
- shop management
- chief executive.

#### *Distance between vocational Level 3 and Level 4*

A large motor manufacturer and retailer commented on the 'glass ceiling', preventing progression in the industry. The gap between competency-based programmes and academic programmes can be too big for former apprentices to bridge. This gap was said to be caused by the inflexibility in the way universities deliver and assess learning, for example the need for a research-based exercise, lecture delivery and format of coursework in a style that only the university recognises. This respondent was addressing

this concern within the company's apprentice programmes, for example, by 'bolting on' academic modules to the Advanced Apprenticeship in IT, maths, science and electronics. Apprentices who take these additional elements and the Technical Certificate are then prepared at a high enough level to be able to undertake a foundation degree. However, this approach is not suitable for all apprentices, many of whom may not have the ability or time to undertake such a large programme.

#### *Local provision*

Alongside the development of appropriate qualifications there needs to be local or at least easily accessible provision. The supply-driven approach of local colleges came under some criticism by employers in the sample. A WBL provider commented on the local college's monopoly on skills delivery in the area and that the college provision was distorted by supply-driven targets. This was seen to be affecting retention, employability of students, the responsiveness of the syllabus and so on, and was also thought to limit the opportunity for progression to Level 4. The availability of specialist staff was seen to influence the availability of Ordinary National Certificates (ONCs) or HNCs and foundation degree units unduly, rather than employee and employer requirements.

A college in the south west which had run a very successful HNC programme in printing and management expressed a counter view. However, it no longer offers the programme after delivering to 25 applicants in 2 years – this to a certain extent exhausted the supply of eligible and willing candidates in the area.

### **Additional activity supporting progression**

Key findings in relation to additional activity to support career progression:

Supportive employers in apprenticeship training were carrying out additional activity to support the trainee's future career progression. Examples include:

- matching progression through the framework(s) with management training
- enabling apprentices to gain chartered status on completion of their technician-level programme
- ensuring that apprentices experience a wide range of roles within their training
- mentoring by senior colleagues and the practice of senior colleagues taking apprentices under their wing and training as their successor
- placing emphasis on interpersonal skills development including team building exercises, mentoring, and activity weekends
- embedding apprentices firmly in the employment structure.

#### ***Rules for work***

One learning provider firmly believed in enhancing the employability of apprentices from day one of their training. This was often done in very simple ways, such as setting clear expectations and rules of behaviour to which apprentices must adhere, including standards of discipline, language and dress code. The provider has not often had to enforce the rules as they are being followed naturally, as the learners are there through their own free choice and are engaged in their programme.

#### ***Access to management training***

In one large engineering company, apprenticeships are an inherent component of the career structure of the organisation. Progress through the frameworks is accompanied by management training. Career progression material is available on the company intranet, and is easily accessible, clearly laid out and available to all.

### ***Chartered status***

A large engineering company's Apprenticeship Programme is endorsed by the Institute of Incorporated Engineers so that apprentices receive chartered status on completion. At the time of the research, only 33 organisations have this scheme in place.

### ***Work placement rotation***

A large engineering employer provider ensures that each of the apprentices experience 10 placements throughout the company over the course of their four-year training period. This gives the apprentices an insight into various job roles and increases their knowledge of the overall function of the company. This has enabled the apprentices to broaden their career horizons within the company. At the end of their training they can then use their knowledge and experience to apply for various roles through an individual process with a mentor and their training manager to match their aspirations to the jobs available.

### ***Mentoring***

Within the last year of the apprenticeship, trainees in one organisation are allocated a mentor. There are several reasons for this, including to provide 'objective' advice to learners about their career progression within the company and to discuss what area of work they would like to move into, based on their rotation experiences. The mentor can also help with the process of matching business needs with aspirations. Mentors are assigned for four years, and they undergo a training course to equip them with the skills to help fulfil this support role. There are many volunteers to act as mentors, because of what was described by the employer as the 'energy to pass on their skills'. The mentors can also provide a positive role model to the apprentices of what they can achieve. A number of apprentices referred to the positive culture in the company of long-term senior colleagues (referred to as 'lifers') passing on their knowledge.

Current apprentices also become involved in mentoring through the young apprenticeship programme operated by the company. This experience was highly praised by all those who had taken part for the management experience it had given them and the increased confidence it had left them with. The latter aspect was attributed to the experience of passing on advice and guidance to young people and dealing with authority figures such as head teachers.

### ***Articulation of aspirations***

Apprentices at the end of their training in one large engineering company have to give a presentation on their career aspirations. Based on this they then have a one-to-one session with the relevant manager and are given immediate feedback. This is meant to stimulate the apprentices to succeed and to ensure that there is no complacency on either side. At the end of the programme there is also a 360-degree feedback process, which enables the trainee to comment on their experience, and feedback is incorporated into the company's apprenticeship delivery.

### ***Team building***

One former apprentice explained that there had been 10 apprentices in the year they had begun their training. The social interaction with other apprentices and their tutors, work colleagues and mentors had enabled them to develop social, interpersonal and communication skills. These were referred to as core skills. The process of team building was seen to be particularly important in helping the apprentices interact in a business environment. It was argued that these skills were not taught at school, where friendship groups predominated.

Other providers and employers supported the development of these skills through activities including activity weekends away in the Peak District, apprentice forums and so on:

*We have an in-house MA programme that includes Induction Days, Improving Business Understanding Days and Teambuilding Days. These are designed and delivered in-house specifically to meet the current needs of the MAs. All office-based MAs also attend a monthly development session where someone from the business comes in to talk to them about their job role or a new initiative being introduced.*

(E19)

Not only did these activities help develop the personal skills of apprentices but they also could go some way towards developing loyalty to the organisation.

### **Succession planning**

When speaking to many of the former apprentices across all the employers it was not unusual to find that they had a significant hand in the training and development of current apprentices. This was true for those apprentices qualified before 1994 and to an extent those qualified after, depending on the distance travelled in their careers.

In one instance, despite not being able to take part in further learning because of time pressures, a former apprentice, now a director of a medium-sized company, was encouraging the company's apprentices to take on additional activities to their apprenticeship studies and pursue extra qualifications, knowing the benefits this would bring later in their careers. He was also 'bringing on' his own successor. He had identified a learner from among the apprentices as having management potential and being suited to office work. Taking a personal interest has enabled the director to pass on his own knowledge in terms of sharing positive experiences and helping the new apprentice avoid the negative ones.

This earmarking of new apprentices for progression to 'greater things' was common among former apprentices. It was also seen to be of great benefit to the company and served to exploit the training acquired via the apprenticeship to the full, while aiming for skills and staff retention and development:

*My lad [speaking about an apprentice] did the apprenticeship, he went to college and he did NVQs. We put X through everything... but it was hard work. He's finished his apprenticeship, he's got his HND at college, his got his NVQ Level 3 in Maintenance Engineering and he is now doing a degree in Electrical Engineering.*

*[Why did you encourage him to do it?]*

*Because my boss and I believe that we should give these people the opportunities and it's beneficial to the company. And hopefully X might be fast-tracked a little bit into other areas' projects or specific areas as well.*

(P12)

### **Ensuring a representative workforce**

Within one city council, apprenticeships were being offered to develop the workforce of tomorrow taking an inclusive role to ensure career progression for traditionally excluded groups.

*[Apprenticeship] training is also very important because there are skills shortages within the construction industry and we are under-represented with female and BME employees within the department. The Apprenticeship Training Scheme is an excellent avenue to develop the workforce of tomorrow.*

(E16)

## Conclusions

This study has undertaken a small-scale investigation into the career paths of apprentices. It concentrated on organisations where training is effectively delivered in a supportive working environment. The research findings therefore demonstrate a positive and purposeful picture of the career paths that apprenticeship training can lead to, particularly within medium-sized and large companies.

### What careers does apprenticeship training secure access to?

It appears that, when effectively delivered in supportive environments, apprenticeship programmes undertaken at advanced level can open up a wide range of opportunities for career progression within the sector of training and occasionally across sectors.

By virtue of its combination of on-the-job and off-the-job training, apprenticeship training has enabled many of the research respondents to gain access to:

- management and strategic positions
- the possibility of the transition into self-employment
- roles within teaching and assessing
- diverse opportunities applying skills in a broad range of contexts.

More opportunities existed in large organisations than smaller ones for apprentices to move around the workplace and experience different roles while training, benefiting their later careers. The practice of rotating jobs meant that they had a more rounded perspective of what their organisation offered and a broader base of experience on which they could draw when applying for internal promotions that were more plentiful in a larger company. However, within smaller firms operating good practice in the delivery and support of apprenticeships, apprentices could fulfil multiple roles and build on the base of their experience. Nevertheless, promotion opportunities tended to come about only when someone left the organisation or it grew, and were therefore more limited. There is also less flexibility in smaller organisations to allow apprentices to spend time away from the workplace to take part in further education and training post-apprenticeship.

It was generally found in organisations of all sizes that apprentices tended to stay with their original employers in both the long and short term, and that former apprentices were present at every level of the organisational structure from shop floor to director.

Sector had a large impact on the career progression available to former apprentices. Those with a tradition of apprenticeships, such as engineering, motor vehicle and construction, offered structured progression routes and the opportunity for young people to learn their trade from the bottom up, often progressing to management. It is this career structure and likelihood of a long-term career that had attracted some apprentices to their particular sector. Similar career progression can take place within retail, but it was found that the apprentice often had to move between organisations of varying sizes to achieve it.

Hairdressing apprenticeships secured entry to a profession that could be applied in numerous contexts, and offered the chance to work flexibly, become self-employed, and move into management or teaching, and so on.

While apprenticeships in care could provide an entrance point to nursing, barriers to progression were found in this and other sectors, sometimes because employers trained apprentices to fulfil a certain role and did not encourage progression beyond this.

## **Does the method and quality of the learning experience in apprenticeships support employability and access to future careers?**

Certain features of apprenticeship programmes appear to promote continued learning and the development of expertise. Some of these features relate to programme design, for example the structure and discipline of the qualifications provides a broad range of technical knowledge on which to build.

Employers visited during the course of the research were fully supportive of the apprenticeship programme and valued its components parts, particularly the NVQ – retention and achievement rates were therefore high among their apprentices. The NVQ or its equivalent qualification was equally valued by the former and current apprentices, who often saw it as a stepping-stone to greater things. Less was known and understood about the potential impact of Technical Certificates on career progression although the underpinning knowledge provided was often valued. Key skills tended to be more appreciated after their completion, for example in enabling the development of better communication skills that in hindsight had been successfully applied.

Possibly due to the high quality of delivery and good practice within the providers and employers visited, it was often the ‘apprenticeship package’ rather than the component parts that were valued by the employers and learners as providing a rounded experience and often well integrated on-the-job and off-the-job elements.

It was also found that the support and example provided by the employer and other people in the company was more important, or certainly more valued by apprentices and employers, in ensuring the employability of apprentices and their access to career progression. Former apprentices often attribute their career progression in part to the application of social, interpersonal and communication skills gained during their training. These were seen to be linked to the quality and the strength of inter-relationships between key players.

Key aspects of support include:

- peer support and mentoring in the workplace
- interpersonal skills development
- team building activities
- on-the-job experience matching off-the-job experience
- transferable recognised skills
- desirable core characteristics, such as management or supervisory units, customer care
- informal learning
- an effective CPD process.

### **Future exploration**

At present, little systematic information is available on the career progression of former apprentices. Such information could enhance the SSCs’ understanding of the career paths within their sectors. At present the only information available is provided by the individualised learner record on qualification achievement. The systematic availability of information on career patterns would enable the SSC to identify trends within sectors better and plan accordingly. It would also help facilitate conversations with providers about the type and nature of provision (via the ALP and AoC) and large employer groups.

It would be useful to undertake a similar study of apprentices who completed their training at Level 2, and those who began apprenticeship training but did not complete it,



to identify the effect this has on career progression. It would also be interesting to look at the current position of former apprentices who did not complete their training.

The relative position of male and female former apprentices within the labour market in terms of their employment status, earnings and access to further learning also merits further investigation.

## Recommendations

### Commitment of employers

- Employers' complete and active support to apprenticeship training is key to ensuring that trainees go on to achieve full and interesting careers. Employers' commitment may be increased by promoting the long-term advantages that apprenticeship training can bring to their organisations, such as employee loyalty, staff retention and a motivated workforce, as well as occupational competence and skills development.
- The LSC, SSDA/SSCs, ALP and AoC should work together to get this message across.
- The support and example of the employer and other people in the company is extremely important in enhancing the employability of the apprentice and their access to career progression. However, training for people taking on this supporting role was rarely available.
- The DfES and LSC could support this development further and encourage providers to ensure that training and support materials are routinely available to those taking on the role of mentor to ensure that it is effectively fulfilled to the benefit of the apprentice and wider organisation.

### Progression into further learning

- Many apprentices in the research progressed to further learning supported by their employers. However, it was often remarked that there was a lack of suitable provision at Level 4, and learners could have difficulty bridging the occupational competency and academic programme divide. Access to existing provision could also be problematic for a full-time employee when delivered according to a traditional timetable.
- Articulation between the qualifications gained during apprenticeship training and other qualifications needs to be secured to improve progression routes. The LSC, SSCs and QCA should work together to ensure appropriate provision with flexible delivery.

### 'Fit for purpose' apprenticeship programmes

- One of the major ways of increasing employer commitment to apprenticeships is to ensure that the programmes are fit for purpose and meet employers' needs, both in terms of content and delivery. This is also likely, in turn, to improve retention, achievement and success rates. The SSDA and SSCs should ensure that the components of the apprenticeship are appropriate and delivered in the most effective way, and are clearly in line with developments in the Framework for Achievement.
- Career progression and engagement in further learning is influenced by the quality of training experience during the apprenticeship. Continued efforts must therefore be made and supported by LSC, SSDA, ALI, ALP, AoC and other key stakeholders to increase quality in WBL.

## **Additional elements**

- The importance of the development of interpersonal and social skills within apprenticeship training should be recognised by providers and employers and supported where possible, for example through encouraging the establishment of apprenticeship fora or team building activities.
- There is a need to ensure that apprenticeships are recognised as a model of formation training that takes time – apprentices need to mature, practise their skills and gain work experience. Too much emphasis can be placed within the current system on making sure apprentices are productive workers as quickly as possible. This research shows that long-term gains can accrue from a more patient approach.

## **Information, advice and guidance**

- Information, advice and guidance should be used more effectively to inform young people of the range of options available and the potential career benefits of engaging in an apprenticeship. It is therefore crucial to ensure that young people have access to informed and impartial information. Ensuring that young people are undertaking the most appropriate option given their ambitions, interests and abilities may also decrease the number of 'false starts'. It is recommended that Connexions works in partnership with SSDA and the individual SSCs to map potential career paths stemming from apprenticeships. This information should then be communicated to young people within schools and colleges, and given the same status as information on other available pathways.

## **Business acumen**

- Self-employment was often considered to be a desirable but sometimes daunting option by former and current apprentices. The inclusion of entrepreneurship within the school curriculum and apprenticeship training could encourage young people to develop some necessary business acumen. This would help them realise any ambitions of self-employment or make them more likely to contribute to the 'bottom line' of any company through a better understanding of business processes.

### Appendix 1. Employers responding to the survey

Employer (E)	Size of current workforce	Number of apprentices	Number of FMAs	Number of AMAs	Number of previous apprentices	Number of FMAs	Number of AMAs	Number of FMAs	Number of AMAs	Areas	Since when
E1/P1	50-249	3		3	10		6	4		Engineering Bus Admin ICT Retail Hair & Beauty	2001
E2	250+	270		270	hundreds			all		Engineering	1950s
E3	250+	1		1	1			1		Engineering	2000
E4	250+	approx 230								ICT	2001
E5	250+	39		39	84			84		Health & SC	Apr 2000
E6*	10-49	72	22	50	300	22	22	278		Hair & Beauty	Since inception
E7*	1-9	72	22	50	300	22	22	278		Hair & Beauty	Since inception
E8	10-49	2		2	2			2		Bus Admin Finance	1998
E9	10-49				1			1		Bus Admin	Oct 1999
E10	86	2		2	2			2		Engineering	2001
E11	250+	196		196						Health & SC	2002
E12	250+	42	36	8	100+					Bus Admin Warehouse & Distribution	Since inception
E13**		36		36						Engineering Bus Admin	1936
E14	50-249	36		36	80					Construction	1980 approx
E15***	250+	3	1	2	12	7	5			Construction Engineering Bus Admin	1994

E16											ICT Retail Hosp, S & R	
	250+	45-50									Construction Bus Admin ICT	1975
E17	50-249	2	1	1	8	8				8	Construction	1994
E18	250+	390		390	116	116				116		1990
E19	250+	15	14	1	69	69	approx 50	approx 10	approx 10	10	Bus Admin AAT Carpentry Plumbing Electrics	Oct 2001

\* E6 and E7 are combined - E6 is the hairdressing salon, E7 the training provider

\*\* E13 has three people on Graduate Apprenticeship

\*\*\* Answering as an employer

**Table 3. Employers responding to the survey by size, number and type of apprenticeships offered and area**

Source: Labour Force Survey 2001-2002

## Appendix 2. Providers responding to the survey

Provider (P)	Number of apprentices enrolled currently	Number of FMAs	Number of AMAs	Number of previous apprentices	Number of FMAs	Number of AMAs	Areas	Since when
P1	79	53	26	233	156	77	Engineering Bus Admin ICT Retail Hair & Beauty Health & SC	2001
P2	120		120	100		100	Construction	1998
P3	650	360	290	3000	1800	1200	Construction Engineering Bus Admin ICT Retail Hosp, S & R Hair & Beauty Health & SC	
P4	329	95	234	839	315	524	Engineering Bus Admin	2000
P5/E7	72	30	42	350	35	315	Hair & Beauty	1994
P6	308	244	35				Horticulture Accountancy Floristry	
P7	403		403				Engineering Retail Supervisory Mgmt	
P8	425	237	188	1228	548	680	Construction Engineering	1998
P9	42	32	10	200 approx	180	40	Engineering	1997

P10							14,706			Media & Design	1983
										Construction Engineering Bus Admin ICT Retail Hosp, S & R E2E	
P11									Yes	Bus Admin Retail Hosp, S & R Hair & Beauty Management	inception
P12							1000+			Construction Engineering Bus Admin	1994
P13							166		166	Engineering	1998
P14							1766	1113	653	Construction Engineering Bus Admin ICT Retail Hosp, S & R Hair & Beauty Health & SC	1994

**Table 4. Providers responding to the survey by size, number and type of apprenticeships offered and area**

Source: Labour Force Survey 2001 - 2004

### Appendix 3. Description of former apprentices taking part in interviews

Still with employer who sponsored training	Framework	Level	Approx apprenticeship start date	Current job role	Further education and training
Yes	Fire Service Operations	AMA	1998-2000	Vocational support	Watch Management NVQ Level 3, crew command course
Yes	Business admin	National traineeship then trade apprenticeship	1991	Senior trainer	Assessor NVQ, Customer Service NVQ
Yes	Apprentice joiner	City and Guilds trade apprenticeship	1985	Assistant director	Advanced craft, ONC, HNC, degree, Masters (MBNA)
Now employed by provider who delivered training	Warehouse and distribution	AMA	2001-04	Training consultant	Customer Service NVQ Level 3
Yes	Electrical engineering	AMA	August 1999 to September 2003	Maintenance engineer	HNC in Electrical Engineering, HND in Electronic and Electrical Engineering. Just commenced Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical and Electronic Engineering
No	Electrical engineering	AMA	September 1995	Maintenance Manager	Management training, ET5 Electrical Technician Certificate
Yes	Customer service	FMA/AMA	Completion 2003	Quality assistant	C&G training course outlining the admin procedures behind the C&G. Various Learndirect courses
Yes	Business administration	AMA	Completion 2003	Tutor and assessor	3-day intensive skills adviser course. Various Learndirect courses
Yes	Business	AMA	Completion 2004	Admin assistant	Various Learndirect courses



Yes	administration	FMA (now on AMA)			IT technician	Various Learndirect courses
Yes	Engineering maintenance	FMA/AMA	September 1997 to September 2001		Design and project engineer	Additional units for Engineering Design NVQ, mechanical engineering degree, professional development scheme through Institution of Mechanical Engineering
Yes	Mechanical engineering	AMA	Approx 1994			
Yes	Mechanical engineering	AMA	Approx 1994			
Yes	Engineering	FMA/AMA	Completion 2003			HND
Yes	Engineering	FMA/AMA	Completion 2003			HND
Yes	Business admin	FMA/AMA	Completion 2004			HND
Yes	Business admin	FMA/AMA	Completion 2005			HND
No	Electrical engineering	Trade apprenticeship	Completion 1980s		Training manager	Assessor training
Yes	Electrical engineering	Trade apprenticeship	Completion mid-1980s		Contracts director	Occupationally-specific City and Guilds, assessor training, short management course
Yes	Motor vehicle	Trade apprenticeship	Completion approx 1980		Training manager	
No	Motor vehicle	AMA	Completion 1993-95		Trainer	
?	Motor vehicle	Trade apprenticeship	Completion early 1980s			

**Table 5. Characteristics of former apprentices taking part in interviews**

Source: Labour Force Survey 2001-2004

## Appendix 4. Analysis of Labour Force Survey Data

Data is taken from the last quarter of the Labour Force Survey spanning from December 2004 to February 2005. Checks have been made to ensure that these findings are consistent over 4 years.

Demographics of former apprentices in the labour market

- The analysis showed that the majority of former apprentices undertook their training before 1994, with a decrease in numbers completing apprenticeship training from 1980 onwards. 64% of former apprentices were 42 or older with only 8.6% under 27 (Modern Apprentices).
- The vast majority of apprenticeships have been undertaken by men (86%).
- The vast majority of apprenticeships have been undertaken by white groups (97%).

### Age

Apprenticeship analysis variable	Age band						Total
	16-24	25-27	28-35	36-41	42+		
Completed apprenticeship	Count 188,912	Count 117,493	Count 485,426	Count 484,021	Count 2,308,481	Count 3,584,333	
	% 5.27	% 3.28	% 13.54	% 13.50	% 64.40	% 100.00	
No apprenticeship	Count 4,609,354	Count 1,661,521	Count 4,926,251	Count 4,156,710	Count 11,486,096	Count 26,839,932	
	% 17.17	% 6.19	% 18.35	% 15.49	% 42.79	% 100.00	
<b>Total</b>	Count 4,798,266	Count 1,779,014	Count 5,411,677	Count 4,640,731	Count 13,794,577	Count 30,424,265	
	% 15.77	% 5.85	% 17.79	% 15.25	% 45.34	% 100.00	

Table 6. Whether former apprentices in the labour market had completed their apprenticeship, by age Source: Labour Force Survey 2001-2004

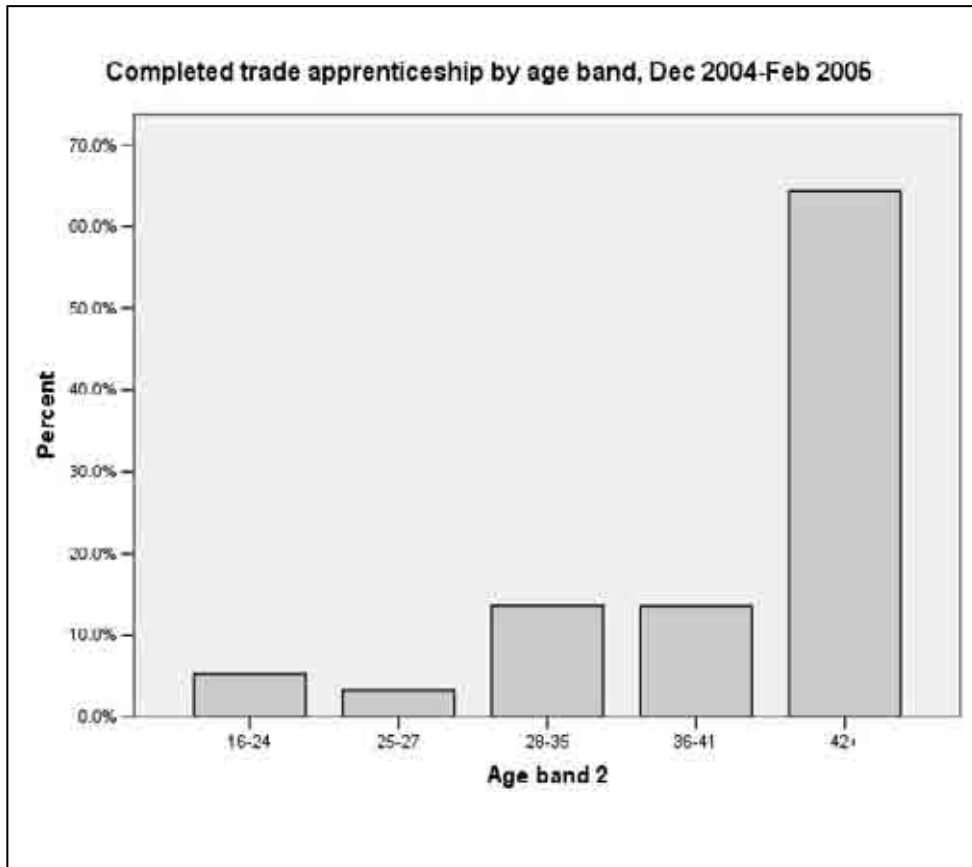


Figure 1. Percentage of learners who had completed a trade apprenticeship, by age band, Dec 2004 to Feb 2005

Source: Labour Force Survey 2001-2004

**Gender**

Apprenticeship analysis variable		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Completed trade apprenticeship	Count	3,088,884	495,449	3,584,333
	%	86.20%	13.80%	100.00%
No trade apprenticeship	Count	12,314,677	14,525,255	26,839,932
	%	45.90%	54.10%	100.00%
Total	Count	15,403,561	15,020,704	30,424,265
	%	50.60%	49.40%	100.00%

Table 7. Whether former apprentices in the labour market had completed their apprenticeship, by gender

Source: Labour Force Survey 2001-2004

**Ethnicity**

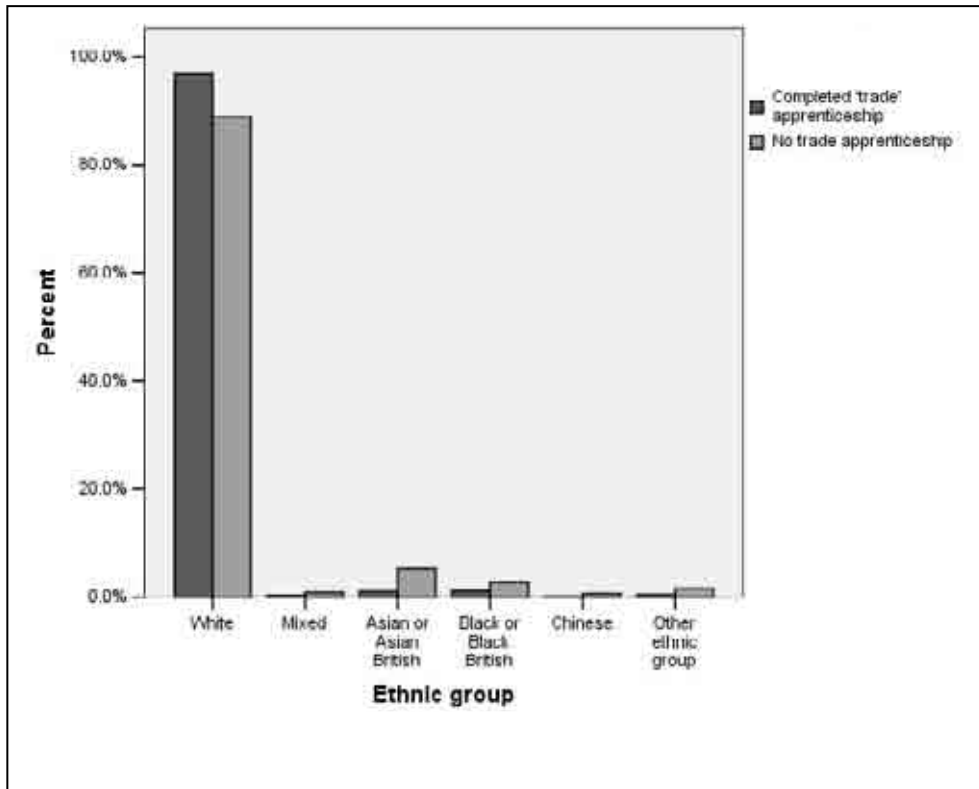


Figure 2. Percentage of learners who had completed a trade apprenticeship, by ethnic group

Source: *Labour Force Survey 2001–2004*

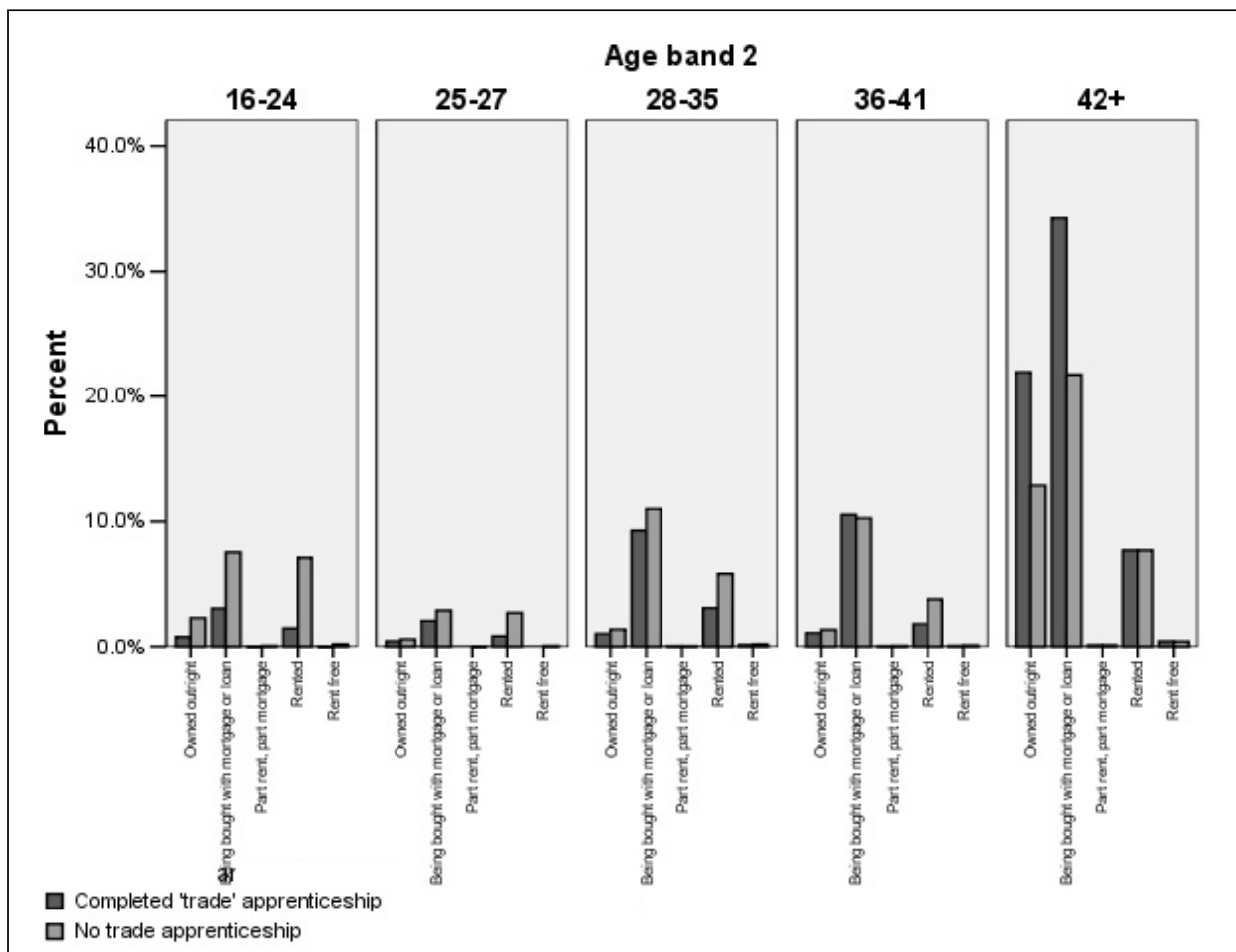
### Home ownership

- Former apprentices over 42 (but before retirement age) are more likely to own houses outright than individuals who have not taken an apprenticeship. This may reflect the greater proportion of people who undertook pre-1980 apprenticeships in the working population.

Accommodation status		Completed apprenticeship	No apprenticeship	Total
Owned outright	Count	902,732	4,927,869	5,830,601
	%	25.19	18.37	19.17
Being bought with mortgage or loan	Count	2,117,263	14,320,161	16,437,424
	%	59.08	53.38	54.05
Part rent, part mortgage	Count	8,699	79,686	88,385
	%	0.24	0.30	0.29
Rented	Count	531,259	7,248,364	7,779,623
	%	14.83	27.02	25.58
Rent free	Count	23,497	250,895	274,392
	%	0.66	0.94	0.90
Total	Count	3,583,450	26,826,975	30,410,425
	%	100.00	100.00	100.00

Age band	Accommodation status	Completed apprenticeship		No apprenticeship	
		Count	%	Count	%
16-24	Owned outright	27,299	0.76	608,271	2.27
	Being bought with mortgage or loan	108,188	3.02	2,025,170	7.55
	Part rent, part mortgage	511	0.01	14,747	0.05
	Rented	51,711	1.44	1,909,766	7.12
	Rent free	643	0.02	50,073	0.19
25-27	Owned outright	15,014	0.42	155,216	0.58
	Being bought with mortgage or loan	72,929	2.04	768,465	2.86
	Part rent, part mortgage	-	-	6,686	0.02
	Rented	29,550	0.82	715,215	2.67
	Rent free	-	-	15,408	0.06
28-35	Owned outright	36,261	1.01	363,484	1.35
	Being bought with mortgage or loan	332,555	9.28	2,947,710	10.99
	Part rent, part mortgage	1,865	0.05	12,841	0.05
	Rented	109,579	3.06	1,550,397	5.78
	Rent free	5,166	0.14	50,288	0.19
36-41	Owned outright	38,386	1.07	355,057	1.32
	Being bought with mortgage or loan	377,154	10.52	2,750,288	10.25
	Part rent, part mortgage	1,727	0.05	14,954	0.06
	Rented	64,199	1.79	1,005,424	3.75
	Rent free	2,555	0.07	27,948	0.10
42+	Owned outright	785,772	21.93	3,445,841	12.84
	Being bought with mortgage or loan	1,226,437	34.23	5,828,528	21.73
	Part rent, part mortgage	4,596	0.13	30,458	0.11
	Rented	276,220	7.71	2,067,562	7.71
	Rent free	15,133	0.42	107,178	0.40

Table 8 (above). Accommodation status of apprentices and non-apprentices, by age



Source: Labour Force Survey 2001–2004

Figure 3. Percentage of learners who had completed an apprenticeship by age and type of accommodation

Source: Labour Force Survey 2001–2004

#### Duration of unemployment

- Former apprentices as a group are less likely to experience short-term unemployment of less than a year and of 5 years or more than their non-apprentice peers. They are more likely to experience unemployment of 1–5 years' duration, however.
- It is not possible to examine this finding by age group because there is inadequate data, but from the limited analysis it appears that Modern Apprentices are more likely to experience unemployment of less than 3 months, and of 6–12 months, than individuals who have not undertaken an apprenticeship. Figures for unemployment of 1–2 years' duration are similar.

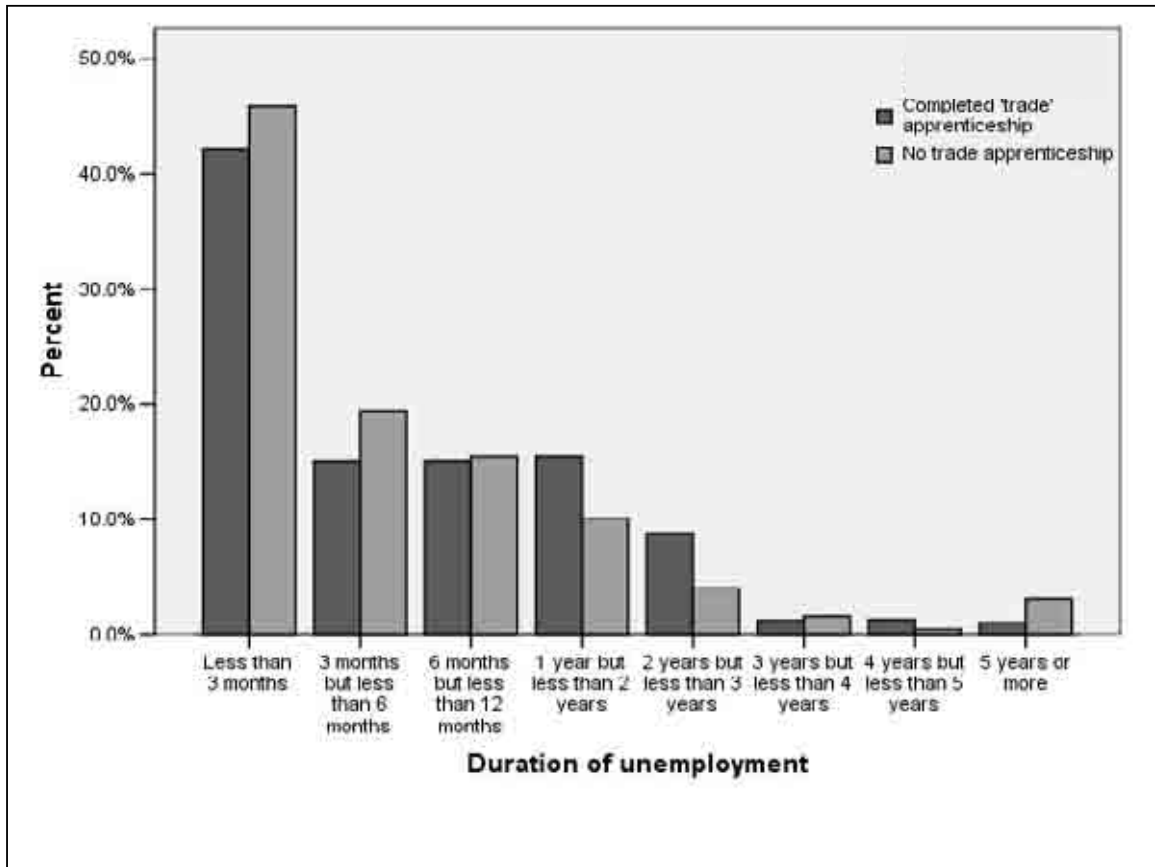


Figure 4. Duration of unemployment for those who had completed a trade apprenticeship and those without a trade apprenticeship (%)

Source: Labour Force Survey 2001–2004

Age band	Duration of unemployment	Completed apprenticeship		No apprenticeship	
		Count	%	Count	%
16-24	Less than 3 months	5,376	60.90	216,999	51.92%
	3-6 months	1,003	11.36	96,226	23.02%
	6-12 months	1,817	20.58	60,791	14.54
	1-2 years	631	7.15	30,644	7.33
	2-3 years	-	-	8,686	2.08
	3-4 years	-	-	1,415	0.34
	4-5 years	-	-	1,032	0.25
	5 years or more	-	-	2,161	0.52
25-27	Less than 3 months	2,518	49.84	36,222	47.66
	3-6 months	637	12.61	12,839	16.89
	6-12 months	1,385	27.41	12,420	16.34
	1-2 years	512	10.13	9,085	11.95
	2-3 years	-	-	1,585	2.09
	3-4 years	-	-	3,321	4.37
	4-5 years	-	-	531	0.70
28-35	Less than 3 months	4,898	51.59	80,345	46.15
	3-6 months	980	10.32	27,027	15.53
	6-12 months	841	8.86	30,418	17.47
	1-2 years	540	5.69	18,813	10.81
	2-3 years	1,741	18.34	7,884	4.53
	3-4 years	-	-	1,682	0.97
	4-5 years	495	5.21	1,177	0.68
	5 years or more	-	-	6,734	3.87
36-41	Less than 3 months	2,853	37.22	45,535	42.12
	3-6 months	1,411	18.41	21,816	20.18
	6-12 months	1,964	25.62	16,543	15.30
	1-2 years	1,437	18.75	13,733	12.70
	2-3 years	-	-	3,823	3.54
	3-4 years	-	-	3,774	3.49
	4-5 years	-	-	2,882	2.67
42+	Less than 3 months	16,785	36.47	87,856	36.48
	3-6 months	7,588	16.49	39,762	16.51
	6-12 months	5,629	12.23	37,043	15.38
	1-2 years	8,786	19.09	30,405	12.63
	2-3 years	5,018	10.90	18,790	7.80
	3-4 years	936	2.03	5,853	2.43
	4-5 years	499	1.08	1,900	0.79
	5 years or more	782	1.70	19,201	7.97

**Table 9. Duration of unemployment of apprentices and non-apprentices, by age**  
Source: Labour Force Survey 2001-2004



**Level and age of highest qualification**

- The majority of former apprentices as a group are qualified at Level 3 and above. Non-apprentices are more likely to be qualified at Level 4 and above or Level 2 and below. This is particularly true for Modern Apprentices compared to their non-apprentice peers.
- More former apprentices gain their highest qualification aged between 20 and 30 than their non-apprentice peers.
- 47.38% of former apprentices have obtained qualifications above 'trade apprenticeship' level.

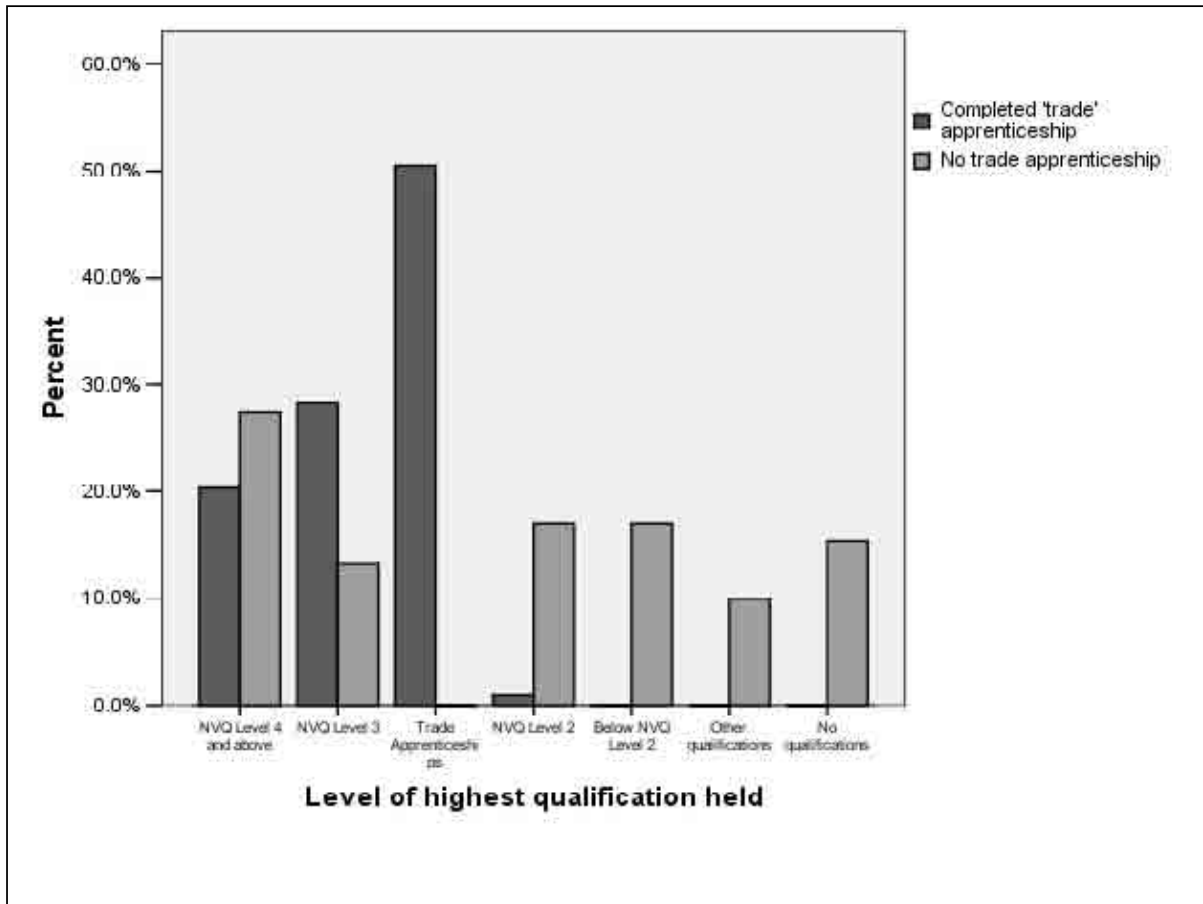


Figure 5. Level of highest qualification held for those who had completed a trade apprenticeship and those without a trade apprenticeship (%)

Source: Labour Force Survey 2001–2004

Age band	Level of highest qualification	Completed apprenticeship		No apprenticeship	
		Count	%	Count	%
16-24	NVQ Level 4 and above	15,561	8.24	608,026	13.23
	NVQ Level 3	81,804	43.30	1,282,346	27.90
	Trade apprenticeship	89,375	47.31	-	-
	NVQ Level 2	2,172	1.15	1,186,270	25.81
	Below NVQ Level 2	-	-	848,166	18.45
	Other qualifications	-	-	230,597	5.02
	No qualifications	-	-	441,389	9.60
25-27	NVQ Level 4 and above	20,452	17.41	631,401	38.10
	NVQ Level 3	49,474	42.11	262,471	15.84
	Trade apprenticeship	45,929	39.09	-	-
	NVQ Level 2	1,638	1.39	259,359	15.65
	Below NVQ Level 2	-	-	198,065	11.95
	Other qualifications	-	-	163,017	9.84
	No qualifications	-	-	142,869	8.62
28-35	NVQ Level 4 and above	83,057	17.11	1,727,458	35.16
	NVQ Level 3	162,953	33.57	588,094	11.97
	Trade apprenticeship	237,498	48.93	-	-
	NVQ Level 2	1,918	0.40	809,352	16.47
	Below NVQ Level 2	-	-	840,885	17.11
	Other qualifications	-	-	492,107	10.02
	No qualifications	-	-	455,575	9.27
36-41	NVQ Level 4 and above	117,992	24.38	1,222,540	29.48
	NVQ Level 3	138,314	28.58	465,515	11.23
	Trade apprenticeship	222,458	45.96	-	-
	NVQ Level 2	5,257	1.09	758,161	18.28
	Below NVQ Level 2	-	-	874,976	21.10
	Other qualifications	-	-	355,985	8.58
	No qualifications	-	-	469,451	11.32
42+	NVQ Level 4 and above	491,001	21.28	3,149,667	27.45
	NVQ Level 3	579,475	25.11	962,283	8.39
	Trade apprenticeship	1,214,547	52.63	-	-
	NVQ Level 2	22,468	0.97	1,532,260	13.35
	Below NVQ Level 2	-	-	1,784,369	15.55
	Other qualifications	-	-	1,422,652	12.40
	No qualifications	-	-	2,623,157	22.86

**Table 10. Level of highest qualification of apprentices and non-apprentices, by age**  
Source: *Labour Force Survey 2001-2004*

### Current engagement in education

- Former apprentices are more likely to be currently engaged in part-time education at university or college than their non-apprentice peers (55% compared with 29%) and less likely to engage in full-time education (8% compared with 51%). This was particularly true for former Modern Apprentices.
- Former apprentices are more likely to take part in Open University (7% compared with 3%) and other correspondence courses (22% compared with 12%). This was particularly true for former Modern Apprentices.
- Former apprentices are marginally more likely to have enrolled in a course that they are not attending than non-apprentice peers (2.97% compared with 1.7%). This was particularly marked for former Modern Apprentices.

Current education received	Completed apprenticeship		No apprenticeship		Total
	Count	%	Count	%	
At school	0	0.00	4,655	0.12	4,655
Sandwich course	0	0.00	14,219	0.38	14,219
Full-time at univ/poly or college	17,444	8.44	1,916,318	50.81	1,933,762
Part-time at school	0	0.00	1,849	0.05	1,849
Training in nursing etc	4,276	2.07	64,889	1.72	69,165
Part-time at univ/poly or college	113,996	55.13	1,085,509	28.78	1,199,505
Open college	4,485	2.17	60,129	1.59	64,614
Open University	13,681	6.62	104,990	2.78	118,671
Other correspondence course	45,749	22.13	440,431	11.68	486,180
Course not stated	0	0.00	12,479	0.33	12,479
Enrolled but not attending	6,138	2.97	64,147	1.70	70,285
Enrolled but not stated if attending	1,001	0.48	2,014	0.05	3,015
<b>Total</b>	<b>206,770</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>3,771,629</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>3,978,399</b>
Not enrolled on course	3,377,563		23,060,929		26,438,492

**Table 11. Current education of apprentices and non-apprentices**

Source: *Labour Force Survey 2001-2004*

Age band	Current education received	Completed apprenticeship		No apprenticeship	
		Count	%	Count	%
16-24	At school	-	-	4,655	0.24
	Sandwich course	-	-	7,777	0.40
	Full-time at univ/poly or college	5,544	22.03	1,612,382	82.17
	Part-time at school	-	-	1,849	0.09
	Training in nursing etc	-	-	19,114	0.97
	Part-time at univ/poly or college	15,566	61.86	217,378	11.08
	Open college	-	-	9,369	0.48
	Open university	989	3.93	11,310	0.58
	Other correspondence course	1,873	7.44	63,396	3.23
	Course not stated	-	-	3,235	0.16
	Enrolled but not attending	1,191	4.73	11,792	0.60
	<b>Total</b>	<b>25,163</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1,962,257</b>	<b>100.00</b>
25-27	Sandwich course	-	-	1,119	0.43

	Full-time at univ/poly or college	2,166	15.34	97,086	37.52
	Training in nursing etc	-	-	6,021	2.33
	Part-time at univ/poly or college	7,411	52.49	103,147	39.87
	Open college	-	-	3,730	1.44
	Open university	538	3.81	8,441	3.26
	Other correspondence course	2,994	21.21	33,193	12.83
	Course not stated	-	-	437	0.17
	Enrolled but not attending	1,010	7.15	5,557	2.15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14,119</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>258,731</b>	<b>100.00</b>
	Not enrolled on course	103,374	2.88	1,401,793	5.22
28-35	Sandwich course	-	-	1,590	0.31
	Full-time at univ/poly or college	2,423	7.44	103,533	20.29
	Training in nursing etc	1,175	3.61	10,918	2.14
	Part-time at univ/poly or college	15,993	49.09	233,589	45.78
	Open college	-	-	12,536	2.46
	Open university	2,651	8.14	23,454	4.60
	Other correspondence course	8,488	26.05	101,431	19.88
	Course not stated	-	-	3,040	0.60
	Enrolled but not attending	1,430	4.39	19,161	3.76
	Enrolled but not stated if attending	421	1.29	1,004	0.20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>32,581</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>510,256</b>	<b>100.00</b>
	Not enrolled on course	452,845	12.63	4,414,422	16.45
36-41	Sandwich course	-	-	1,415	0.36
	Full-time at univ/poly or college	4,325	10.63	50,048	12.57
	Training in nursing etc	629	1.55	14,581	3.66
	Part-time at univ/poly or college	20,802	51.11	193,142	48.51
	Open college	1,402	3.44	13,533	3.40
	Open university	4,065	9.99	21,675	5.44
	Other correspondence course	9,087	22.33	92,169	23.15
	Course not stated	-	-	994	0.25
	Enrolled but not attending	391	0.96	9,594	2.41
	Enrolled but not stated if attending	-	-	1,010	0.25
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40,701</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>398,161</b>	<b>100.00</b>
	Not enrolled on course	443,320	12.37	3,757,655	14.00
42+	Sandwich course	-	-	2,318	0.36
	Full-time at univ/poly or college	2,986	3.17	53,269	8.29
	Training in nursing etc	2,472	2.62	14,255	2.22
	Part-time at univ/poly or college	54,224	57.56	338,253	52.67
	Open college	3,083	3.27	20,961	3.26
	Open university	5,438	5.77	40,110	6.25
	Other correspondence course	23,307	24.74	150,242	23.39
	Course not stated	-	-	4,773	0.74
	Enrolled but not attending	2,116	2.25	18,043	2.81
	Enrolled but not stated if attending	580	0.62	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>94,206</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>642,224</b>	<b>100.00</b>
	Not enrolled on course	2,214,275	61.78	10,841,555	40.40

**Table 12. Current education of apprentices and non-apprentices, by age**  
Source: Labour Force Survey 2001-2004

### Conditions of work

- Former apprentices were more likely to work 40 hours or more than their non-former apprentice peers. This was true for apprentices who completed their training pre and post 1994.
- Former apprentices were more likely to be self-employed than non-former apprentices. This was true for all age groups; at ages 25–27 former apprentices were almost three times more likely to have their own business than non-former apprentices (18.3% compared with 6.29%).
- Male former apprentices were more likely to be engaged in full-time work than their non-apprenticeship peers. It was difficult to see the effect of this for former Modern Apprentices, when comparing them against a cohort of which many would be in full-time higher education, although at age 25–27 there were 92.7% of former apprentices compared with 85.2% non-apprentices in full-time work.

Age band	Total number hours usually in main job (including overtime) per week	Completed apprenticeship		No apprenticeship	
		Count	%	Count	%
16-24	0-24	8,199	4.93	798,702	29.37
	25-39	48,099	28.93	948,476	34.88
	40-54	101,266	60.91	886,208	32.59
	55+	8,679	5.22	85,664	3.15
25-27	0-24	4,210	4.17	148,948	11.49
	25-39	32,653	32.38	457,873	35.33
	40-54	56,298	55.83	611,229	47.17
	55+	7,679	7.62	77,816	6.00
28-35	0-24	31,764	7.27	603,319	15.77
	25-39	90,748	20.78	1,254,010	32.78
	40-54	261,217	59.81	1,663,526	43.49
	55+	53,034	12.14	304,288	7.95
36-41	0-24	26,857	6.16	635,489	19.49
	25-39	109,595	25.15	1,066,934	32.73
	40-54	241,073	55.32	1,282,317	39.33
	55+	58,289	13.37	275,468	8.45
42+	0-24	203,870	10.94	1,867,047	21.69
	25-39	493,101	26.46	2,972,292	34.54
	40-54	953,871	51.18	3,028,316	35.19
	55+	212,919	11.42	738,939	8.59

**Table 13. Conditions of work of apprentices and non-apprentices, by age**

Source: Labour Force Survey 2001–2004

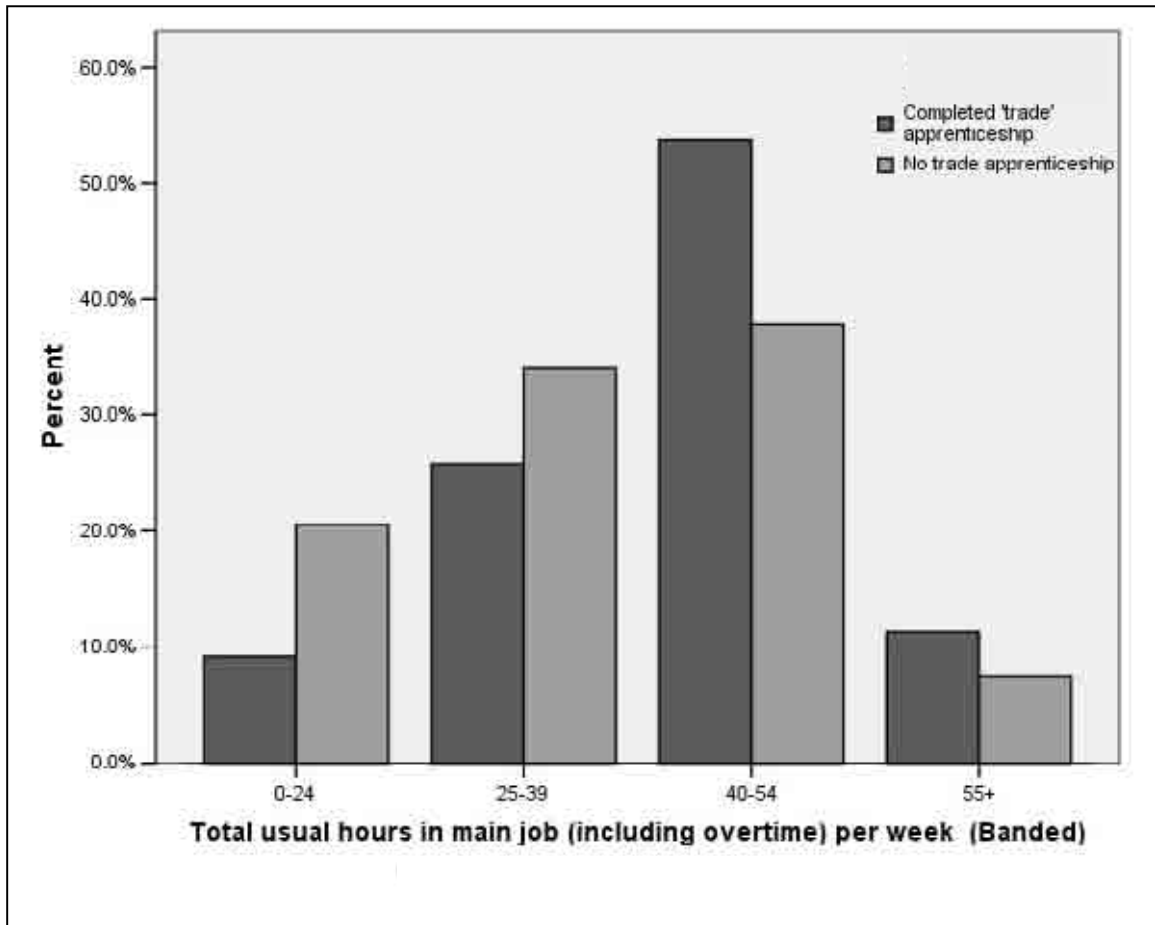


Figure 6. Usual hours in main job per week for those who had completed a trade apprenticeship and those without a trade apprenticeship (%)  
 Source: *Labour Force Survey 2001-2004*

## Self-employment

Age band	Employment status main job (reported)	Completed apprenticeship		No apprenticeship	
		Count	Col %	Count	Col %
16-24	Employee	150,911	87.80	2,664,281	95.06
	Self-employed	20,131	11.71	112,363	4.01
	Government scheme	833	0.48	16,668	0.59
	Unpaid family worker	-	-	9,288	0.33
25-27	Employee	86,117	81.70	1,235,567	93.21
	Self-employed	19,290	18.30	83,420	6.29
	Government scheme	-	-	2,257	0.17
	Unpaid family worker	-	-	4,353	0.33
28-35	Employee	351,776	79.09	3,514,610	90.26
	Self-employed	93,009	20.91	367,938	9.45
	Government scheme	-	-	4,105	0.11
	Unpaid family worker	-	-	7,358	0.19
36-41	Employee	334,356	75.25	2,927,704	87.89
	Self-employed	108,573	24.44	396,086	11.89
	Government scheme	-	-	1,858	0.06
	Unpaid family worker	1,381	0.31	5,481	0.16
42+	Employee	1,414,957	74.09	7,427,200	84.12
	Self-employed	484,343	25.36	1,352,515	15.32
	Government scheme	483	0.03	4,491	0.05
	Unpaid family worker	9,972	0.52	45,103	0.51

**Table 14. Employment status of apprentices and non-apprentices, by age**  
Source: *Labour Force Survey 2001-2004*

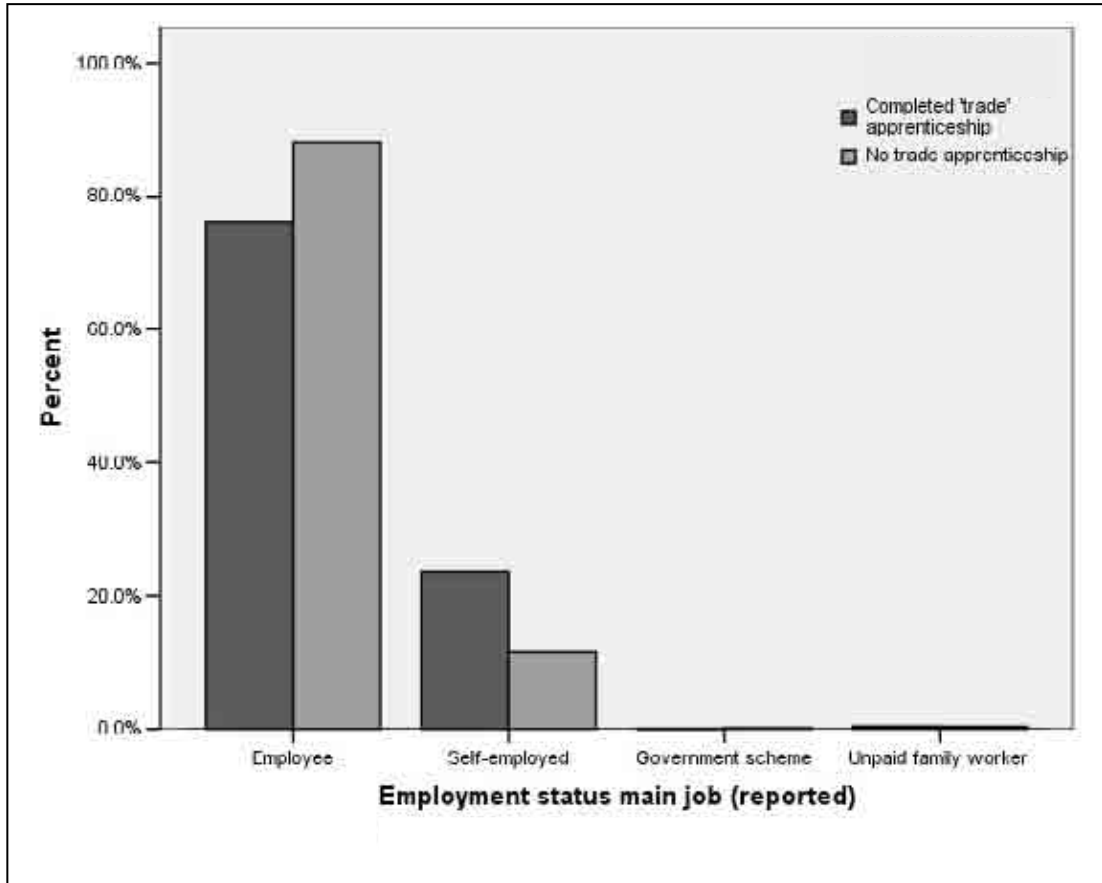


Figure 7. Type of employment for those who had completed a trade apprenticeship and those without a trade apprenticeship (%)  
 Source: Labour Force Survey 2001-2004



Full-time versus part-time employment

Age band	Full-time or part-time (all in employment)	Completed apprenticeship		No apprenticeship	
		Count	%	Count	%
16-24	Full time	161,732	93.49	1,843,835	65.42
	Part time	11,256	6.51	974,764	34.58
25-27	Full time	98,171	92.73	1,129,997	85.24
	Part time	7,692	7.27	195,665	14.76
28-35	Full time	404,064	90.69	3,078,644	78.98
	Part time	41,487	9.31	819,203	21.02
36-41	Full time	404,721	91.09	2,456,385	73.61
	Part time	39,589	8.91	880,564	26.39
42+	Full time	1,633,033	85.44	6,167,577	69.81
	Part time	278,222	14.56	2,667,505	30.19
	New Deal-PT	-	-	422	0.00

Age band	Full-time or part-time (all in employment)	Completed apprenticeship		No apprenticeship	
		Count	%	Count	%
Male	Full time	2,475,384	92.55	8,692,980	88.88
	Part time	199,346	7.45	1,087,948	11.12
Female	Full time	226,337	55.85	5,983,458	57.35
	Part time	178,900	44.15	4,449,753	42.65
	New Deal-PT	-	-	422	0.00

**Table 15. Full-time and part-time status of apprentices and non-apprentices, by age**  
Source: Labour Force Survey 2001-2004

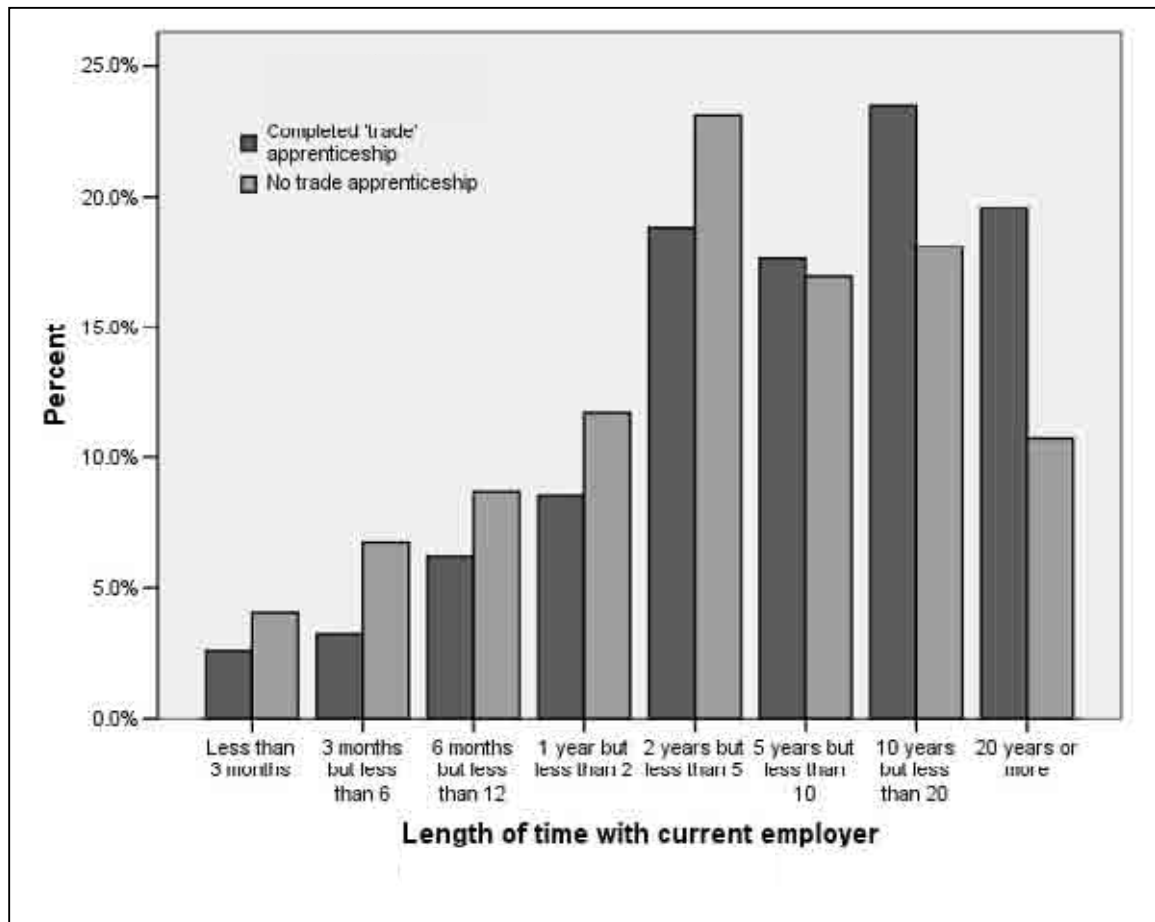
### ***Length of time with current employer***

Former apprentices were more likely to have been with their current employer for more than 5 years. This was true for both Modern Apprentices and trade apprentices. For younger former apprentices and their non-apprenticeship peers, this figure will be affected by the comparison with peers who may have left education at 21.

Age band	Length of time with current employer	Completed apprenticeship		No apprenticeship	
		Count	%	Count	%
16-24	Less than 3 months	9,248	5.40	309,767	11.08
	3-6 months	12,453	7.27	540,929	19.35
	6-12 months	18,336	10.70	506,324	18.11
	1-2 years	30,346	17.71	585,439	20.94
	2-5 years	58,016	33.85	689,090	24.65
	5-10 years	42,991	25.08	162,677	5.82
	10-20 years	-	-	1,762	0.06
25-27	Less than 3 months	3,990	3.80	61,026	4.61
	3-6 months	6,612	6.30	127,962	9.68
	6-12 months	11,486	10.94	182,518	13.80
	1-2 years	13,348	12.72	246,667	18.65
	2-5 years	34,306	32.68	475,637	35.97
	5-10 years	25,139	23.95	200,927	15.19
	10-20 years	10,085	9.61	27,610	2.09
28-35	Less than 3 months	13,198	2.98	146,691	3.78
	3-6 months	22,828	5.15	256,124	6.60
	6-12 months	35,332	7.97	364,801	9.40
	1-2 years	56,324	12.71	535,586	13.80
	2-5 years	96,181	21.70	1,102,491	28.40
	5-10 years	92,377	20.84	861,011	22.18
	10-20 years	123,340	27.82	606,087	15.61
36-41	Less than 3 months	10,538	2.38	99,981	3.01
	3-6 months	13,136	2.96	150,607	4.54
	6-12 months	32,279	7.28	260,254	7.84
	1-2 years	33,526	7.56	330,006	9.94
	2-5 years	90,604	20.43	781,842	23.55
	5-10 years	76,134	17.17	631,060	19.01
	10-20 years	128,135	28.90	826,376	24.89
42+	Less than 3 months	41,333	2.17	190,668	2.17
	3-6 months	44,320	2.33	277,674	3.16
	6-12 months	93,339	4.90	426,059	4.85
	1-2 years	127,478	6.70	651,528	7.42
	2-5 years	297,640	15.63	1,600,326	18.22
	5-10 years	303,765	15.95	1,553,530	17.69
	10-20 years	458,683	24.09	2,173,297	24.74
	20 years or more	537,454	28.23	1,911,362	21.76

**Table 16. Length of time with current employer of apprentices and non-apprentices, by age**

Source: *Labour Force Survey 2001–2004*



**Figure 8. Length of time with current employer those who had completed a trade apprenticeship and those without a trade apprenticeship (%)**

Source: *Labour Force Survey 2001–2004*

**Gross weekly pay**

As a group, former apprentices are more likely to earn more than £370 a week than non-former apprentices and more than £700 a week overall. This figure varies when comparing a group by age and qualification level, however.

Comparison by age group:

- Former apprentices aged 16–24 earn more than non-former apprentices (possibly because non-former apprentices have spent longer in full-time education).
- Former apprentices aged 25–27 earn less than their non-former apprenticeship peers (but more at very high level) – this could be related to the number starting their own business.
- From age 28+ former apprentices earn more than their non-apprenticeship peers (even at very high levels).

Comparison by qualification level:

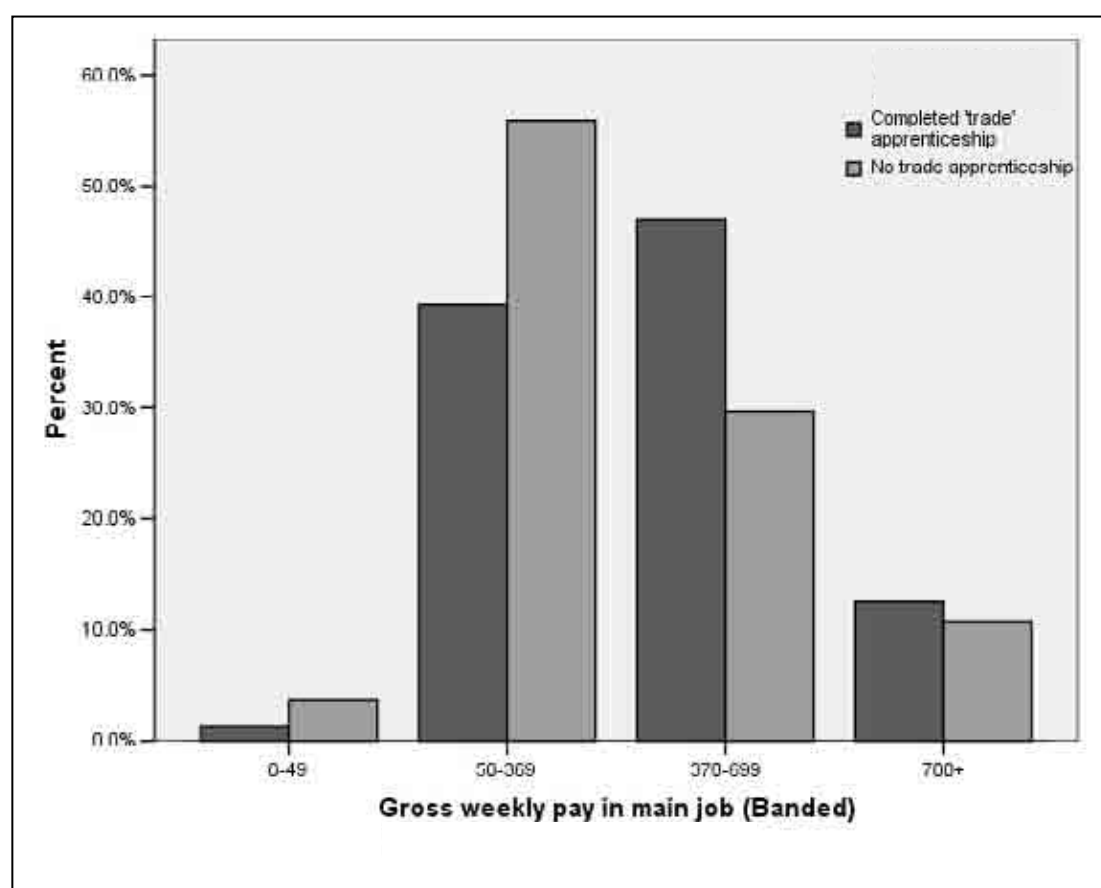
- Former apprentices earn more than peers qualified at Level 2 and below for every age band.
- Compared with peers qualified at Level 3 and above, former apprentices are more likely to earn £370–699 aged 16–24 (possibly related to comparison groups participation in full-time further education) and marginally less likely to earn £700 plus (1.79% compared to 2.4%).
- At age 25–27 they are less likely to earn £370–699 and marginally more likely to earn more than £700.

Age band	Gross weekly pay in main job (banded)	Completed apprenticeship		No apprenticeship	
		Count	%	Count	%
16-24	£0-49	525	1.55	74,020	11.28
	£50-369	22,534	66.34	505,691	77.08
	£370-699	10,299	30.32	68,318	10.41
	£700+	608	1.79	8,067	1.23
25-27	£0-49	-	-	4,227	1.20
	£50-369	15,234	64.52	196,499	55.99
	£370-699	6,812	28.85	137,425	39.16
	£700+	1,567	6.64	12,796	3.65
28-35	£0-49	1,243	1.20	18,188	1.74
	£50-369	39,119	37.70	496,624	47.43
	£370-699	50,097	48.28	405,027	38.68
	£700+	13,309	12.83	127,301	12.16
36-41	£0-49	-	-	23,391	2.59
	£50-369	34,025	30.46	464,872	51.42
	£370-699	59,790	53.52	286,806	31.73
	£700+	17,905	16.03	128,929	14.26
42+	£0-49	6,569	1.61	71,288	3.28
	£50-369	156,839	38.42	1,205,358	55.50
	£370-699	192,871	47.25	623,939	28.73
	£700+	51,923	12.72	271,360	12.49

Age band	Gross weekly pay in main job (banded)	No apprenticeship				Completed apprenticeship	
		Level 2 and below		Level 3 and above		Count	%
		Count	%	Count	%		
16-24	£0-49	39,127	13.63	30,463	9.55	525	1.55
	£50-369	232,894	92.95	232,044	72.76	22,534	66.34
	£370-699	14,707	17.33	48,755	15.29	10,299	30.32
	£700+	421	0.46	7,646	2.40	608	1.79
25-27	£0-49	2,543	2.81	509	0.23	-	-
	£50-369	67,213	74.19	103,307	45.99	15,234	64.52
	£370-699	20,388	22.50	109,981	48.96	6,812	28.85
	£700+	454	0.50	10,830	4.82	1,567	6.64
28-35	£0-49	10,847	3.20	3,307	0.57	1,243	1.20

	£50-369	218,479	64.46	199,396	34.39	39,119	37.70
	£370-699	93,704	27.64	275,763	47.56	50,097	48.28
	£700+	15,928	4.70	101,392	17.49	13,309	12.83
36-41	£0-49	13,381	3.70	5,217	1.23	-	-
	£50-369	240,127	66.41	146,002	34.39	34,025	30.46
	£370-699	90,777	25.11	167,606	39.48	59,790	53.52
	£700+	17,277	4.78	105,722	24.90	17,905	16.03
42+	£0-49	22,288	3.22	18,557	2.08	6,569	1.61
	£50-369	465,155	67.15	311,277	34.86	156,839	38.42
	£370-699	169,294	24.44	342,469	38.35	192,871	47.25
	£700+	35,941	5.19	220,673	24.71	51,923	12.72

**Table 17 (above). Gross weekly pay in main job of apprentices and non-apprentices, by age** Source: *Labour Force Survey 2001-2004*



**Figure 9. Gross weekly pay of those who had completed a trade apprenticeship and those without a trade apprenticeship (%)** Source: *Labour Force Survey 2001-2004*

#### **Career status**

As a group former apprentices are more likely to be in management, foreman or supervisory positions than their non-apprenticeship peers. For Modern Apprentices this does not hold entirely true with former Modern Apprentices, who are less likely to be a manager but more likely to be a foreman or supervisor.

Age band	Managerial status (reported)	Completed apprenticeship		No apprenticeship	
		Count	%	Count	%
16-24	Manager	10,050	6.66	190,434	7.16
	Foreman or supervisor	24,991	16.56	232,904	8.75
	Not manager or supervisor	115,870	76.78	2,238,143	84.09
25-27	Manager	11,802	13.79	236,603	19.21
	Foreman or supervisor	15,476	18.09	180,998	14.70
	Not manager or supervisor	58,285	68.12	814,042	66.09
28-35	Manager	88,821	25.25	1,070,357	30.50
	Foreman or supervisor	73,022	20.76	482,462	13.75
	Not manager or supervisor	189,933	53.99	1,955,980	55.74
36-41	Manager	116,430	34.87	942,822	32.26
	Foreman or supervisor	68,811	20.61	340,233	11.64
	Not manager or supervisor	148,687	44.53	1,639,348	56.10
42+	Manager	443,382	31.38	2,201,617	29.67
	Foreman or supervisor	202,729	14.35	845,298	11.39
	Not manager or supervisor	766,694	54.27	4,372,727	58.93

Age	Managerial status (reported)	No apprenticeship				Completed apprenticeship	
		Level 2 and below		Level 3 and above		Count	%
		Count	%	Count	%		
16-24	Manager	66,571	5.58	112,027	9.39	10,050	6.66
	Foreman or supervisor	95,425	7.99	120,797	10.13	24,991	16.56
	Not manager or supervisor	1,031,975	86.43	960,037	80.48	115,870	76.78
25-27	Manager	44,324	13.97	177,837	23.70	11,802	13.79
	Foreman or supervisor	45,678	14.39	116,615	15.54	15,476	18.09
	Not manager or supervisor	227,377	71.64	455,852	60.76	58,285	68.12
28-35	Manager	232,640	20.73	753,575	39.96	88,821	25.25
	Foreman or supervisor	147,029	13.10	265,569	14.08	73,022	20.76
	Not manager or supervisor	742,801	66.18	866,494	45.95	189,933	53.99
36-41	Manager	249,498	21.31	623,121	47.56	116,430	34.87
	Foreman or supervisor	137,695	11.76	156,055	11.91	68,811	20.61
	Not manager or supervisor	783,808	66.93	530,897	40.52	148,687	44.53
42+	Manager	487,699	21.38	1,439,834	48.99	443,382	31.38
	Foreman or supervisor	268,265	11.76	326,382	11.11	202,729	14.35
	Not manager or supervisor	1,525,013	66.86	1,172,837	39.91	766,694	54.27

**Table 18. Career status of apprentices and non-apprentices, by age**  
Source: Labour Force Survey 2001-2004

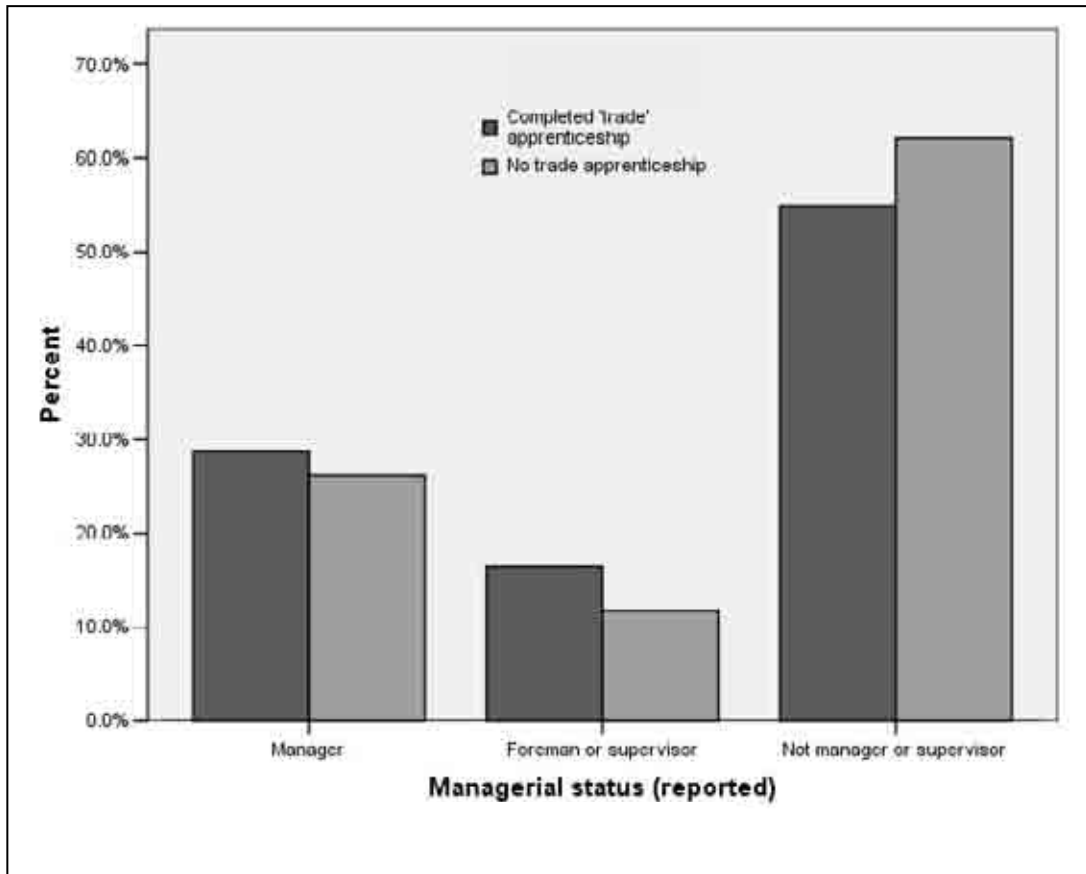
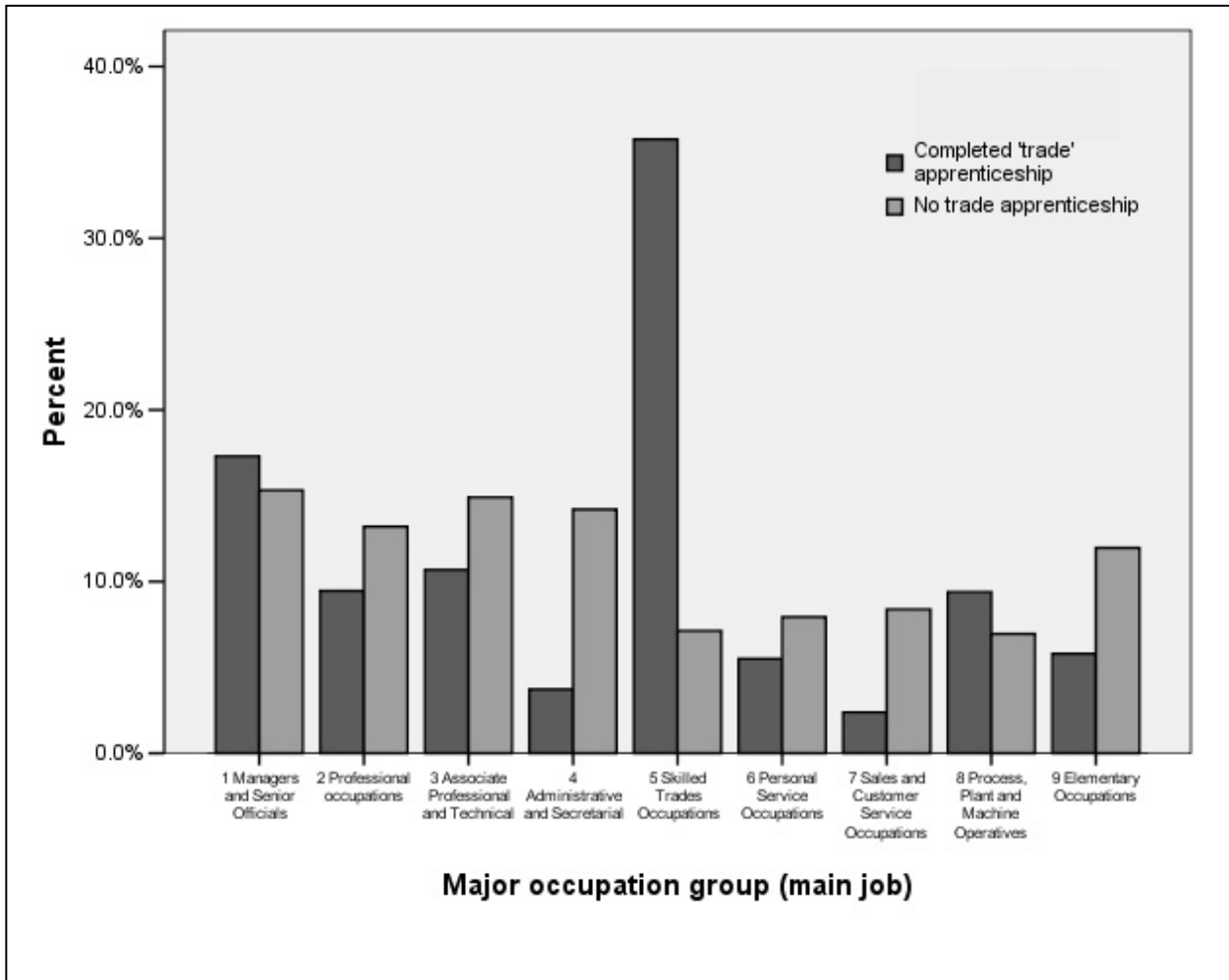


Figure 10. Career status of those who had completed a trade apprenticeship and those without a trade apprenticeship (%)  
 Source: *Labour Force Survey 2001–2004*

**Employment sector**

- Former apprentices throughout the age bands were most likely to be based within skilled trade occupations compared to non-apprentices showing retention of skills within hands-on position.
- This is reflected further in the top 10 occupations of the LFS respondents demonstrating that former apprentices fulfil a key skill role in England.



**Figure 11. Major occupation group (main job) of those who had completed a trade apprenticeship and those without a trade apprenticeship (%)**

Source: Labour Force Survey 2001–2004



## Bibliography

- Chadwick S (1999). Facilitating the progression of Modern Apprentices into undergraduate education. *Education+Training*, 41(5), 227–235.
- Clark J (2002). *Non-prescribed higher education. Where does it fit?* London: Learning and Skills Development Agency.
- DfES (2001). *Work-based training for young people and work-based learning for adults: volumes and outcomes. National Statistics First Release.* London: Department for Education and Skills.
- Dolton P, Galinda-Rueda F, Makepeace G (2004). *The long-term effects of government sponsored training.* London: Department for Education and Skills.
- FDF (2005). *Employer often argue that they do not get what they want from higher education.* Litchfield: Foundation Degree Forward.
- FEDA (2000). *Quality improvement in the work based sector.* London: Further Education Development Agency.
- Fuller A and Unwin L (2003). Creating a 'Modern Apprenticeship': a critique of the UK multi-sector, social inclusion approach. *Journal of Education and Work*, 16(1).
- Fuller A (2004). Expecting too much? Modern Apprenticeship: purposes, participation and attainment. Paper presented at the Nuffield Foundation Review of 14–19 Education and Training, 23 February.
- Hale Consulting (2004). *West London Partnership for Progression: the progression of Advanced Apprentices into higher education.* Loughborough: Hale Consulting.
- Hayward G (2005). *Participation, progress and success in vocational learning: a quantitative analysis of system performance.* London: LSDA. [Not yet published.]
- Hodgson A (2000). Expanding higher education in the UK: from 'system slowdown' to 'system acceleration'. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 54(4), 295–322.
- Hodkinson P, Sparkes A, Hodkinson H (1996). *Triumphs and tears.* London: David Fulton.
- Hodkinson P (2004). Learning careers and career progression. Paper presented at the Nuffield Foundation Review of 14–19 Education and Training, 23 February.
- Kodz J, Tackey ND, Pollard E, Dench S, Tyers C, Dewson S (2000). *Modern Apprenticeships and national traineeships: skills utilisation and progression.* London: Department for Education and Employment, Research brief no 204.
- Little B, Connor H (2005). *Vocational ladders or crazy paving? Making your way to higher levels.* London: Learning and Skills Development Agency.
- ONS (2001–04) *Labour Force Survey.* London: Office for National Statistics.
- Smith D, Bocock J (1999). Participation and progression in mass higher education: policy and the FHE interface. *Journal of Education and Work*, 14(3), 283–299.
- Stasz C, Hayward G, Oh S-A, Wright S (2004). *Outcome and processes in vocational*

*learning*. London: Learning and Skills Research Centre.

Unwin L, Fuller A, Turbin J, Young M (2004). *What determines the impact of vocational qualifications? A literature review*. Nottingham: Department of Education and Skills.

Watson J (2004). Using individual learner data to investigate progression. Paper presented at the Nuffield Foundation Review of 14-19 Education and Training, 23 February.





This report is the result of an investigation into the career paths taken by apprentices, and the extent to which their training has determined those paths. The research suggests that Apprenticeship training can lead to many positive outcomes in terms of career progression.

## making work-based learning work series 2

If this report is relevant to the work you do, you may also be interested in series 1:

- Effective entry to work-based learning
- Identifying effective practice in the delivery of Apprenticeships
- Improving employer engagement in the delivery of Apprenticeships
- Improving the grade in work-based learning
- Increasing flexibility in the delivery of Apprenticeships

See details at [www.LSNeducation.org.uk/pubs](http://www.LSNeducation.org.uk/pubs)

