

Briefing Paper

Apprenticeships that deliver for all

November 2015

Apprenticeships are a vital part of the education and skills agenda. Ensuring that apprenticeships are an attractive and viable option for a wide range of people is an important goal.

Apprenticeships remain notably gendered. In Wales in 2011/12 women accounted for 3.2% of engineering apprentices, 1.5% of vehicle maintenance and repair apprentices, 96.2% of children's care, learning and development apprentices and 91.8% of hairdressing apprentices.¹ This gendering of apprenticeships also needs to be considered against a backdrop of a skills mismatch that sees approximately 2 jobs for each qualified construction worker and 5 qualified practitioners for each job in hair and beauty.²

To ensure that apprenticeships and work placement schemes benefit all in society action is needed to encourage girls to consider routes into sectors likely to experience growth that are considered non-traditional and to ensure that government, education and business are working together to deliver provision that is suitable for all.

Key messages:

1. Closer links between educators, careers professionals and employers should continue to be cultivated and used to tackle gender stereotyping.
2. More could be done to investigate how apprenticeships and other work based learning can be delivered in a flexible manner that enables those with additional work or caring responsibilities to access provision.
3. Data is crucial to understanding who is accessing apprenticeship opportunities, where these opportunities are and the success of interventions to encourage diversity in the apprenticeships on offer and among those who participate.

¹ Sosenko F. & Netto G. (2013) "Scotland focused analysis of statistical data on participation in apprenticeships in four UK countries"

² Young Women's Trust (2014) "Totally Wasted? The crisis of women's worklessness"

1. Work should continue to be done to encourage girls to pursue apprenticeships in non-traditional sectors and links between educators, careers professionals and employers should be used to help achieve this.
 - 1.1. As noted above apprenticeships remain notably gendered with girls more likely to be in lower paid sectors and less likely to pursue careers in many of the sectors prioritised for growth such as ICT and Advanced Materials and Manufacturing.
 - 1.2. To tackle the gender imbalance in apprenticeships action is needed from government, educators and businesses. Good work is being done to engage with young women and this should continue with more job fairs such as “Not Just for Boys”³ and continued campaigns by Careers Wales to promote alternative routes.
 - 1.3. Closer links between education and business could also help by bringing young girls into contact with positive role models in non-traditional sectors who can promote apprenticeships as a viable alternative to university. Continuing to cultivate these links is important but it’s also important to ensure that employers are supported to work with educators and careers professionals to tackle gender stereotypes. One way of doing this would be to offer a gender awareness taster session to the key contact within businesses that are engaged with schools.
2. More could be done to investigate how apprenticeships and other work based learning can be delivered in a flexible manner that enables those with additional work or caring responsibilities to access provision.
 - 2.1. For some, the traditional apprenticeship model is not a viable option. Studies into the barriers to apprenticeships have shown that a lack of flexible working conditions and a lack of suitable support can prevent people from entering into them.⁴
 - 2.2. Investigating alternative models of apprenticeships and other vocational pathways could help to open them up to a wider proportion of society. Part-time apprenticeships models have been used in Australia to open up opportunities to those in their 20s and 30s to re-train.⁵ A similar model could be explored for Wales which could also open up apprenticeships to those with caring responsibilities.
3. Gender disaggregated data should be collected cross all government funded training provision to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation.
 - 3.1. Data is crucial to understanding who is accessing apprenticeship opportunities, where these opportunities are and the success of interventions to encourage diversity in the apprenticeships on offer and among those who participate.
 - 3.2. Gender disaggregated data is not readily available across apprenticeship schemes preventing effective monitoring and evaluation. Without a solid evidence base it will not be possible to accurately measure the extent to which the gendering of apprenticeships is being addressed.

³ Not Just for Boys was a jobs fair run by Chwarae Teg, Kier Construction, Careers Wales and JobCentre Plus which aimed to promote non-traditional careers to young women. The event was held on the 30th June 2015. More information is available here: <http://www.cteg.org.uk/not-just-for-boys-news/>

⁴ TUC (2013) “Under-representation by gender and race in apprenticeships: Research summary”

⁵ University of Bremen, Institute of Technology and Education (2013) “Response to consultation on review of apprenticeship training in Ireland”

3.3. Gender disaggregated data should be published for all Government funded training provision such as apprenticeships and Jobs Growth Wales which can be analysed by sector and occupation to identify areas for intervention.