

The Kent Apprenticeships Select Committee Report



March 2013



All photographs in this report depict young people undertaking apprenticeships. They have been kindly supplied by East Kent College, Thanet.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Foreword	6
1 Executive Summary	10
1.1 Committee Membership	10
1.2 Scene Setting	11
1.3 Terms of Reference	12
1.4 Scope	13
1.5 Recommendations	14
2 Background	20
2.1 Terminology	21
2.2 A Brief History of Apprenticeships	25
2.3 Apprenticeships and the Labour Market	26
2.4 Youth Unemployment	35
2.5 The Cost of Youth Unemployment	39
2.6 National Policies and Strategies	41
2.7 Local Policies and Strategies	46
2.8 Methodology	49
3 Apprenticeships – The Benefits and Challenges	52
3.1 Benefits and Challenges	53
3.2 Good Practice in the UK	61
3.3 Good Practice in the European Union	65
4 Apprenticeships and Awareness	72
4.1 Awareness and Perceptions	73
4.2 Information, Advice and Guidance	79
4.3 An Apprenticeships Kitemark for Kent	89
5 Apprenticeships and Business	96
5.1 Business and Apprenticeships in Kent	97
5.2 Barriers for Local Businesses	99
5.3 Initiatives	101
6 Apprenticeships and Education	108
6.1 Soft Skills and Experience of Work	109
6.2 The Apprenticeships Offer	119
6.3 Apprenticeships in Schools	122
6.4 Apprenticeships and Specialisations	125
7 Apprenticeships and KCC	132
7.1 KCC and Apprenticeships – Setting Good Practice	133
7.2 The Strategic Role for KCC – Looking to the Future	136

Appendix 1 Evidence	144
Appendix 2 Glossary of Abbreviations	148
Appendix 3 Tables, Diagrams and Charts	150
Appendix 4 Further Information and Useful Contacts	174
Appendix 5 Letter from the Under-Secretary of State on Apprenticeship Entry Requirements	176
References	178
Acknowledgments	184



Foreword



An "Apprenticeship", we all know, is current, popular and well thought of. We have found it so in our short but intensive Select Committee hearings and interviews. The subject, almost invariably, has invoked a smile and a genuine desire to discuss and debate. Society must not lose that enthusiasm and desire to participate, to share and to grow.

The Select Committee has only had four weeks to collect evidence, yet in that time we have spoken to over 38 witnessing bodies and over 40 apprentices. We have extensively used our Members as rapporteurs who have often sought out and managed their own interviews, providing a rich, varied and immensely valuable evidence base.

The report and the recommendations follow what we have heard and been able to verify. The report really does need to be read holistically as the apprentice picture is complex but hugely important for apprentices and employers, as well as a direct driver for skills in a changing economy, for growth and steps that are bold for Kent.

The evidence we have heard has produced eight main areas of interest. The enthusiasm for apprenticeships across society; the need for more work on effective information, advice and guidance; education and learning destination into a job/employment; supply and demand for apprentices; the importance of SMEs and their future role; a continuing step change by KCC from intervention to strategic planning, thinking and commissioning; the future quality of apprenticeships in Kent; and the importance of a bottom rung on the progression ladder through clearer progression pathways for not only apprentices but also for providers and especially employers.

I am delighted and proud to report that apprenticeships in Kent are in good hands with KCC as one of the strong leaders. The KCC 14-24 Team have shown great leadership and dynamism in a short time. Naturally there is much more to do, but we found that the building blocks are there. We hope the recommendations will be useful with the report context - helping to expand and inform on new ideas and ways forward.

Our thanks goes to all those who gave evidence in such a frank, honest and open manner. It has been so encouraging to hear from those in apprenticeships and those whose careers have been changed and uplifted by the experience. As ever our thanks goes to all those KCC staff who have been so helpful. Finally I would like to thank all the Select Committee for their time and huge commitment.

Our special thanks go to Gaetano Romagnuolo and Simon Shrimpton who in record time have researched, pulled the evidence together and written this report.

Apprentices make up a skilled, experienced workforce that sits centrally as the key powerhouse in economic and social regeneration and growth in our communities. We hope that this report can help that vital cause.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kit Smith', written over a horizontal line.

Kit Smith, Chairman of the Apprenticeships Select Committee



1. Executive Summary

1.1. Committee Membership

1.1.1. The Committee consists of nine Members of Kent County Council (KCC): six Members of the Conservative Party, one Member of the Labour Party, one Member of the Liberal Democrat Party and one Member of the Swanscombe and Greenhithe Residents' Association.



Mr Rob Bird
Liberal Democrat
Maidstone Central



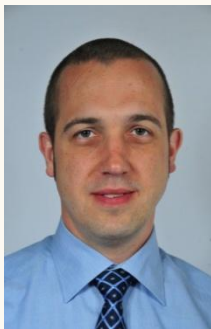
Mr Alan Chell
Conservative
Maidstone South



Mr Leslie Christie
Labour
Northfleet and
Gravesend



Mr David Hirst
Conservative
Herne Bay



Mr Richard Lees
Swanscombe and
Greenhithe Residents'
Association
(Co-optee)



Mr Steve Manion
Conservative
Dover North



Mr Michael Northey
Conservative
Canterbury South East



Mr Kit Smith
Conservative
Deal
(Chairman)



Mrs Carole Waters
Conservative
Romney Marsh

1.2. Scene Setting

- 1.2.1. Young people are the future of England and its economy. Raising their aspirations and creating the right opportunities to enhance their skills and attitudes in order to enter sustainable employment are crucial both for their independence and the quality of their lives, as well as for the country's economic recovery and growth.
- 1.2.2. Addressing the employability of young people is a critical task if we want to contribute to the country's economic recovery as well as provide the best possible prospects for future generations of workers in Kent.
- 1.2.3. Kent County Council recognises the importance placed upon apprenticeships by employers, young people and government at both a local and national level and has taken a major lead in the progress Kent has made in increasing the number of apprenticeships, which now stand at around 10,000.
- 1.2.4. Following last year's Student Journey Select Committee review, which explored ways of improving the employability of young people in Kent, it was decided to organise a shorter review to investigate in more detail the issue of apprenticeships across the county.
- 1.2.5. The Apprenticeships Select Committee was tasked with making recommendations to the Council that can help to ensure that, in the future, apprenticeships in Kent will:-
 - Meet the needs of a changing economy.
 - Provide sustainable pathways for young people into jobs through the acquisition of relevant skills.
 - Consistently achieve professionally recognised high quality qualifications and skills which both employers and learners need.

1.3. Terms of Reference

- To explore apprenticeships in Kent within the wider context of the UK and the EU, and to consider how apprenticeships in Kent may evolve in the future.
- To investigate the demand for apprenticeships from employers and learners in Kent and consider ways in which apprenticeships can be championed and promoted to young people as well as employers.
- To examine the current quality of apprenticeships in Kent, delivered by a multiplicity of providers, and explore the extent to which successful completion of apprenticeships leads to sustainable employment.
- To consider the role of Kent County Council in implementing suggestions put forward in the Richard Review of Apprenticeships.
- For the Apprenticeships Select Committee to make recommendations after having gathered evidence and information throughout the review.

1.4. Scope

1.4.1. The breadth and complexity of this review requires a clear and focused approach, especially when looking to the future. For each of the terms of reference in Section 1.3 possible key themes and issues to be covered by the review are set out below:

- To explore apprenticeships in Kent within the wider context of the UK and the EU, and to consider how apprenticeships in Kent may evolve in the future.
 - a. To explore the present landscape of apprenticeships in Kent within the wider context of the UK and the EU.
 - b. To consider how apprenticeships in Kent may evolve in the future.
- To investigate the demand for apprenticeships from employers and learners in Kent and consider ways in which apprenticeships can be championed and promoted to young people as well as employers.
 - a. To investigate the demand for apprenticeships from employers and learners in Kent.
 - b. To consider ways in which apprenticeships can be championed and promoted to young people and employers.
- To examine the current quality of apprenticeships in Kent, delivered by a multiplicity of providers, and explore the extent to which successful completion of apprenticeships leads to sustainable employment.
 - a. To examine the suitability of the current range of skills and qualifications provided by apprenticeships within Kent.
 - b. To explore the extent to which the successful completion of apprenticeships leads to sustainable employment.
- To consider the role of Kent County Council in implementing suggestions put forward in the Richard Review of Apprenticeships.
 - a. To consider the implications of the Richard Review for apprenticeships in Kent.
 - b. To explore the ways in which Kent County Council can implement suggestions from the Richard Review in Kent.
- For the Apprenticeships Select Committee to make recommendations after having gathered evidence and information throughout the review.

1.5. Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Skills and Employability Service in Kent County Council (KCC) should further raise awareness about apprenticeships and their benefits amongst young people, their parents/carers and employers. It is important to contribute to a shift in the perception of apprenticeships; from poorly paid jobs to funded training which significantly enhances employability.

Recommendation 2

The Skills and Employability Service should ensure that there is a single point of contact to provide information and support for apprenticeships both to young people and to local businesses in Kent. Particular support should be offered to SMEs employing less than 100 people and to vulnerable learners.

Recommendation 3

KCC should consider the use of Gateway Centres to provide information, recruitment and employment services traditionally associated with Jobcentre Plus.

Recommendation 4

The Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills should write to Ofsted to urge that the provision and assessment of careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) in schools is reviewed. Ofsted should ensure that IAG is provided to all pupils at key transition points in their secondary education, and that it becomes a compulsory element in the Agency's assessment of schools' overall performance within 5 years. Ofsted should also assess, as part of its inspection framework, whether IAG in schools is impartial, high quality, and delivered by professionally trained and accredited people.

Recommendation 5

The Skills and Employability Service should develop, in collaboration with the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), an inclusive kitemark to recognise both learning and skills providers and employers who deliver high quality apprenticeships in the county. The kitemark should consist of two awards; one to secure a minimum achievement of Kent high standards of delivery, the other to recognise outstanding provision and excellence.

Recommendation 6

The Skills and Employability Service should recommend to the NAS and the SFA that they promote and finance in Kent:

- initiatives such as Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs), whereby businesses can offer apprenticeships without employing young people directly, and without all the accompanying “red tape”. It is hoped that initiatives such as this will incentivise local SMEs - and micro businesses in particular - to take up apprentices.
- schemes whereby an apprenticeship can be offered jointly by a group of local businesses. The apprentice will work in each of those businesses. The larger business within the group will deal with the administration and organisation of the apprenticeship, in order to fulfil its social responsibility role towards smaller businesses and the wider community.
- a “safety net” system which allows apprentices to complete their courses even if the businesses employing them cease to trade.

Recommendation 7

KCC’s Education Learning and Skills Directorate and the Economic Development and Regeneration Divisions should actively encourage the setting up of an apprenticeship model – similar to that run by BT - where a large employer quality assures, endorses and offers resources to enable the provision of apprenticeships to SMEs within the same sector.

The administration, teaching and bureaucracy are removed from both the SME and the large business, and are instead dealt with by learning and skills providers. The quality assurance of apprenticeships guarantees that SMEs offer high standard skills and knowledge that the large employer requires.

Recommendation 8

The Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills should ask the Secretary of State for Education to further encourage the teaching of soft skills and functional skills in primary schools. He should also further encourage secondary schools to organise work experience placements for all their students in order to prepare them for the world of work.

Recommendation 9

KCC’s Regeneration and Economic Development Division and Education, Learning and Skills Directorate should jointly pilot a scheme whereby post-16 students can gain valuable experience of work by using their skills to help local businesses with particular projects.

Recommendation 10

KCC's Regeneration and Economic Development Division and Education, Learning and Skills Directorate should develop a mechanism to ensure that students in Kent are offered apprenticeships as part of the September Guarantee.

Recommendation 11

The Skills and Employability Service should encourage schools and public bodies in Kent to employ apprentices as part of their workforce.

Recommendation 12

KCC's Education, Learning and Skills Directorate and Regeneration and Economic Development Division should liaise with Further Education representatives across Kent (through groups such as KAFEC) to promote the vision that each college develops an area of apprenticeship specialisation (beyond Level 2).

Recommendation 13

All KCC directorates should implement an internal performance indicator to ensure that they employ a set number of apprenticeships, including higher level apprenticeships. KCC's ambition should be to deliver high quality, reputable apprenticeships that offer good progression opportunities.

Recommendation 14

All KCC directorates should make certain that the requirement for contractors to deliver one apprenticeship opportunity for each £1 million spend on labour is fully implemented.

Recommendation 15

KCC should review its status as a training provider of apprenticeship courses, and move towards a more strategic and enabling role. It should offer more support to providers of apprenticeships, in order to stimulate their growth in a competitive, free market environment.

Recommendation 16

In order to identify new growth sectors in Kent's economy, as well as to support existing ones, it is essential that KCC fulfils a strong strategic and coordinating role. KCC can achieve this by increasing synergy through the sharing of labour market information between each of its directorates. This information should be cascaded effectively to providers and employers in order to secure confidence in the provision of apprenticeships.

Recommendation 17

The Skills and Employability Service should launch, in collaboration with the NAS, a summit to develop strategies aimed at promoting the growth of apprenticeships in the county.



EastKent
College

2. Background

Young people represent the future for Kent and its economy. It is essential to create an environment and opportunities in which they can develop their skills and fulfil their potential. In these difficult financial times accessing sustainable employment can be challenging; enhancing the employability of young people is vital if we want to contribute to the country's economic recovery and give our youth the best possible future.

One of the main tasks of an effective education system is to prepare young people for the world of work. However, the traditional focus of English secondary education on academic achievement may not be ideal for students who are better suited to applied, practical learning. Apprenticeships, through nationally recognised vocational education and training coupled with work-based learning, have a key role in developing their employability. But today's high quality, advanced apprenticeships can also offer real opportunities to those who were traditionally attracted to higher education. And, by improving workers' skills and developing sustainable employment, apprenticeships can help local businesses to develop and grow.

While apprenticeships are increasingly recognised as offering a valuable way of preparing young people for the world of work, there are still concerns about their image, delivery and effectiveness. This Committee was set up to address these issues in order to ensure that young people are able to contribute to the growth of Kent's economy, and are given the best prospects for the future.

2.1. Terminology

- 2.1.1. “**Young people**” are defined as persons aged between 16 and 24, unless stated otherwise.¹
- 2.1.2. In England anyone who is aged 16 or over, and who is not in full-time education, can currently apply for an apprenticeship. There are currently no centrally set entry requirements. Only a minority of apprenticeships – usually those at higher level – have minimum entry requirements to ensure that the apprentice has a reasonable chance of success (please see in Appendix 5 the letter from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business and Education, setting out the entry requirements for an apprenticeship).
- 2.1.3. The Richard Review defines an “**apprenticeship**” as “*a form of education that is based in the workplace. Apprentices acquire skills, knowledge and understanding through on and off-the-job learning, and develop their skills as they do their job, by testing and applying theoretical knowledge and methods directly to the practical world of work*”. Apprenticeships take between 1 and 4 years to complete depending on their level.²

“An “apprenticeship” is a work-based programme that combines practical training with study”

- 2.1.4. Apprenticeships are normally designed in collaboration with employers, and offer a structured programme that helps individuals to gain job-specific skills. Apprentices are **employees**; they receive wages and undertake most of their training in the workplace, complementing it with off-the-job education at a local college or specialist training organisation.³

¹ UNstats (2011) adapted definition from Millennium Development Goals Indicators, United Nations, Geneva.

² Richard, D. (2012) The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, London.

³ National Apprenticeship Service (2011) Apprenticeships: The Basics, website, www.apprenticeships.org.uk.

2.1.5. Under the current funding regime the Government meets all of the training costs for an apprentice aged 16-18 through the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), and up to 50% of the costs for apprentices aged 19-24. The minimum salary for an apprentice is £2.65 per hour, although many apprentices are paid significantly more.⁴ The Government has also recently introduced a new incentive grant of £1500 to encourage small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to employ apprentices.⁵

2.1.6. Apprenticeships are increasingly recognised as the “gold standard” of work-based training. There are more than 200 types of apprenticeship in England, leading to over 1,200 professions. They are offered by more than 100,000 employers in 160,000 locations.⁶

2.1.7. Apprenticeships are organised in three levels:

- **Intermediate Level Apprenticeships** are designed for apprentices who work towards work-based qualifications such as Level 2 Competence Qualifications, Functional Skills and often a relevant knowledge-based qualification.
- **Advanced Level Apprenticeships** are for apprentices who work towards work-based qualifications such as Level 3 Competence Qualifications, Functional Skills and often a relevant knowledge-based qualification.
- **Higher Apprenticeships** are intended for apprentices who work towards work-based qualifications such as Level 4 Competence Qualifications, Functional Skills and often a relevant knowledge-based qualification such as a Foundation Degree.⁷

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

⁶ National Apprenticeship Service (2011) Apprenticeships: The Basics, website, www.apprenticeships.org.uk.

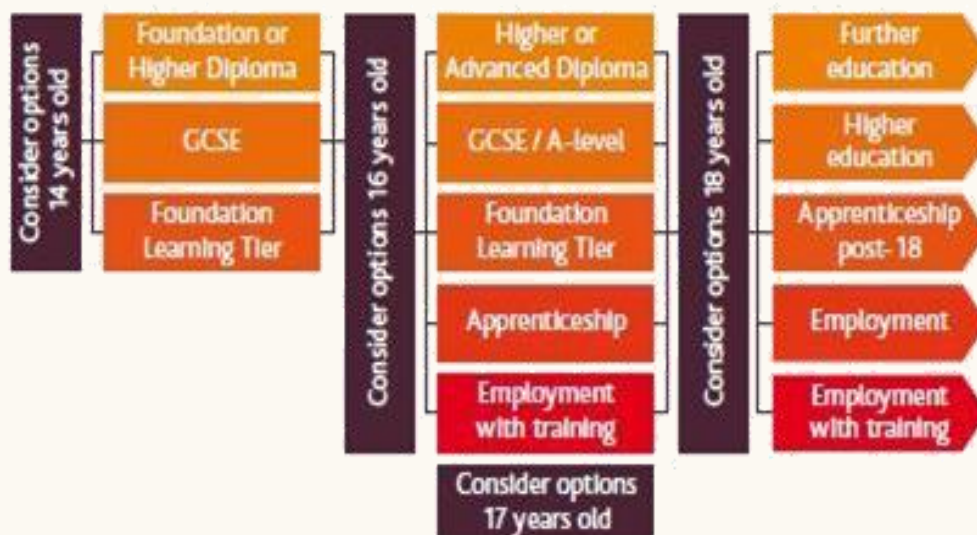
⁷ Ibid.

2.1.8. An apprenticeship must include the following elements:

- A competencies qualification which demonstrates ability in performing a particular skill, trade or occupation, and which must be achieved by the apprentice to qualify for an apprenticeship certificate.
- A technical knowledge qualification, which demonstrates the achievement of technical skills and an understanding of theoretical concepts of a particular industry and its market. Sometimes an apprenticeship framework may have an integrated qualification, combining competence and technical knowledge, which are assessed separately.
- Either key skills (for example working in teams, problem-solving, communication and using new technology), or functional skills qualifications (for example maths and English), or a GCSE with enhanced content (such as maths and English).^{8 9}

2.1.9. Apprenticeships qualifications can be used to access particular professions. They can also be viewed as stepping stones into further study, both at vocational and academic levels (see Figure 1, see also Appendix 3).¹⁰

Figure 1: Choices in education and training from age 14 to 19.



Source: www.apprenticeships.org.uk

⁸ Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2011) Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England, London.

⁹ National Apprenticeship Service (2011) Apprenticeships: The Basics, website, www.apprenticeships.org.uk.

¹⁰ Ibid.

- 2.1.10. This general definition of apprenticeships has sometimes been criticised because of their wide variation in quality. Some sources have even suggested that UK apprenticeships should not be labelled as such, when compared to the high quality, deeply immersive, multi-year apprenticeships offered in other European countries.¹¹
- 2.1.11. The definition of “**pre-apprenticeships**” is still unclear, although different sources suggest that they may involve practical education courses for 16-19 year olds in a particular industry that can lead to an apprenticeship.^{12 13} Although the definition of “**traineeships**” is also not clear, a recent discussion paper from the Government suggests that they are intended to become the preferred route for young people who wish to progress into apprenticeships but require additional training. The paper suggests that traineeships may entail work experience placements, work skills training and an adequate proficiency in functional skills, English and maths.¹⁴
- 2.1.12. In England there is also no formal definition of “**vocational education**”. The term is used to refer to a variety of non-academic programmes, from challenging and highly selective apprenticeships to study programmes of dubious value.
- 2.1.13. “**Employability skills**” can be defined as “*a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy*”.¹⁵
- 2.1.14. Employability skills include: team-working, business and customer awareness, self-management, problem solving, communication and literacy, application of numeracy and application of information technology. Underpinning these skills must be a positive attitude and a readiness to contribute.¹⁶

¹¹ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

¹² E-skills UK (2013) Apprenticeship Projects in England, website, <http://www.e-skills.com/apprenticeships/current-projects/new-pathways-to-it-careers---england>.

¹³ Studynow (2013) Education, website, <http://www.studynow.co.uk/Glossary/Pre-apprenticeship-course>.

¹⁴ Department for Education and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2013) Traineeships, London.

¹⁵ CBI (2009) Future Fit: Preparing Graduates for the World of Work, London.

¹⁶ Ibid.

2.2. A Brief History of Apprenticeships

- 2.2.1. The history of apprenticeships in England goes back to the Middle Ages. One of the first documents attempting to set out the terms and conditions for training was the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers in 1563. From this early formalisation of the master-apprentice relationship, the apprenticeship grew over the centuries.
- 2.2.2. By the late nineteenth century, the scope of apprenticeships had spread from what was (at the time) more traditional trades such as construction, paper-making and printing to include emerging sectors such as engineering and shipbuilding.
- 2.2.3. Apprenticeships today continue to reflect the emerging sectors in the economy such as retail, business and information technology. The most popular apprenticeship subject in 2010–11 was ‘customer service’.¹⁷

¹⁷ House of Commons (2012) Apprenticeships: Fifth Report of Session 2012-13, London, TSO.

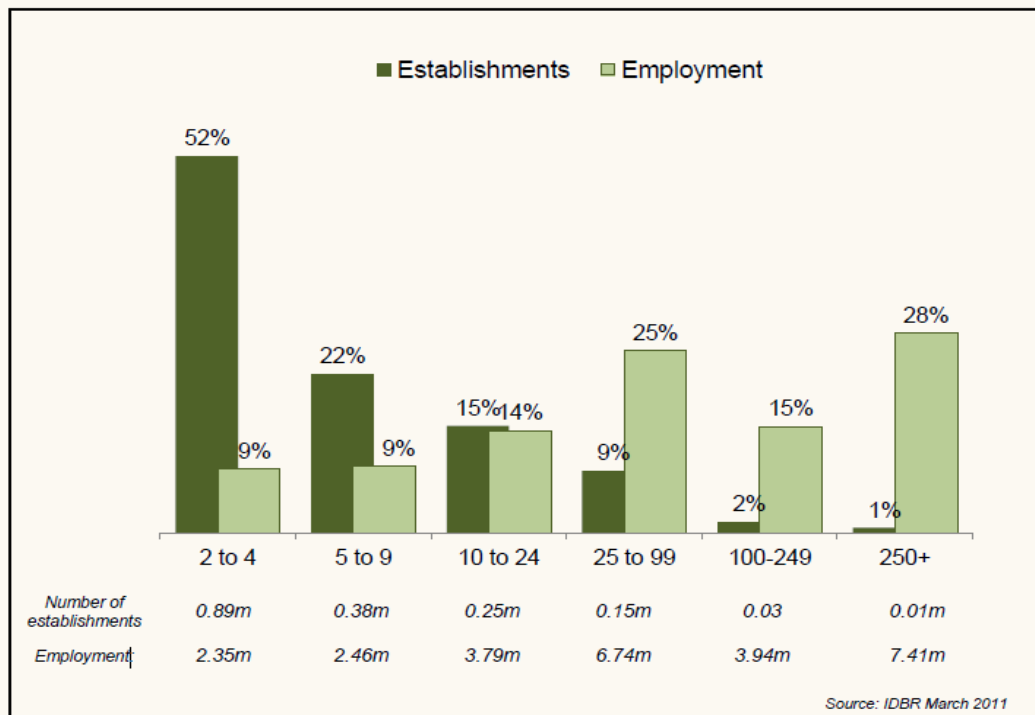
2.3. Apprenticeships and the Labour Market

The Labour Market

2.3.1. In England employment consists largely of small and medium-size firms. More than half (52%) of businesses in England are microbusinesses, with 2 to 4 workers including the employer, while 37% employ between 5 and 24 people. This means that about 9 in 10 firms (89%) employ fewer than 25 people.¹⁸ If sole traders were included, the percentage of microbusinesses with up to 4 employees in England would account for 75.9% of the total number of businesses.¹⁹ In Kent, the percentage of businesses with up to 4 employees is 76%, and the percentage of SMEs (that is, small and medium-sized enterprises with up to 250 employees) is over 99%.²⁰

2.3.2. Nationally, very large employers (those employing over 250 members of staff) represent only 1% of all businesses, but account for over a quarter of overall employment (28%).²¹ This is illustrated in Figure 2 below (see also Appendix 3).

Figure 2: Size distribution of establishments and employment (2011).



Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (2011)

¹⁸ UKCES (2012) UK Commission's Employer Perspectives Survey 2012: Evidence Report 64, UKCES, Wath-upon-Dearn.

¹⁹ Kent County Council (2012) UK Business Survey 2012, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

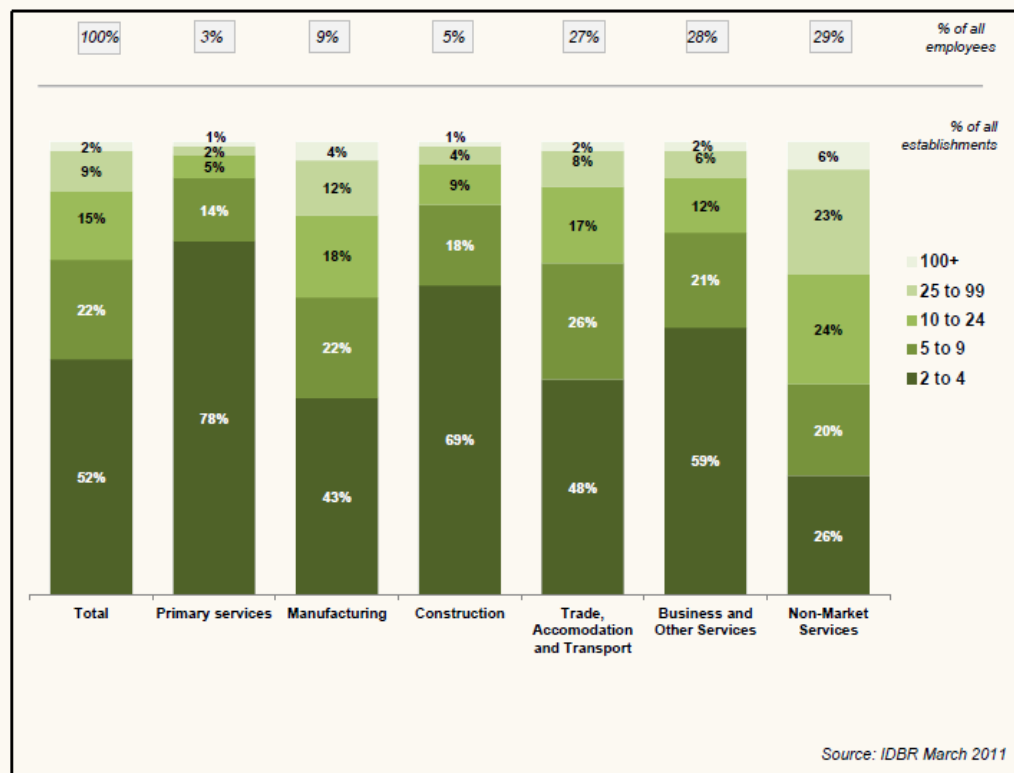
²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ UKCES (2012) UK Commission's Employer Perspectives Survey 2012: Evidence Report 64, UKCES, Wath-upon-Dearn

2.3.3. The size of sector groups in England varies considerably. The two largest sectors - Trade, Accommodation and Transport and Business, Information, Communications and Other services - each account for one-third of all establishments in the UK. By comparison, the Primary Sector and Utilities, and the manufacturing sector, each represent just 6% of all establishments.²²

2.3.4. The size profile of establishments within each sector is also very varied; the distribution of establishments across the sectors is quite different from the distribution of employment across the sectors (Figure 3). Whilst a large proportion of establishments in the UK are in the Business and Other Services sector (33%), 80% of them have fewer than ten employees. By contrast, the Non-Market Services sector only accounts for 12% of establishments, but has a higher proportion of large establishments, and employs 29% of all workers.²³

Figure 3: Size distribution of establishments in each sector, UK (2011)



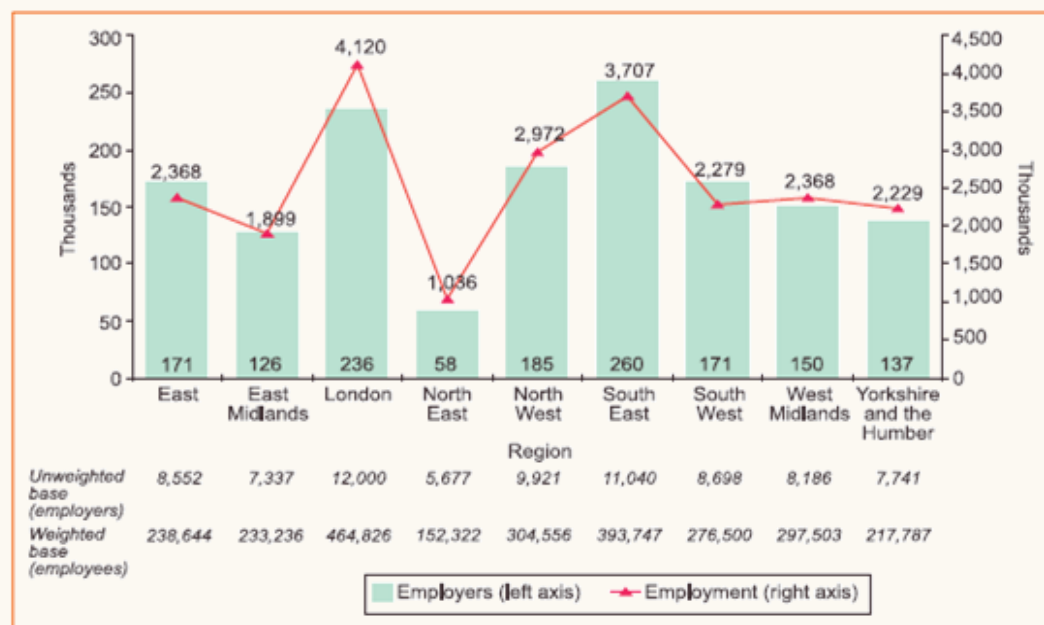
Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (2011)

²² UKCES (2012) UK Commission's Employer Perspectives Survey 2012: Evidence Report 64, Wath-upon-Dearn, UKCES.

²³ Ibid.

2.3.5. There is considerable variation in the number of firms in each region of the country. The South East has the highest number of establishments, followed by London (260,000 and 236,000 respectively), although London accounts for more employees. The North East has the lowest level of employment in the commercial sector (69%), while almost a quarter of the workforce (24%) works in central or local government. The North West and West Midlands have similar employment patterns to the North East (see Figure 4 and Appendix 3).²⁴

Figure 4: Employers and employment across regions, England (2009).



Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (2009)

2.3.6. Other notable features include the high proportion of retail and personal services businesses in the North East, and the highest number of IT firms in the South East.²⁵

2.3.7. Data taken from KCC's Draft 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, shows that the great majority of Kent's workforce is employed in Wholesale and Retail businesses. About 98,500 people work in this sector, accounting for 18.2% of the total number of employees. Although the Real Estate sector employs only 1.3% of the workforce (making it the smallest sector in terms of employment), it is the second largest sector in terms of output, contributing 13.3% (see Figure 5, also Appendix 3).²⁶

²⁴ UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009: Main Report, Wath-upon-Dearn, UKCES.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Kent County Council (2012) 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

Figure 5: Business Sector Profile, Kent (2011).

Industry Sector	2011 Employment ¹¹	%	Output £mil ¹²	%
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining, Electricity/Gas/Water	21,400	4.0	1,380	7.1
Manufacturing	38,400	7.1	1,739	9.0
Construction	31,900	5.9	1,663	8.6
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods	98,500	18.2	2,879	14.9
Transport and storage	28,100	5.2	1,161	6.0
Hotels and restaurants	34,000	6.3	470	2.4
Information and communication	11,900	2.2	626	3.2
Financial intermediation	15,150	2.8	1,067	5.5
Real estate, renting and business activities	7,000	1.3	2,570	13.3
Professional, scientific and technical activities	30,300	5.6	527	2.7
Administrative and support service activities	39,500	7.3	526	2.7
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	29,200	5.4	1,168	6.0
Education	60,600	11.2	1,048	5.4
Health and social work	73,000	13.5	1,541	8.0
Arts, entertainment and recreation	11,300	2.1	Incl below	0.0
Other community, social and personal service activities	9,700	1.8	943	4.9
All Industries	541,000*	100	19,300	100

Source: Kent County Council (2012) 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, Draft, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

2.3.8. The above figures indicate employment trends in Kent, but they do not include self-employment. This is not a route that appeals to all young people; the transition from full-time education to the self-management involved in starting up and running a business successfully can be challenging. But, for some young people, self-employment can be either the only option or the fulfilment of an ambition.²⁷

2.3.9. Every day about 1,500 businesses are launched in the UK; about 7.5% of them by young people under the age of 25. In Kent there are 25,000 young people aged between 18 and 30 who are likely to think about starting a business in the next three years. The number of recorded business start-ups in Kent is approximately 11,000 a year, of which 2,500 are estimated to be by young people under the age of 25.²⁸

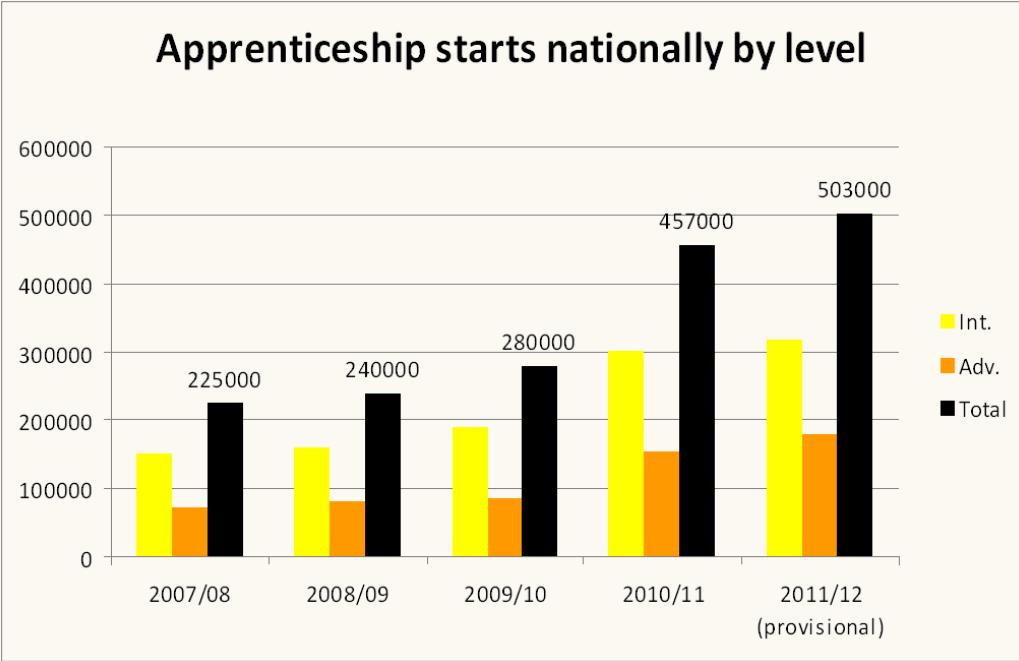
²⁷ EMPOWER (2009) Empower Report for The Kent Foundation, Maidstone, The Kent Foundation.

²⁸ The Kent Foundation (2010) Helping Young People Start Up in Business, The Kent Foundation, Maidstone, The Kent Foundation.

Apprenticeships

2.3.10. Nationally the number of apprenticeship starts in 2012 was more than half a million. This followed a steady increase in apprenticeships over the last few years. The total number of apprenticeship starts has now more than doubled from 225,000 in 2007/08 to 503,000 in 2011/12 (Figure 6, see also Appendix 3).

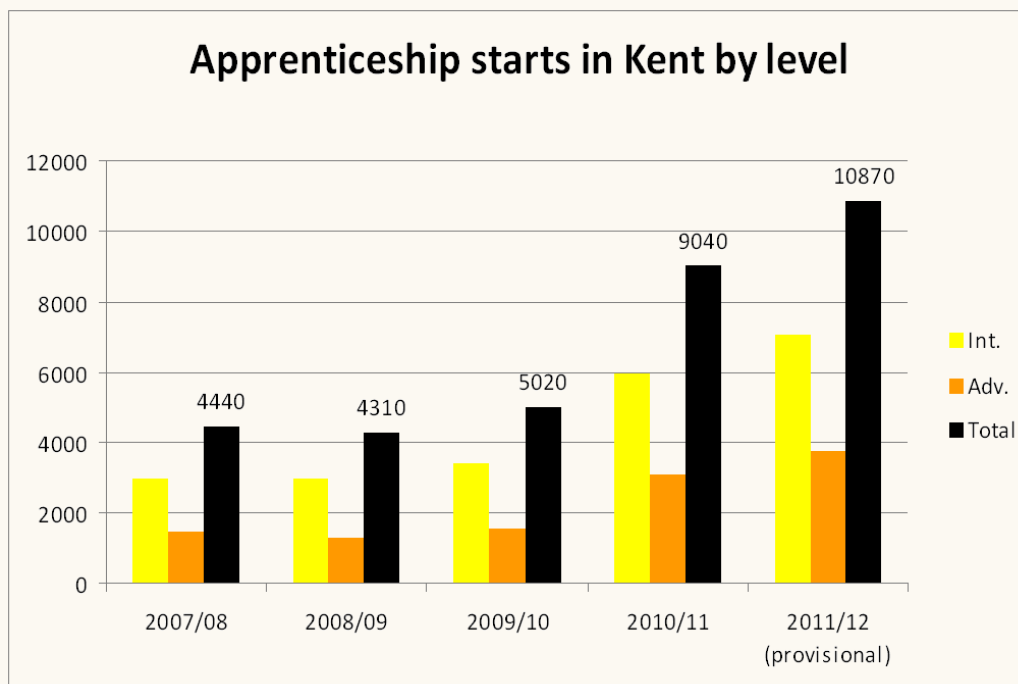
Figure 6: Apprenticeship Starts Nationally by Level, 2007/08 – 2011/12



Source: National Apprenticeship Service, 2012

2.3.11. In 2012, the number of apprenticeship starts in Kent was 10,870. This was more than double the number in 2007/8 (4,440), reflecting the national trend (Figure 7, see also Appendix 3).²⁹

Figure 7: Apprenticeship Starts in Kent by Level 2007/08 – 2011/12

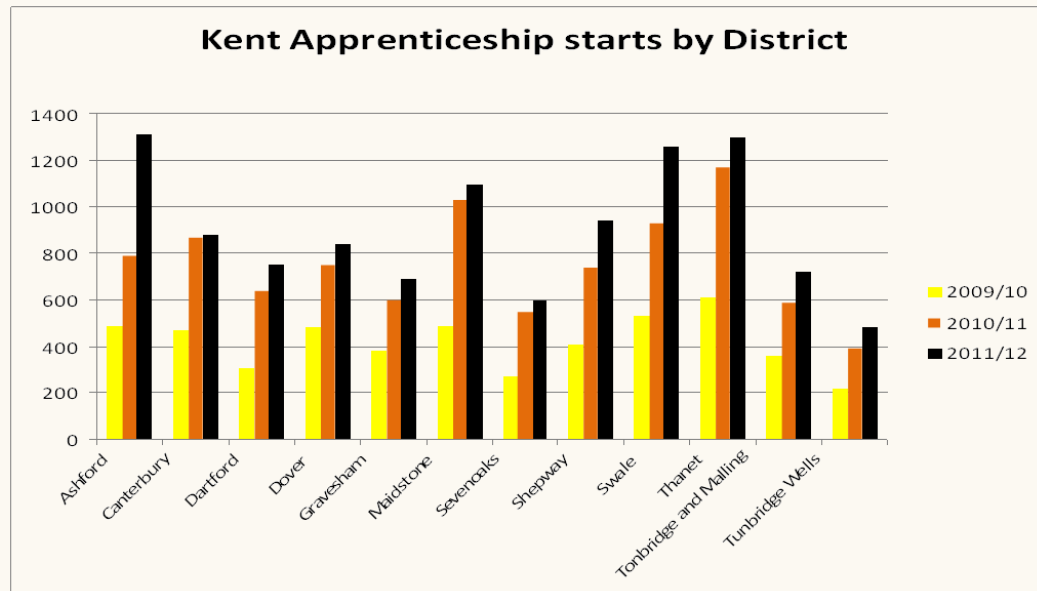


Source: National Apprenticeship Service, 2012

²⁹ Ibid.

2.3.12. This trend is also reflected at District level. In the last few years the number of apprenticeship starts in each of Kent's Districts has seen a progressive increase (see Figure 8, also Appendix 3).

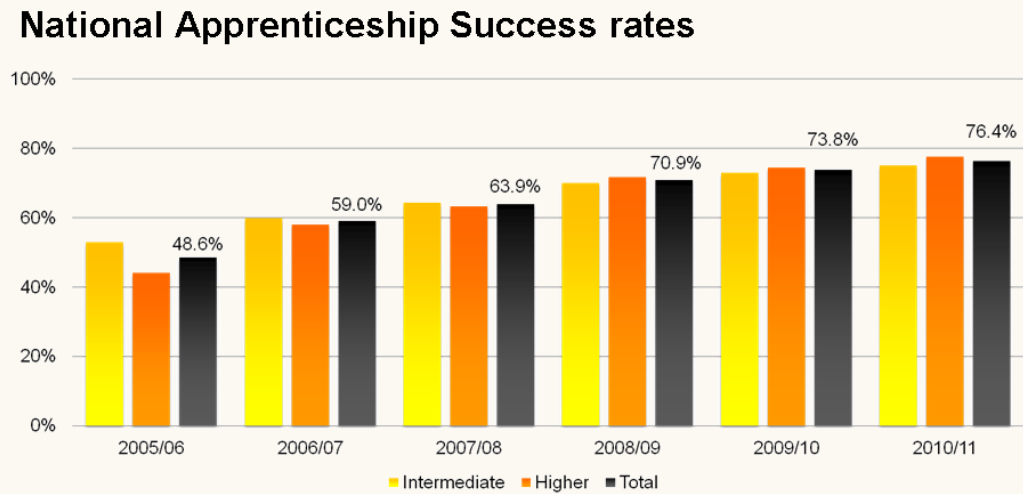
Figure 8: Apprenticeship starts in Kent by District 2009/10 – 2011/12



Source: National Apprenticeship Service, 2012

2.3.13. National Apprenticeship Success rates have progressively increased over the last few years from 48.6% in 2005/06 to 76.4% in 2010/11. This is also indicative of a longer-term trend (Figure 9, see also Appendix 3). The current success rate of 76% is equal to the non-completion rate only 10 years ago.

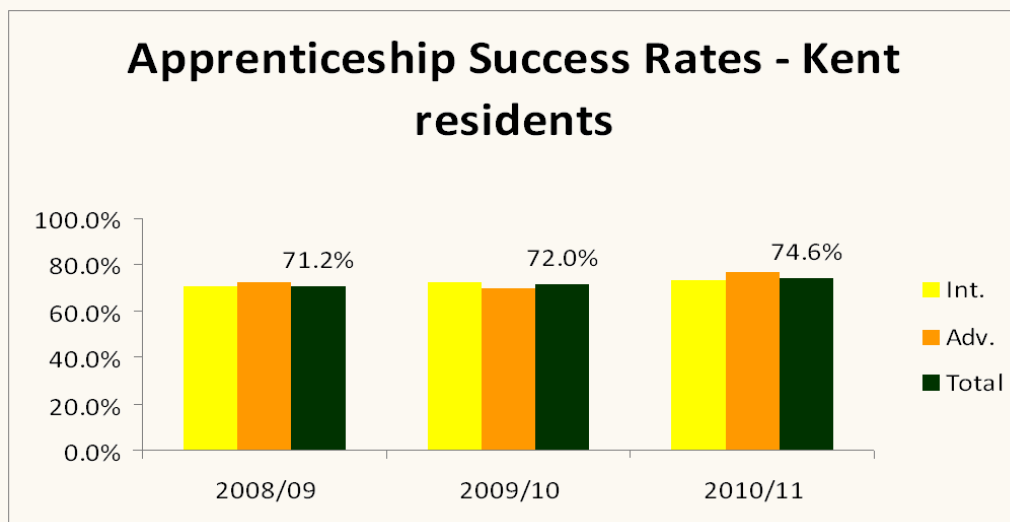
Figure 9: National Apprenticeship Success Rates 2005/06-2010/11



Source: National Apprenticeship Service, 2012

2.3.14. Apprenticeship Success rates in Kent have also steadily improved over the last few years, from 71.2% in 2008/09 to 74.6% in 2010/11. This is slightly below the national average (Figure 10 below).

Figure 10: Percentage of Apprenticeships successfully completed in Kent, 2008/09-2010/11



Source: National Apprenticeship Service, 2012.

2.3.15. The number of apprentices nationally declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) rose sharply from 2005/6 to 2010/11 but, as a proportion, fell from 11.1% to 8% (see Figure 11).³⁰

Figure 11: Numbers and proportion of apprentices declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability

Start	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
LDD - Yes	19,200	20,400	25,900	23,700	26,400	35,600
LDD - No	153,600	162,400	196,900	214,600	250,600	403,700
LDD - Unknown	2,100	1,700	2,000	1,700	2,700	3,400
Proportion of LDD	11.1%	11.1%	11.5%	9.9%	9.4%	8.0%
Grand Total	175,000	184,400	224,800	239,900	279,700	442,700

Source: Department for Education, 2012

³⁰ Department for Education and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012) Creating an Inclusive Apprenticeship Offer, London.

2.4. Youth Unemployment

- 2.4.1. Although unemployment has not reached the levels that some feared, the current state of the economy, and the lack of growth in particular, is not encouraging for job creation, especially for young people.³¹
- 2.4.2. The number of 18-24 year olds who are unemployed in the UK is about 1 million; in Kent it is nearly 10,000, more than half of whom have been out of work for more than 3 months.³²

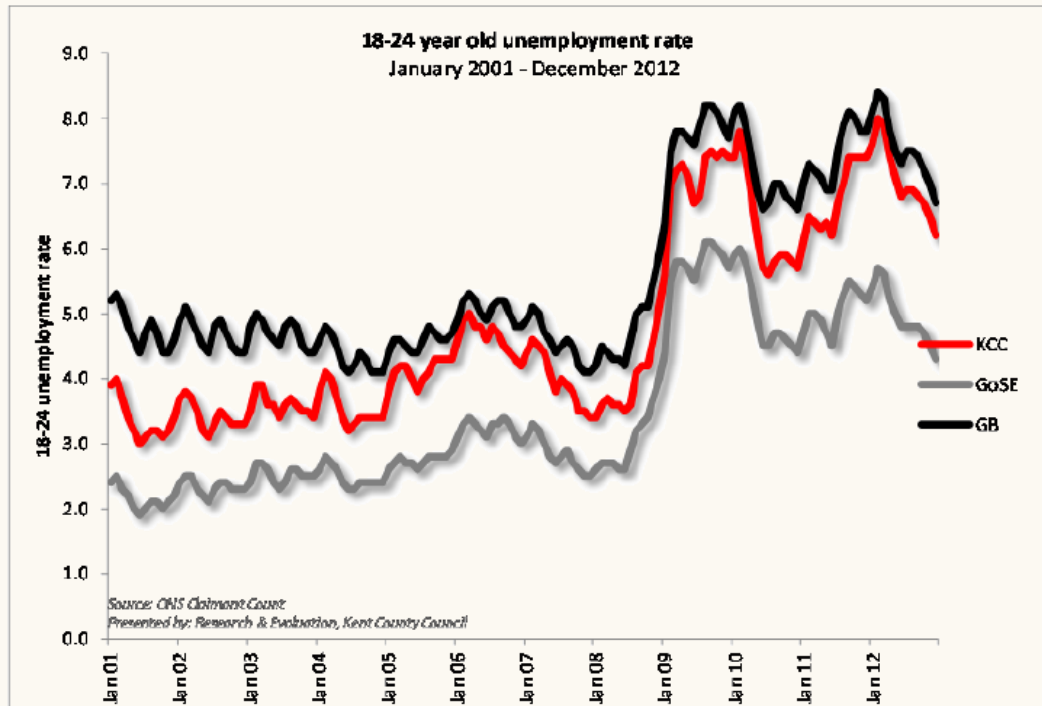
“The number of 18-24 year olds who are unemployed in the UK is about 1 million, while in Kent it is nearly 10,000. More than half of unemployed youth in Kent have been out of work for more than 3 months”

³¹ Recruitment and Employment Confederation (2010) *Avoiding a Lost Generation: Preparing Young People for Work Now and in the Future*, London, Recruitment and Employment Confederation.

³² Kent County Council (2012) *14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016*, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

2.4.3. The youth unemployment rate in the UK in the last decade has generally risen from about 5% in 2001 to 6.7% in December 2012. In Kent the unemployment rate among those aged 18-24 was slightly below the national average (just below 4% in 2001 and 6.2% in December 2012) but above the rates in the South East region (2.4% and 4.3% respectively) (Figure 12).³³

Figure 12: 18-24 year old unemployment rate, January 2001 – December 2012

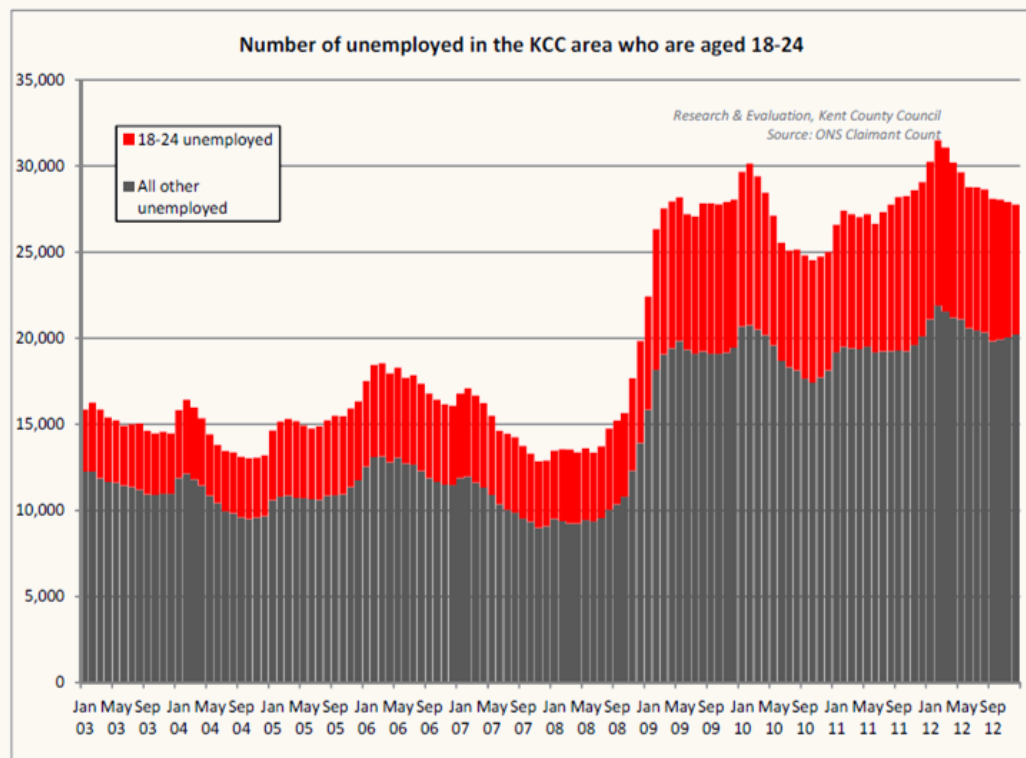


Source: ONS Claimant Count, 2012

³³ Kent County Council (2013) Research and Evaluation Statistical Bulletin, Unemployment in Kent, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

2.4.4. Young people aged 18-24 make up the largest proportion of all those unemployed in Kent (almost one third), and have the highest unemployment rate of any of the age groups (Figure 13 and Appendix 3).³⁴

Figure 13: Number of unemployed in the KCC area who are aged 18-24.



Source: ONS Claimant Count, 2012

2.4.5. Recent Government reports suggest that unemployment rates among young people with learning disabilities is as high as 95%. Many remain permanently unemployed.³⁵

2.4.6. Youth unemployment is particularly concerning because of its negative and prolonged impact on lifetime earnings and employment. Research suggests that a year of youth unemployment (16 to 24) reduces earnings a decade later by approximately 6% and by up to 15% by age 42. It also suggests that 16-24 year olds who were unemployed for a year spend an extra month unemployed every year up to their mid 30s. For some these effects appear to continue; 1 in 5 continue to experience low wages and a higher risk of unemployment into middle age.³⁶

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Kent County Council (2012) Independent Evaluation of the Vulnerable Learners Project, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

³⁶ Kent County Council (2012) 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

- 2.4.7. If youth unemployment is a serious problem, it is particularly concerning when young people are not in education, employment or training (NEET), because this is likely to prolong their inactivity, with serious consequences for their self-esteem and for the economy. The Government is addressing this by raising the compulsory participation age in full-time education and training to 17 from Summer 2013 and to 18 from 2015.³⁷
- 2.4.8. In England, in the last decade the proportion of 16-18 year old NEETs has remained stable at around 10%.³⁸ In Kent, the proportion is lower than the national average, although it remains a matter of concern. In the early months of 2012 there were 2,577 NEETs, accounting for 6.3% of 16-18 year olds.³⁹
- 2.4.9. Many NEETs fall into recognisable groups, such as young parents, those with learning difficulties, or young offenders. Strategic KCC documents recognise that these more vulnerable young people need particular support to help them return to education, training or employment.^{40 41}

³⁷ Maguire, S. (2011) The Student Journey Select Committee, written evidence, Centre for Education and Industry, University of Warwick.

³⁸ Department for Education (2012) NEET Statistics – Quarter 3, 2012.

³⁹ Kent County Council (2012) 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Kent County Council (2013) The Apprenticeships Select Committee, 22 January 2013.

2.5. The Cost of Youth Unemployment

2.5.1. Long periods of unemployment can not only have serious consequences for the confidence and self-esteem of young people, but can also result in severe consequences for the economy. Youth unemployment translates into higher spending on benefits, lost income to the exchequer through tax receipts forgone, and higher spending on services such as the NHS and the criminal justice system.

2.5.2. The cost of youth unemployment for the individuals concerned and the communities they live in is enormous. It has been estimated that the annual cost of youth unemployment to the Exchequer in 2012 was approximately £4.8 billion. This is more than the 2011-12 budget for further education for 16- to 19-year-olds in England. The total cost to the economy of youth unemployment at its current levels in terms of lost output was estimated to be even higher, at £10.7 billion in 2012.⁴²

“It has been estimated that the annual cost of youth unemployment to the Exchequer in 2012 was approximately £4.8 billion. This is more than the 2011-12 budget for further education for 16 to 19 year-olds in England”

⁴² ACEVO (2012) Youth Unemployment; The Crisis We Cannot Afford, London, ACEVO.

2.5.3. The cost of NEETs to society is considerable. A recent study by the University of York (2010) estimated that the average life-time public finance cost of a 16-18 year old NEET is £56,300, while the average life-time resource cost is £104,300. The study also estimated the total current, medium and long-term resource costs to be between £22 billion and £77 billion, and the public finance costs between £12 billion and £32 billion (see Figure 14 and also Appendix 3).^{43 44}

Figure 14: The economic costs attributable to the NEETs Population, Britain, 2010.

CURRENT COSTS	Resource cost	Public finance
Educational Underachievement		
Unemployed	£79,366,751	£1,199,238,148
Underemployed	£32,016,602	
Unemployment	£429,680,191	
Inactivity	£766,541,549	
Teenage mothers	£432,843,048	£453,866,079
Crime	£61,382,528	£7,819,683
Poor health	£413,022	£413,022
Substance misuse	£1,335,458	£1,335,458
Sub-total	£1,803,579,148	£1,662,672,388
MEDIUM TERM COSTS		
Educational Underachievement (low estimate)	£2,221,895,298	£7,216,038,780
Unemployment (low estimate)	£16,928,726,082	£27,950,397,552
Educational Underachievement (high est)	£8,606,225,493	
Unemployment (high estimate)	£65,571,241,853	
Early Motherhood	£282,863,048	£2,185,747,288
Crime	£461,052,180	£67,309,377
Poor Health	£7,759,321	£7,759,321
Substance abuse	£11,495,200	£11,495,200
Sub-totals (low estimate)	£19,913,791,129	£9,488,349,966
Sub-totals (high estimate)	£74,940,637,095	£30,222,708,738
LONG TERM COSTS		
Tax loss		£383,339,717
Additional benefits		£187,225,963
Sub-total		£570,565,680
FINAL TOTAL (low estimate)	£21,717,370,278	£11,721,588,036
(high estimate)	£76,744,216,244	£32,455,946,808

Source: University of York, 2010

⁴³ Cole, B et al (2010) Estimating the Life-Time Cost of NEET: 16-18 Year Olds Not in Education, Employment or Training, York, University of York.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

2.6. National Policies and Strategies

2.6.1. A range of policies relating to apprenticeships have been introduced recently. They are intended to encourage more people to take up apprenticeships, encourage more businesses to offer apprenticeships and to raise apprenticeship standards.

The Education Act 2011

2.6.2. The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (ASCLA) introduced a duty to provide an apprenticeship place to all qualified young people (aged 16-19) who did not have one and wanted one. This was due to start in 2013.

2.6.3. The Education Act 2011 removed this duty and replaced it with a new duty on the Government to fund an apprenticeship for young people who have already secured an apprenticeship place. This new “apprenticeship offer” is planned to come into effect in 2013 and applies to England only.

2.6.4. The Act also requires the Government to “make reasonable efforts to ensure employers participate in apprenticeship training.”⁴⁵

Minimum standards for apprenticeships

2.6.5. The NAS published the “Statement on Apprenticeship Quality” in May 2012. This summarises the various aspects of apprenticeships that are subject to minimum standards.

2.6.6. The minimum length of all apprenticeships will be 12 months. Some apprentices over the age of 19 may be able to complete their apprenticeship in a shorter period of time, but only if they can demonstrate prior attainment of certain relevant qualifications. In these cases, the apprenticeship must last a minimum of six months.

2.6.7. All apprentices must be employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week. This includes time spent away from the workplace engaged in training. All apprenticeships must offer training to Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE grade A* to C) in Functional Skills or English and Maths.

2.6.8. Before an apprenticeship can begin, all apprentices must sign an Apprenticeship Agreement with their employer. This is a contract which stipulates the framework which the apprentice is following and the skill, trade or occupation in which the apprentice is working. This agreement is not a legally binding contract of employment, but without it, an apprenticeship completion certificate cannot be issued.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ House of Commons Library (2012) Apprenticeships Policy, London.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16 to 24 year olds (age 16-24)

- 2.6.9. The Apprenticeship Grant for Employers of 16 to 24 year olds (AGE 16-24) was announced in November 2011 and launched in February 2012. It is designed to encourage more small businesses to take on apprentices, to encourage more young apprentices and to raise the skill level of apprentices.
- 2.6.10. The scheme will pay £1,500 to small businesses that take on a young apprentice between February 2012 and March 2013, if the firm has not hired an apprentice before. The scheme has been extended until 31st December 2013.⁴⁷

Strategic Drivers

- 2.6.11. Together with the initiatives outlined above a series of policy documents and drivers are contributing to the strategic national direction of apprenticeships.
- 2.6.12. **The Wolf Report (2011)** was an independent review of vocational education commissioned by Education Secretary Michael Gove and carried out by Professor Alison Wolf.
- 2.6.13. Professor Wolf was asked to investigate how vocational education for 14 to 19 year-olds could be improved in order to promote young people's successful progression into the labour market and into higher level education and training. She was also asked to offer practical recommendations to help inform future policy direction in vocational education, taking into account current financial constraints.⁴⁸
- 2.6.14. The Report argued that:
- The system should not steer young people into educational programmes with little employability value.
 - Young people should be provided with useful and accurate information and guidance that enables them to make informed decisions about their careers.
 - The English vocational system should be simplified.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Wolf, A. (2011) Review of Vocational Education: The Wolf Report, London.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

2.6.15. Professor Wolf's key recommendations included that:

- Funding should be on a per-student basis.
- Post-16 English and mathematics should be required elements of study programmes for those without good GCSEs in those subjects.
- Schools should be free to offer any qualifications they wished, as long as they met stringent quality criteria.
- "Perverse" incentives that encourage schools to run educational programmes with little value should be removed.⁵⁰

2.6.16. The **Holt Review (2012)** was commissioned by the Secretaries of State for Education and for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Minister for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning. Jason Holt, who led the review, is a SME employer and was tasked with delivering practical recommendations on:

- improving the promotion of Apprenticeships to SMEs;
- speeding up and simplifying the processes and requirements related to recruiting and employing apprentices for SMEs;
- other factors which may affect the experiences of SMEs in relation to the Apprenticeship programme including training procurement and other barriers to recruiting an apprentice.

2.6.17. The review found that the main barriers to SMEs taking on apprentices are 'lack of awareness, insufficient SME empowerment and poor process.' The main recommendations raised by Holt relate to:

- communication – raising awareness of the benefits of Apprenticeships;
- empowerment – enabling SMEs to get the best from their training providers;
- simplification – clarifying ownership and responsibility for the programme and removing barriers.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Holt, J. (2012) Making Apprenticeships More Accessible to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, London.

2.6.18. **“No Stone Unturned in the Pursuit of Growth” (2012)**, is Lord Heseltine’s personal report on how economic growth can be more effectively encouraged in the UK. The report was commissioned last March by the Prime Minister.

2.6.19. The central message from the report is that the main drivers of the economy – business, central government and local leadership – “should be organised and structured for success”. To achieve this goal, Lord Heseltine believes that the Government needs to ensure the following:

- local communities empowered and incentivised to collaborate for growth
- a rejuvenated partnership between the public and private sectors involving both local and central Government
- a dynamic, strategic central Government with wealth creation at its heart, working more effectively in the national interest to support wealth creation and embracing a culture of both public and private sector decision making
- a private sector-led business support infrastructure accessible everywhere
- a system for producing the skills that our economy needs now and in the future
- businesses, irrespective of size, sector or location which are engaged with their wider communities and ambitious to grow.

2.6.20. Central to delivering this are “enhanced roles” for both Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and local chambers of commerce.⁵²

2.6.21. **The Richard Review of Apprenticeships (2012)** was carried out by Doug Richard, entrepreneur, educator and founder of School for Startups. He was commissioned by the Education Secretary and the Business Secretary to consider the future of apprenticeships in England, and to recommend how they can meet the needs of the changing economy.

2.6.22. He was also asked to advise on how to ensure that every apprenticeship delivers high-quality training and the qualifications and skills that learners need.

⁵² Heseltine, M. (2012) No Stone Unturned in Pursuit of Growth.

2.6.23. His review sets out a comprehensive vision for the future of apprenticeships. Key themes and recommendations include:

- Redefining apprenticeships; they should be targeted only at those who are new to a job or role that requires sustained and substantial training.
- Focusing with greater rigour on the outcome of an apprenticeship; what the apprentice can do when they complete their training, and freeing up the process by which they get there. Trusted, independent assessment is key.
- Recognised industry standards should form the basis of every apprenticeship; employers and other organisations with relevant industry expertise should be invited to design and develop new apprenticeship qualifications for their sectors.
- All apprentices should reach a good level in English and maths before they can complete their apprenticeship.
- Government funding must create the right incentives for apprenticeship training; the purchasing power for investing in apprenticeship training should lie with the employer.
- Far greater diversity and innovation in training should be encouraged; with employers and Government taking a more active role in safeguarding quality.

2.7. Local Policies and Strategies

2.7.1. At local level Kent has produced, and is developing, policies and strategies which are aimed – amongst other things - at promoting apprenticeships. Key objectives of the medium-term strategic document **Bold Steps for Kent (2010)** include:

- To continue to support the growth of apprenticeships, in particular promoting the benefits of apprenticeships to small and medium-sized businesses in Kent.
- To raise attainment by ensuring that more young people are ready to progress to post-16 learning, and to close the gap so that more 16-19 years olds achieve level 2 and 3 qualifications. To ensure that more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds can progress from advanced level to higher level apprenticeships and higher education.
- To support the expansion of apprenticeships as means to help keep young people engaged in training and learning post-16 by offering a wage, on the job training and work relevant qualifications, especially for those not suited to classroom-based learning.⁵³

2.7.2. **Unlocking Kent's Potential (2009)** is a long-term strategic document that identifies the essential infrastructure needs for public capital investment over the next 20-25 years. The document considers the future challenges and opportunities facing Kent in local and global contexts. Specific targets that relate to apprenticeships include:

- Developing new channels of learning provision, such as apprenticeships and work-based learning degrees, that allow school leavers to acquire work-based skills and knowledge.
- Employing a number of apprentices at the Council and using the Council's procurement strength to promote the expansion of apprenticeships across Kent.
- Facilitating the wider take-up of apprenticeships across the public sector.⁵⁴

⁵³ Kent County Council (2010) **Bold Steps for Kent: The Medium Term Plan to 2014/2015**, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

⁵⁴ Kent County Council (2009) **Unlocking Kent's Potential: Kent County Council's Framework for Regeneration**, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

2.7.3. The **Vision for Kent (2012)** is KCC's county-wide strategy for the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Kent's communities. It is led by the Kent Forum, a partnership involving representatives from the county's public, private, voluntary and community sectors who provide services to the people in Kent.

2.7.4. One of the key objectives of the Vision is to raise the career aspirations of Kent's residents, from early years through to adulthood, and to meet those increased aspirations with a range of learning opportunities that meet business needs, including apprenticeships and internships.⁵⁵

2.7.5. The **14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016** has been designed to link learning more effectively with the world of work, and to enhance the skills and employability of young people in Kent. The four priorities of the Strategy are:

- To raise attainment and skill levels.
- To improve vocational education, training and apprenticeships.
- To increase participation and employment.
- To target support to vulnerable young people.

2.7.6. With regard to apprenticeships the Strategy aims to increase significantly the take-up and successful completion of apprenticeships, as well as encouraging more young people to follow vocational pathways that lead to higher level qualifications and skilled jobs.⁵⁶

2.7.7. Together with these strategic policies, other initiatives are helping to shape the direction of apprenticeship delivery in the county. For instance, the **Vulnerable Learner Apprenticeship Project (VLP)** is a pilot funded through KCC, aimed at engaging four distinct groups of vulnerable young people (young parents, young people with LDDs and/or mental illness, young offenders and looked after children leaving care) aged between 16 and 34 years, deemed to be furthest from the labour market.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Kent County Council (2012) The Vision for Kent, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

⁵⁶ Kent County Council (2012) 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

⁵⁷ Kent County Council (2012) Independent Evaluation of the Vulnerable Learners Apprenticeship Project, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

2.7.8. Through this project, KCC has supported the employment of 69 vulnerable young people by paying their salary for 12 months and providing support to them and their employers throughout the apprenticeship period. The project has now been extended into its second phase, supporting an additional 36 vulnerable young people.⁵⁸

2.7.9. KCC is also supporting businesses and young people by launching a new apprenticeship campaign, “**Kent Jobs for Kent’s Young People**”. The purpose of the campaign is to encourage employers in the private and public sectors to give young people the opportunity of work-based learning and experience. Through various funding regimes, KCC will subsidise the cost of employing an apprentice and will also reduce administrative paper work to a minimum.⁵⁹

2.7.10. The Kent Youth County Council (KYCC) have recently launched a scheme – “**KYCC Certified**” which features guidelines for an under 16 minimum wage as well as changes to working hours, work ethics and health and safety for young employees in Kent through a “youth employment code”.^{60 61}

⁵⁸ Kent County Council (2012) 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

⁵⁹ Kent County Council (2012) Kent Jobs for Kent’s Young People, website, http://www.kent.gov.uk/news_and_events/news_archive/2012/april/kent_jobs.

⁶⁰ Kent County Council (2013) Introducing KYCC Certified, website, http://www.kent.gov.uk/education_and_learning/kent_youth_service/youth_participation/kent_youth_county_council/campaigns/employment_campaign/kycc_certified.

⁶¹ Kent County Council (2013) The Apprenticeships Select Committee, 1 February 2013.

2.8. Methodology

- 2.8.1. The Apprenticeships Select Committee held several hearings, from which it gathered a wealth of information and evidence from a variety of sources, including young people, business representatives and academics, as well as KCC officers and apprenticeship providers.
- 2.8.2. The Committee also received written evidence. This included views and data on apprenticeship-related issues, and questionnaires which were aimed at seeking the views of young people on apprenticeships. Literature from desktop research was also used to inform the review.
- 2.8.3. Seven official visits, as well as several informal visits and rapporteur sessions, also took place during the review. The visits mainly involved seeking views of apprentices and of those who had recently completed an apprenticeship, as well as perspectives from providers. Other visits involved meetings with employers, with Ofsted and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. More details about the evidence gathering process can be found in Appendix 1.



3. Apprenticeships - The Benefits and Challenges

Apprenticeships are becoming increasingly central to any discussion about education systems and the provision of high-quality vocational education. They provide an important route through that system and offer a series of benefits for both young people and employers. However, there are a number of acknowledged problems that hinder the perception, take-up and development of apprenticeships in Kent and throughout the Country.

3.1. Benefits and Challenges

3.1.1. Apprenticeships have the potential to deliver valuable skills that can underpin long-term employment security of young people. They provide an access route to the labour market by ensuring that young people acquire and develop the expertise and attributes necessary for work.

3.1.2. Apprenticeships can also support employers in all sectors by offering a way of attracting new talent in a subsidised, low-risk environment, and by providing young people with the practical skills and qualifications businesses need.

3.1.3. They can offer several benefits for young people. The key benefits of being an apprentice include:

- earning a salary and getting paid holidays
- receiving training
- gaining qualifications
- learning job-specific skills.⁶²

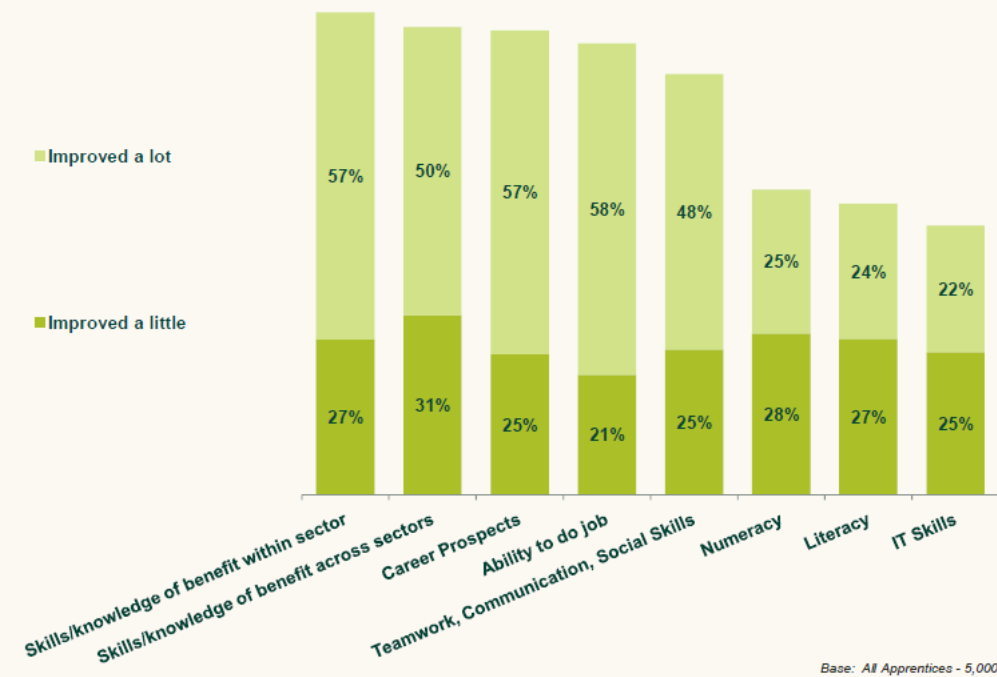
3.1.4. Apprentices are employees; they are paid while they learn. All apprentices must receive a wage of at least £2.65 per hour. However the average weekly wage for an apprentice is now around £170 and in some job roles around £210.⁶³

⁶² National Apprenticeship Service (2013) Apprentices: The Benefits, website, <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk>.

⁶³ Ibid.

3.1.5. Apprentices learn on the job; they develop knowledge and skills, gain qualifications and earn money all at the same time. They work towards a work-based, nationally recognised qualification such as a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). Apprenticeships typically take between one and four years to complete, depending on the type of Apprenticeship and its level (see Figure 15 and Appendix 3).⁶⁴

Figure 15: Impact of Apprenticeships on skills and abilities

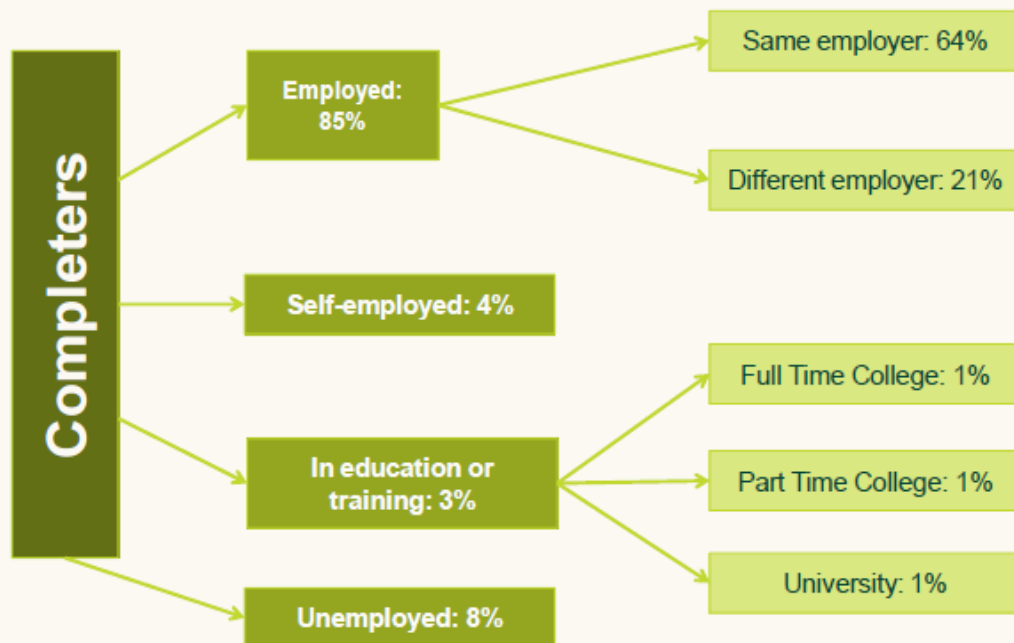


Source: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012)

⁶⁴ Ibid.

3.1.6. Apprenticeships can be demanding but can also be very rewarding. They can provide young people with job-specific and transferrable skills that can help their progress in both the workplace and education. The employment outcomes for those who successfully complete their apprenticeship are very high; 85% find a permanent job after their apprenticeship (see Figure 16).^{65 66}

Figure 16: Employment outcomes of completed apprenticeships



Source: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012)

3.1.7. Apprenticeships are available across a wide range of industry sectors and with different types of employers, from large companies such as BT, British Gas, Rolls Royce to smaller local companies. There are more than 200 different types of apprenticeships, offering over 1,200 job roles.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012) Evaluation of Apprenticeships: Learners, London, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

⁶⁶ Kent County Council (2013) The Apprenticeships Select Committee, 10 January 2013, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

⁶⁷ National Apprenticeship Service (2013) Apprentices: The Benefits, website, <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk>.

- 3.1.8. As well as offering benefits to young people, apprenticeships can also help businesses across all sectors. UK employers consider skills shortages and recruitment difficulties more threatening to their performance than oil prices and declining consumer spending. Apprenticeships can ensure that employees have the practical skills and qualifications businesses need.⁶⁸
- 3.1.9. Over 130,000 workplaces offer apprenticeships because they understand the benefits that apprentices bring to their business, such as increased productivity, improved competitiveness and a committed and competent work-force.⁶⁹
- 3.1.10. Apprenticeships help employers to improve productivity and be more competitive. Training apprentices can also be more cost-effective than hiring skilled staff, leading to lower overall training and recruitment costs.⁷⁰
- 3.1.11. Apprenticeships enable employers to shape the skills of their workforce around both current and future business needs. They can also help businesses to develop specialist skills to keep pace with the latest technology and working practices in their sector.⁷¹
- 3.1.12. Evidence shows that apprentices tend to be motivated, flexible and loyal to the firm that invested in them. By undertaking an apprenticeship, young people demonstrate to employers their commitment, dedication and potential.⁷²

“As an apprentice, you get a chance to prove yourself. It’s a trial for both sides. If you can then go for a full-time post, the employer has the chance to take on someone whom they already know and has been given the experience they need, and does not have the risk of taking on someone unknown.”

- An apprentice

⁶⁸ National Apprenticeship Service (2013) The Business Benefits, website, <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk>.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

3.1.13. Research presented by the NAS shows that:

- 77% of employers believe apprenticeships make them more competitive;
- 76% say that apprenticeships provide higher overall productivity;
- 80% feel that apprenticeships reduce staff turnover;
- 83% of employers rely on their apprenticeships programme to provide the skilled workers that they need for the future;
- Two-thirds of respondents believe that their apprenticeship programme helps them fill vacancies more quickly, whilst
- 88% believe that apprenticeships lead to a more motivated and satisfied workforce;
- 59% report that training apprentices is more cost-effective than hiring skilled staff, with 59% believing that apprenticeships lead to lower overall training costs and 53% feeling that they reduce recruitment costs;
- In terms of the return on investment linked to apprenticeships, 41% say that their apprentices make a valuable contribution to the business during their training period, while a further third (33%) report that apprentices add value within their first few weeks;
- 57% report a high proportion of their apprentices going on to management positions within the company;
- Over three-quarters of respondents expect apprenticeships to play a bigger part in their recruitment policy in the future.⁷³

“At O2, we're with apprentices because we're committed to helping our people grow and progress and we see the value they can offer. Our apprentices are given hands-on experience in a variety of job roles, and we've found that this is a great way to develop raw talent, ensuring they have the knowledge and skills we need to progress in the future.”

- Ann Pickering, HR Director, Telefonica UK

⁷³ Ibid.

3.1.14. Although apprenticeships offer a variety of benefits to both young people and businesses, they are also surrounded by a number of constraints. For example:

- Apprenticeships have tended to be target-driven rather than market-led, and the lack of involvement of many employers may indicate a lack of demand.⁷⁴
- Much so-called apprenticeship training was merely re-labelling of *existing* workers' roles, or converting Government supported programmes of work-based learning into apprenticeships. As Doug Richard put it in his Review, "Everything is not an apprenticeship...apprenticeships require a new job or new role, a role that is new to the individual and requires them to learn a substantial amount before they can do that job effectively".^{75 76}
- Bureaucracy is a disincentive to the involvement of some employers. The CBI reports that 1 in 3 employers want to see a reduction in red tape, and that this would encourage them to get more involved with apprenticeships.⁷⁷
- There is an abundance of Level 2 apprenticeships, but a shortage of higher level apprenticeships. A related concern is the existence of too many apprenticeship programmes of short duration. These issues have raised concerns about the quality of apprenticeships and the dilution of the brand.^{78 79}
- There also appears to be an abundance of bodies involved in the provision and promotion of apprenticeships, which creates unnecessary complexity, and the apparent lack of a single point of contact.⁸⁰
- Advice and guidance appears not always to be working effectively in raising awareness among young people of all their post-16 options, which include apprenticeships.^{81 82}

⁷⁴ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

⁷⁵ Richard, D. (2012) The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, London.

⁷⁶ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

⁷⁷ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

⁷⁸ Richard, D. (2012) The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, London.

⁷⁹ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

⁸⁰ Richard, D. (2012) The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, London.

⁸¹ Richard, D. (2012) The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, London.

⁸² Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

- It can be harder for vulnerable learners, such as young parents, to complete an apprenticeship given the additional demands they face. Evidence suggests that it is not always possible for some vulnerable learners to overcome these barriers.⁸³

“Everything is not an apprenticeship ... apprenticeships require a new job or new role, a role that is new to the individual and requires them to learn a substantial amount before they can do that job effectively.”

- Doug Richard, The Richard Review of Apprenticeships

⁸³ Kent County Council (2013) The Apprenticeships Select Committee, 22 January 2013.

The benefits of apprenticeships include:

- Apprentices learn on the job; they build up knowledge and skills, gain qualifications and earn money all at the same time.
- A large proportion apprentices go on to management positions within the company that employs them.
- You can become an apprentice from age 16.
- Apprenticeships help businesses to grow, offering an employer the opportunity to mould an employee to their current or future needs.
- Salaries for young apprentices are 100% tax deductible.
- There are a number of alternative routes for businesses who might otherwise struggle to employ apprentices directly.

3.2. Good Practice in the UK

3.2.1. As the report pointed out earlier, one of the most widely acknowledged problems about apprenticeships is their perceived lack of quality. High quality and well-developed apprenticeship systems, when delivered in a deeply immersive and robust manner, have been shown to improve productivity, staff morale and the quality of a product or service. There are a number of examples of good practice in the UK, showing how particular factors and attitudes – such as appropriate recruitment, effective work-based learning and the teaching of functional skills, and continuous support and mentoring - can lead to the successful delivery of high performance apprenticeships.

3.2.2. Recruitment and guidance play an important role in ensuring that young people are recruited into an area of learning that matches their interests and the needs of the employer. The case study of the Fairport Training provider offers an illustration of effective apprenticeship recruitment and guidance.

3.2.3. Fairport Training's hairdressing provision trainers meet apprentices at least five times before they start their programme. Trainers and past apprentices begin by holding presentations in schools and taster days for Year 9 pupils, who are encouraged to apply for apprenticeships at this early stage. Trainers contact the pupils again in Year 10 to see if they are still interested and ask them to apply early. Once they receive the application form, trainers begin a four-stage recruitment process. The stages of this recruitment process:

- Stage 1: a mini interview where applicants' potential grades, future career and motivation are discussed.
- Stage 2: a preparation and selection for employment day which includes teambuilding, an analysis of the type of salon they would like to work in and how to create a good impression at interview. The day is also designed to ensure that applicants have a realistic view of the industry.
- Stage 3: the trainers meet to discuss each applicant and their suitability for an apprenticeship. Successful applicants receive details of the hairdressing salons that the provider has links with that are recruiting and also meet the applicants' requirements.
- Stage 4: successful applicants are generally given Saturday or holiday work over the summer to give them a taste of the industry. They are then invited to attend evening workshops held by the provider.

3.2.4. The recruitment process of Fareport Training is very successful: around 90% of applicants who attend the preparation and selection for employment day start the apprenticeship and nearly all complete it successfully.⁸⁴

3.2.5. There are a number of factors which contribute to effective work-based learning and to the teaching of functional skills. McDonald's, for instance created its skills programme to ensure its relevance to apprentices and to the company's needs. Teachers are appropriately qualified in literacy and numeracy. The assignments encourage apprentices to help the company to improve its environmental performance and share the improvements with customers. Apprentices are given a choice of assignments such as the following:

- Calculating the costs of energy use and considering how these could be reduced by good housekeeping;
- Recording the amount and type of litter collected near restaurants and presenting the findings in a range of charts and graphs. Considering what the results tell them about people's behaviour and how the business could reduce its impact on the local environment.
- Developing a leaflet on McDonald's products, detailing the quality of the food and where it was sourced. One apprentice said: 'I have developed my confidence and my ability to inform customers about food quality and to pass on information to other local businesses and members of staff who have not completed the apprenticeship.'

3.2.6. To make certain that the knowledge developed is built on, McDonald's have introduced 'Planet Champions'. These ensure that all staff in the restaurant understand what environmental initiatives McDonald's have introduced and why they are important, as well as providing continuing encouragement for current initiatives such as litter management, recycling and energy saving.⁸⁵

3.2.7. In order to ensure that young people make good progress and are comfortable in their roles, continuing support and mentoring is necessary. PH Academy found that apprentices respond well to extended reviews that involve the tutor, an assessor, the apprentice and their employer.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Ofsted (2012) Apprenticeships for Young People: A Good Practice Report, Manchester, Ofsted

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

3.2.8. The process begins with the tutor and apprentice grading against criteria such as timekeeping, attitude and progress. The same criteria are then completed by the apprentice and employer. Equality and diversity (harassment, bullying), health and safety (using new equipment) and safeguarding, including reinforcement of what has been covered off the job, are also reviewed.⁸⁷

3.2.9. Progress is covered thoroughly, including all parts of the apprenticeship framework. Also covered is apprentice support, including extra visits and self-directed learning for literacy and numeracy. Apprentices particularly valued negotiating and agreeing realistic short-term (four to six weeks) and long-term (six to 12 weeks) practical and theory targets which are monitored regularly. An apprentice said: 'The review process is a key part of my progress. I know what I should be doing every day and love getting ahead of my targets.'⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Good Practice

McDonald's Skills Programme

McDonald's created its skills programme to ensure its relevance to apprentices and to align it to key company drivers. Teachers are appropriately qualified in literacy and numeracy. The assignments encourage apprentices to help the company improve its environmental performance and share the improvements with customers. Apprentices are given a choice of assignments such as the following:

- Calculating the costs of energy use and considering how these could be reduced by good housekeeping;
- Recording the amount and type of litter collected near restaurants and presenting the findings in a range of charts and graphs. Considering what the results told them about people's behaviour and how the business could reduce its impact on the local environment.
- Developing a leaflet on McDonald's products, detailing the quality of the food and where it was sourced. One apprentice said: 'I have developed my confidence and my ability to inform customers about food quality and to pass on information to other local businesses and members of staff who have not completed the apprenticeship.'

3.3. Good Practice in the European Union

- 3.3.1. A major shortcoming of the English approach to technical-vocational education seems to be the failure to recognise the unique and specific demands that a high quality technical-vocational route requires. Some commentators argue that the pursuit of 'parity of esteem' is misguided, because it assumes that vocational education can be delivered through a system designed to cater for traditional academic education.⁸⁹
- 3.3.2. Highly developed vocational education systems, with highly developed apprenticeship programmes, exist in a number of European countries, and have been instrumental in securing low rates of youth unemployment. The pathways in these systems are institutionally supported, have a high degree of "buy-in" from stakeholders, and are seen as feasible alternatives to traditional academic routes - not as second tiers or "dumping grounds".⁹⁰
- 3.3.3. The Leitch Review found that the UK skills base lagged behind many advanced industrial countries because of historic failures in its education system.⁹¹ More recent research by the Confederation for British Industry (CBI) has shown that employers report STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) subject skills shortages, with 43% experiencing difficulty recruiting in these areas at present. Skills gaps now affect 1 in 5 employers, with professional skills gaps being the most common, found in more than 50% of all workplaces.⁹²
- 3.3.4. Analysis by the Royal Academy of Engineering also shows that the combined expansion and replacement demand for SET (Science, Engineering and Technology) occupations to 2020 will be 830,000 professionals and 450,000 technicians, requiring more than 100,000 STEM graduates per annum and about 60,000 people with Level 3 or higher STEM qualifications.⁹³

⁸⁹ Policy Exchange (2013) *Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System*, London, Policy Exchange.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Leitch, S. (2006) *Prosperity for all in the Global Economy – World Class Skills*, London, HMSO

⁹² CBI (2011) *Building for Growth: Business Priorities for Education and Skills*, London.

⁹³ Royal Academy of Engineering (2012) *Jobs and Growth: The Importance of Engineering Skills to the UK Economy*, London, Royal Academy of Engineering.

- 3.3.5. While England cannot adopt foreign models in their entirety, there are many lessons that can be learned which could help to move towards international best practice and towards apprenticeship systems that deliver high quality, practically-focused education that learners and employers need. Effective systems in Europe feature: high levels of employer involvement, robust quality assurance, a core of general education, strong advice and guidance, flexible progression options (including back into academic routes), labour market relevance of learning, and the institutional and regulatory support required to provide students with clear alternatives and effective choices.⁹⁴
- 3.3.6. Apprenticeship training in countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Austria and the Netherlands is as long (or even longer) as a university degree. Apprenticeship routes often attract more students than the university sector; in Germany, for example, about two thirds of young people undertake an apprenticeship.^{95 96}
- 3.3.7. The following tables provide more detailed information about the apprenticeship schemes run in some of these countries.

⁹⁴ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ofsted (2012) The Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills, Manchester.

Good Practice

Apprenticeships in Germany

Youth unemployment in Germany is one of the lowest in the EU. Apprenticeships have a high status; two thirds of young people undertake an apprenticeship. In comparison, in 2011 in England only 6% of young people aged 16 to 18 began an apprenticeship.

German apprenticeships cover over 300 trades, and both employers and the government are involved in the design of programmes and the payment of the apprentice. Nearly all apprenticeships are at Level 3, and most programmes take three years to complete. In England, two thirds of apprenticeships are at Level 2 and most programmes last one to two years.

Information and guidance on choosing an apprenticeship is well established in German schools and careers advice centres. The range of subjects is evenly represented across service sector and industrial or craft occupations. In England, a recent Ofsted survey found careers guidance on apprenticeships to be weak.

Employer engagement is particularly strong in Germany. In 2005, nearly 100% of large firms (with more than 500 employees) offered apprenticeships, compared with 30% in England.

Source: Learning and Skills (2012), Ofsted.

Good Practice

Apprenticeships in Switzerland

In Switzerland, all apprentices attend publicly-funded vocational schools, limiting the costs for business. Employers can choose to provide additional training in technical subjects or other areas. Switzerland is the only country in Europe where the firm bears no net cost as a result of the apprenticeship.

Young people in Switzerland are also provided with extensive careers guidance, which begins when the young person is about 12. During this process they learn about the local economy and local business. As they get older they attend careers centres, and parents become part of the careers guidance process. Young people may also attend taster sessions in local businesses that offer apprenticeships in which they learn how to apply for jobs.

Some have argued that the Swiss apprenticeship model is in many ways the most successful in Europe. Swiss school leavers have a higher educational standard, and are normally more qualified when they start an apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are a popular career pathway in the country; in 2010 just under two thirds gained the apprenticeship certificate.

Source: The Apprenticeship Journey (2012) Federation of Small Businesses

Good Practice

Apprenticeships in Austria

In Austria, 40 per cent of young people go into apprenticeships, the majority of whom are under-19. Most apprenticeships last three years and completion rates are high. The demand for apprenticeships is very high; more young people want to be apprentices than there are businesses to support them. This phenomenon is also apparent in England.

A number of measures have been taken by the Austrian Government since 2003 to increase the number of engaged businesses:

- The appointment of apprenticeship advisors (experienced apprenticeship trainer and providers) whose job is to contact firms directly and persuade them to offer more apprenticeships.
- The provision of training facilities for young people not yet ready to take up an apprenticeship, or for apprentices that are falling behind the expectations of their employer. This provision is supplied outside of the employer's remit.

Alongside financial incentives these measures have begun to reverse the trend and increase employer demand.

Source: The Apprenticeship Journey (2012) Federation of Small Businesses



4. Apprenticeships and Awareness

Although apprenticeships are becoming an important part of the English education system, they are still surrounded by a variety of issues which limit their potential. The delivery practices of some apprenticeships, with short time-scales and inadequate organisation, encourage a negative perception of all apprenticeships, and endanger the integrity of the apprenticeship "brand".

The provision of accurate and genuine information, support and guidance is crucial in raising awareness about what apprenticeships can offer, and in promoting them to employers, young people and society at large.

KCC is already doing much to promote the quality and take-up of apprenticeships in the county. Nonetheless, we believe that Kent should lead by example to ensure that apprenticeships become an essential reference point in our education system and a route towards successful careers and prosperity.

4.1. Awareness and Perceptions

- 4.1.1. Although apprenticeships have recently received much attention from both the Government and the media, currently too few young people, their parents and their teachers see apprenticeships as a credible and valued choice. As the Richard Review points out, they tend to see apprenticeships as a last resort, rather than as positive choices leading to promising career paths.⁹⁷
- 4.1.2. Employers' perceptions of apprenticeships also seem to be often based on unfounded prejudice; while employers are generally supportive of apprenticeships, many believe they are not appropriate for their own companies or sectors.⁹⁸
- 4.1.3. A recurring theme, which seems to be strongly linked to these negative perceptions, concerns the influence of the apprenticeship "brand". Some commentators argue that, while A-Level and GCSE qualifications in England are well-established and recognised brands for academic pathways, there are fewer such brands in vocational education where qualifications change so frequently they become confusing for young people, their parents and employers.⁹⁹
- 4.1.4. While this argument may seem persuasive, others maintain that the pursuit of 'parity of esteem' is misguided, because it begins from the assumption that high-quality vocational education can be delivered through a system which is generally designed to cater for traditional academic education.¹⁰⁰
- 4.1.5. Nonetheless, it appears that there are several specific issues that contribute to the negative perception of apprenticeships. As Doug Richard points out, "everything is not an apprenticeship". Apprenticeships should be clear pathways for acquiring the knowledge, experience and skills required for doing a job well. They should involve substantial learning for young people new to a role. However, evidence suggests that the apprenticeships brand has been diluted by existing, competent employees undertaking "upskilling".¹⁰¹
- 4.1.6. Secondly, the delivery of some apprenticeships which have no relevant curriculum, or focus on programmes that are easy to deliver, have contributed to the perception that apprenticeships are practical programmes of poor quality.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Richard, D. (2012) The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, London.

⁹⁸ Holt, J. (2012) Making Apprenticeships More Accessible to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, London.

⁹⁹ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

¹⁰⁰ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

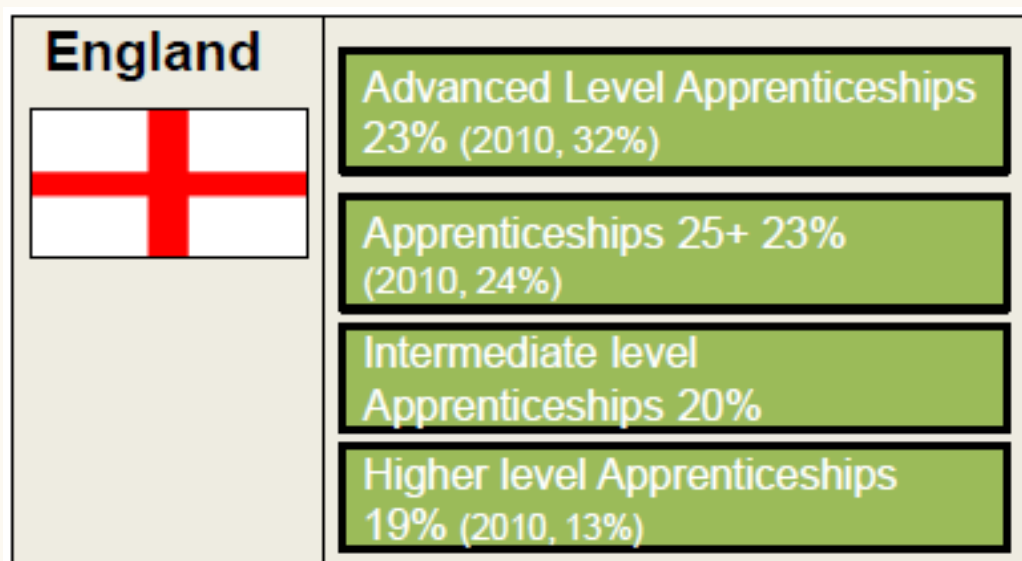
¹⁰¹ Richard, D. (2012) The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, London.

¹⁰² Ibid.

4.1.7. The short duration of a number of programmes, and the abundance of Level 2 apprenticeships, have also contributed to negative attitudes about the quality of apprenticeships.¹⁰³ Indeed, the Centre of Economic Performance at the London School of Economics and Political Science states that “England is the only country where apprenticeships at Level 2 far outnumber those offered at Level 3. In Australia most apprenticeships are at Certificate 3 level and in France just under half are at Level 2. In the dual system countries, Austria, Germany and Switzerland, and in Ireland, almost all apprenticeships are at Level 3”.¹⁰⁴

4.1.8. According to the UK Commission’s Employer Perspectives Survey 2012, the awareness of Government recognised apprenticeship schemes amongst employers is generally low, and in some cases it has decreased in the last few years. For example, in England in 2012 only one employer in five was aware of Intermediate and Higher Level apprenticeships (20% and 19% respectively). Only 23% of employers knew about apprenticeships for people over 25. Only 23% were aware of advanced level apprenticeships: in 2010 this figure was 32% (Figure 17).¹⁰⁵

Figure 17: Employers’ awareness of Government recognised apprenticeship schemes



Source: UKCES 2012

¹⁰³ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

¹⁰⁴ House of Commons (2012) Apprenticeships: Fifth Report of Session 2012-13, London, TSO.

¹⁰⁵ UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009: Main Report, Wath-upon-Dearn, UKCES.

4.1.9. The Holt review (2012) also highlighted this lack of awareness, pointing out that members of a business association simply did not understand the differences between Level 2 and Level 3 apprenticeships, and arguing that employers needed clearer information.¹⁰⁶

4.1.10. The review also revealed that the most common reason for taking on an apprentice was “being approached by a provider”. While accepting that the provider’s role is vital, the review makes the point that the decision to recruit an apprentice should stem from an informed decision and conviction that an apprentice is the most appropriate long-term option for the business.¹⁰⁷

“About 34% of young people believe that apprenticeships are for “people who are really good at hands-on work”.

4.1.11. Awareness of apprenticeships also seems to be low among young people. For instance, a survey of the Association of Colleges in 2011 found that only 7% of pupils entering Year 10 were able to name apprenticeships as a post-GCSE option.¹⁰⁸

4.1.12. Perhaps of greater concern is the evidence that, despite the recent revival of apprenticeships, many young people still associate them with academic failure. In a recent survey about 80% of young people believed that apprenticeships were aimed at those with low qualifications, and nearly a quarter cited this as a reason for not considering them.¹⁰⁹

4.1.13. Another long-standing preconception about apprenticeships is that they are associated with traditional, practical professions. About 34% of young people believe that apprenticeships are for “people who are really good at hands-on work”.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Holt, J. (2012) Making Apprenticeships More Accessible to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, London.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

¹⁰⁹ Working Links (2011) Learning a Living: A Research Report into Apprenticeships and Reducing Youth Unemployment, London, Working Links.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

4.1.14. The Skills and Employability Service in KCC is already doing much to transform the education and skills system in Kent and to improve young people's qualifications, skills and employability.

4.1.15. The Team was established on 1st April 2012, and is primarily responsible for the delivery, co-ordination and monitoring of the 14-24 Employment, Learning and Skills Strategy. Its key, strategic priorities are to:

- equip young people with the skills they need to progress to further learning, employment or self employment
- match the provision of learning providers to the needs of employers
- ensure young people are fully informed of the opportunities available to them
- and provide additional support to the most vulnerable young people.¹¹¹

4.1.16. A key part of the Team, which supports young people's progression in education and into the world of work, is the "kentchoices4u" service. This service includes:

- A county-wide network of support to schools for the delivery of effective IAG.
- A range of events, projects and publications.
- A website (www.kentchoices4u.com).^{112 113}

4.1.17. The website is a comprehensive source of information on careers education and guidance for post-16 learning and training. It contains functions such as links and tools to access information on apprenticeships and their benefits, careers information and an online prospectus and application process for education courses.^{114 115}

4.1.18. As well as fulfilling its strategic priorities, the team is involved in wider KCC schemes and in more specific initiatives aimed at improving awareness of, and participation in, apprenticeship programmes.

¹¹¹ Kent County Council (2012) 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

¹¹² Bransby, R. and Prior, M. (2011) Learner Voice in Kent; Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance, Maidstone, Kent County Council and Connexions.

¹¹³ Kent County Council (2011) The Student Journey Select Committee, written evidence, 7 December 2011.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Kent County Council (2012) 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

- 4.1.19. The recent “**Kent Jobs for Kent Young People**” campaign is designed to promote apprenticeships to local employers. It also offers subsidies and grants to encourage local businesses to take on apprentices.¹¹⁶
- 4.1.20. The **Kent Apprenticeship scheme** provides support and information to improve awareness and to promote the take-up of apprenticeships in the county. The scheme already supports about 1500 young people aged 16-19, and its ambition is to double the number of apprenticeships by 2015.¹¹⁷
- 4.1.21. The **Vulnerable Learner Apprenticeship Project** supports four groups of vulnerable people aged 16-24, who are not in education, employment or training, to access local apprenticeship opportunities.¹¹⁸
- 4.1.22. In addition to these schemes a number of other initiatives have been taken. The team has provided bespoke training to over 90% of schools and academies in Kent on KentChoices4U.¹¹⁹
- 4.1.23. In November 2012 a range of materials were sent to staff and students in order to raise awareness of the raising of the participation age and what it involves.¹²⁰
- 4.1.24. Finally, the team is planning to improve the service provided by KentChoices4U by introducing “MyKentChoices”, which will be a web-based personal space, designed to offer careers information, support, advice and guidance to young people from Year 8.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Kent County Council (2012) Independent Evaluation of the Vulnerable Learners Project, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

¹¹⁹ Kent County Council (2012) Skills and Employability Service CEIAG Update, Maidstone, Kent County Council

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

4.1.25. We are aware of the strong commitment of KCC and of the work undertaken by the Skills and Employability Service in promoting the awareness of apprenticeships to both young people and employers in Kent. Nonetheless, the current gaps in awareness and the presence of long-standing, negative perceptions suggest that more needs to be done to dispel the myths that hinder the expansion of apprenticeships in the county. We therefore recommend the following.

Recommendation 1

The Skills and Employability Service in Kent County Council (KCC) should further raise awareness about apprenticeships and their benefits amongst young people, their parents/carers and employers. It is important to contribute to a shift in the perception of apprenticeships; from poorly paid jobs to funded training which significantly enhances employability.

4.2. Information, Advice and Guidance

- 4.2.1. As stated earlier, the provision of accurate and genuine information, support and guidance is vital to raising awareness about apprenticeships and promoting them to employers, young people and the community.
- 4.2.2. Together with raising awareness to dispel misguided perceptions of apprenticeships, there are still a number of concerns about the nature and delivery of accurate information and support that need addressing. The number of sources of information, their location and their quality appear to hinder the effectiveness and delivery of apprenticeships' information and support.

A single point of contact

- 4.2.3. Providing information about apprenticeships can be complex. There are a large number of diverse organisations that contribute to their promotion, provision and delivery. The delivery of the current Apprenticeship Programme is led by two key organisations: The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), which manages the overall programme, and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), which manages the funding and approves training organisations that deliver programmes. Training providers include: FE colleges, large employers and other public, private and charitable training bodies.¹²²
- 4.2.4. The Holt Review states that around 1,000 providers contract directly with the SFA, and that another 2,000 are subcontractors. The review points out that when this is multiplied by the number of apprenticeship frameworks covered by each provider and the combined number of clients, it is perhaps unsurprising that businesses receive inconsistent information. As one employer put it, "there is an abundance of information, but it is difficult to see the wood from the trees. What is needed is a clear set of simple messages for each audience".¹²³

¹²² Richard, D. (2012) The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, London.

¹²³ Holt, J. (2012) Making Apprenticeships More Accessible to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, London.

“There is an abundance of information, but it is difficult to see the wood from the trees. What is needed is a clear set of simple messages for each audience”.

-An employer

- 4.2.5. Instead of attracting the attention of busy employers, whose focus has to be on day-to-day businesses, this could have the effect of alienating them.¹²⁴ Evidence given to the Committee during a visit to a college supports this concern.¹²⁵
- 4.2.6. In addition to the abundance of information sources it appears that the information can also be inadequate or inappropriate. The Government has recently launched a National Careers Service which offers on-line and telephone careers advice to young people. However, as the Heseltine Review points out, this is not a substitute for good advice that is grounded in sound, local knowledge.¹²⁶
- 4.2.7. In addition to its overall management of the Apprenticeship programme, the NAS has 320 staff, operating in 4 divisions, who offer information and support to employers. This support can be accessed through channels such as a website and dedicated telephone hotlines. The NAS also provides a web-based apprenticeship vacancy system which advertises all new apprenticeship vacancies.¹²⁷
- 4.2.8. Nonetheless evidence suggests that the support the NAS currently provides to SMEs is limited to those employing over 100 staff. This is a concern, particularly in Kent where the vast majority of firms are small and micro-businesses, employing no more than 25 staff.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, visit, 7 January 2013.

¹²⁶ Heseltine, M. (2012) No Stone Unturned in Pursuit of Growth.

¹²⁷ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 10 January 2013.

¹²⁸ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, visit, 7 January 2013.

4.2.9. As the Richard Review indicates, although many employers are satisfied with the contributions made by the NAS, Group Training Associations and providers in helping them to navigate the current apprenticeship system, many express concerns about its complexity and about the lack of a single point of contact.¹²⁹

4.2.10. A recent KCC Select Committee Review identified this issue and recommended the setting up of an easily identifiable, high-profile single point of contact to offer information and support about apprenticeships in Kent. KCC's Skills and Employability Service has already begun work to develop this "one-stop-shop". We strongly endorse this initiative and stress that additional support should be provided to vulnerable learners.¹³⁰

Gateway Centres

4.2.11. In addition to concerns about the abundance of organisations involved in the supply of information and delivery of apprenticeships, there are also concerns about the location of such provision.

4.2.12. Many young people who attempt to access competitive labour markets with complex barriers to employment do not have the experience, qualifications and skills that employers require. Organisations such as Jobcentre Plus have been set up to offer information and support on future education pathways, career options, and recruitment.¹³¹

4.2.13. Literature shows that there are several excellent examples of effective initiatives and partnership working which deliver good information and jobs outcomes in local labour markets. However, it also shows that, overall, this provision to young people remains fragmented, with individual national services and programmes failing to deliver their full potential.¹³²

4.2.14. For instance, while Jobcentre Plus is performing better than during the 1990's recession, still one claimant in six becomes long-term unemployed. In addition, of the 75% of claimants who move unemployment benefits within 6 months, only two thirds move into employment; one in five move onto another benefit.¹³³ Finally, evidence suggests that there is variability in the quality of provision supplied by Jobcentre Plus across the County.^{134 135}

¹²⁹ Richard, D. (2012) The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, London.

¹³⁰ Kent County Council (2012) The Student Journey Select Committee Report, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

¹³¹ Local Government Association (2013) Hidden Talents 2: Re-Engaging Young People, The Local Offer, London, LGA.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 10 January 2013, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

¹³⁵ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, visit, 29 January 2013.

4.2.15. There is some evidence that young people are reluctant to seek information on education and careers options – which may include apprenticeships – from Jobcentre Plus, because of the perceived stigma associated with benefit claimants.¹³⁶ Given that Gateway Centres offer a variety of services, including many that are not linked to employment and recruitment, the Committee believes that they could also offer an alternative route for young people and their parents and carers to access apprenticeships information. KCC should also consider the use of its own website to highlight these services.

IAG in Schools

4.2.16. Apart from the number of sources of information and their location, there are more specific concerns about the provision of careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) in schools.

4.2.17. From September 2012 the statutory duty to make provision for IAG has been removed from the Connexions service and given to schools and the National Careers Service. Schools must now ensure that they provide independent, impartial and comprehensive careers advice, which promotes the best interests of the pupil to all those in Years 9 – 11. Independent advice is defined as “external to the school”.¹³⁷

4.2.18. However, the current funding system in which secondary schools are largely funded on a per-student basis, seems to create perverse incentives because it encourages them to retain as many of their students post-16 as possible for financial reasons.^{138 139}

4.2.19. Research suggests that this practice is widespread; about two thirds of school leaders indicated that they made “in-house provision” for IAG (Figure 18). The clear incentives to retain students post-16 have resulted in some schools restricting the delivery of IAG to students who may be interested in progressing to further education in other establishments.

4.2.20. Anecdotal evidence even suggests that the raising of the participation age (RPA) is often referred to in schools as “raising the school leaving age” implying that extended compulsory education can only be undertaken within the school.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Elizabeth Finn Care and University of Kent (2012) Benefits Stigma in Britain.

¹³⁷ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

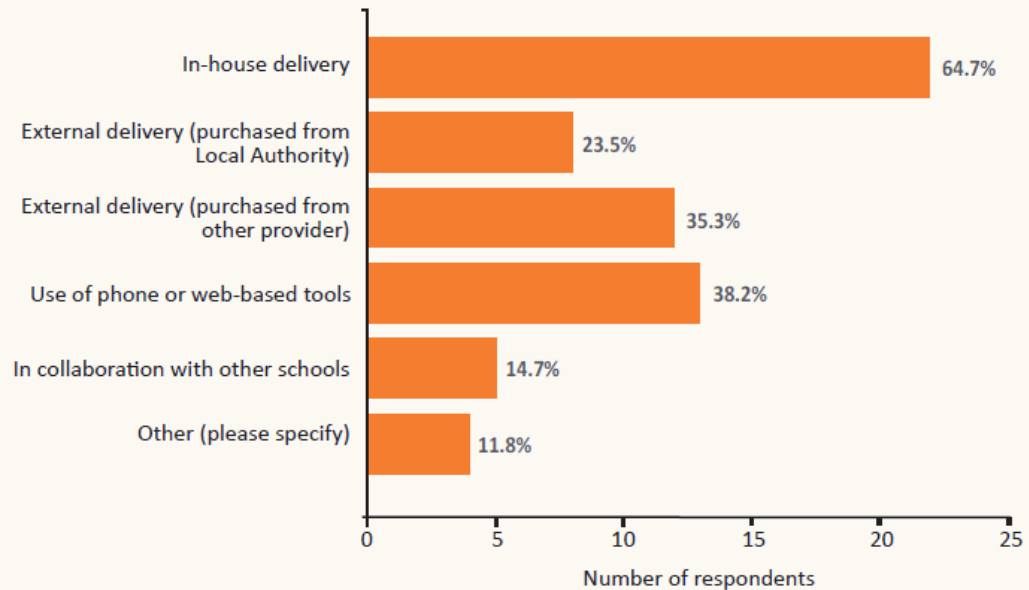
¹³⁸ Wolf, A. (2011) Review of Vocational Education: The Wolf Report, London.

¹³⁹ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 10 January 2013, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

4.2.21. These attitudes have the potential to undermine the effective functioning of post-16 provision because students and their families cannot make informed, effective choices in the absence of complete and unbiased IAG.¹⁴¹

Figure 18: How does your school intend to deliver independent advice and guidance with the devolution of responsibility for IAG to school level?



Source: Policy Exchange (2013)

4.2.22. One of the consequences of schools' retaining students and limiting their choices is that they may not be given the skills and knowledge that enable them to make progress. For example, one FE principal described a situation where a school provided a motor vehicle qualification to Level 2 which didn't give students the skills and knowledge they needed to progress to Level 3 in an FE college. The students, therefore, had to retake Level 2 at the college.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

¹⁴² Ibid.

- 4.2.23. There are also issues about the quality of IAG provided in schools. It appears that in many schools a large proportion of careers guidance is provided by teachers who have no direct industry experience. Recent research indicates that 22% of students aged 14-16 received careers advice from a teacher, with only 14% rating it as useful. For those aged 16-18, 62% received IAG from a teacher with only 16% finding it to be useful.¹⁴³ A survey for the Times Educational Supplement found that 47% of teachers were “not at all confident” of their ability to advise students about what an apprenticeship entails or how to secure one after school.¹⁴⁴
- 4.2.24. One of the consequences of poor quality advice and guidance is that it can result in a mismatch between the skills acquired and those needed to secure employment. For instance, in 2010/11, 94,000 hairdressing qualifications were awarded in a sector where total employment was 208,000 with only 18,000 vacancies.¹⁴⁵
- 4.2.25. Several groups of people have expressed reservations about the current arrangements. In a survey, 71% of FE principals strongly disagreed with the statement that “the devolution of IAG responsibility to schools is beneficial for the quality and impartiality of careers advice and guidance”. Recent research indicates that even the majority of schools are not convinced that this devolution would be beneficial to the impartiality or quality of IAG, with 68% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (see Figure 19 and Appendix 3).¹⁴⁶

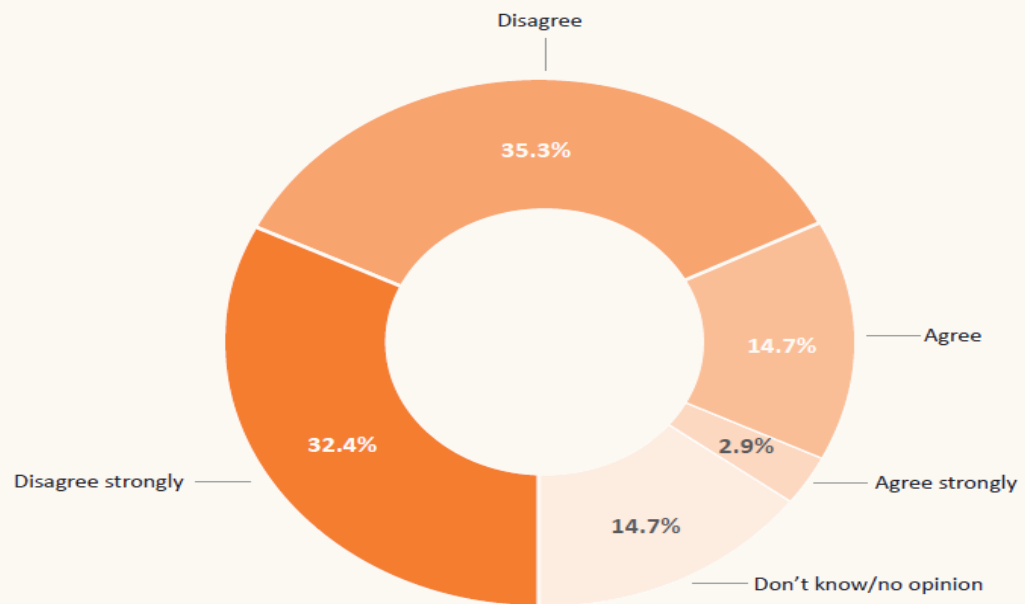
¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (2012) Hidden Talents: Skills Mismatch Analysis, London, LGA

¹⁴⁶ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

Figure 19: The devolution of statutory responsibility for IAG to schools will be beneficial for the quality and impartiality of IAG – the views of schools



Source: Policy Exchange (2013)

4.2.26. Strong evidence from visits to local colleges has shown the Committee that many young people either did not receive any IAG at school or that it was not helpful. In many cases apprenticeships were never mentioned.^{147 148 149}

4.2.27. The business world is also sceptical about the quality of IAG, with 64% believing that it needs to improve.¹⁵⁰

4.2.28. This seems to reflect the findings of others. In a survey carried out by Ofsted, many young people said that the advice and guidance they received from their schools was unsatisfactory. Most of them had to conduct their own research online or were helped by their parents to find out about their careers options. Perhaps more worryingly, inspectors came across several examples of bright young people feeling that they had been derided by their teachers for wanting to progress to work-based learning rather than stay on at school.

¹⁴⁷ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, visit, 7 January 2013.

¹⁴⁸ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, visit, 17 January 2013.

¹⁴⁹ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, visit, 24 January 2013.

¹⁵⁰ CBI (2011) Building for Growth: Business Priorities for Education and Skills, London.

“We were given no information about apprenticeships. They tried to steer us towards 6th form and university”.

-A student

- 4.2.29. Although this evidence portrays a bleak scenario, there are a number of examples of good IAG practice in Kent schools. Many, such as Castle Community College, now have a named careers advice coordinator on their staff to compensate for the loss of support that previously came from the Connexions service. Others, such as the Gravesham Consortium, are working more closely with employers and other learning providers as part of a strategy to manage students' progression more effectively.¹⁵¹
- 4.2.30. The national introduction of Destination Measures could also contribute to resolving the problem of poor quality IAG. These provide data on the destinations of young people in education, training or employment in the year following compulsory schooling.¹⁵² This could be an indication of the effectiveness of IAG in schools. However, as the Richard Review points out, despite these measures recognising a wide range of outcomes, many schools still continue to measure their own success solely on the number of students they get into university.¹⁵³
- 4.2.31. The literature shows that the general provision of IAG does not match the practices in other European countries, with strong systems of technical vocational education. Currently schools are not inspected on whether, how, or when they provide this advice and guidance to their learners.¹⁵⁴ Ofsted are aware of this issue and have commissioned a survey, scheduled for Summer 2013, to explore the extent to which all young people up to the age of 16 are receiving comprehensive, impartial careers advice and guidance.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ Kent County Council (2012) Progression in Kent: Schools Taking Charge, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

¹⁵² Department for Education (2013) Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 Destination Measures, website, <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/participation/a00208218/key-stage-4-and-key-stage-5-destination-measures>.

¹⁵³ Richard, D. (2012) The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, London.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ofsted (2012) Commissioned Survey: Careers Guidance, Manchester, Ofsted

4.2.32. It is suggested that what is needed is official oversight of IAG by Ofsted inspection; in particular, that Ofsted should explicitly monitor the quality and impartiality of IAG in schools as part of its assessment of their performance.¹⁵⁶

4.2.33. The raising of the participation age offers schools an opportunity to give pupils additional careers information, advice and guidance before they leave compulsory education.

¹⁵⁶ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

4.2.34. We believe that the provision of good quality, accurate information, particularly to businesses and young people, is central to the continuing success and expansion of apprenticeships in Kent. We also believe that the provision of good quality and impartial IAG is also a moral responsibility, because young people deserve the best possible guidance to make well-informed decisions about their future.

Recommendation 2

The Skills and Employability Service should ensure that there is a single point of contact to provide information and support for apprenticeships both to young people and to local businesses in Kent. Particular support should be offered to SMEs employing less than 100 people and to vulnerable learners.

Recommendation 3

KCC should consider the use of Gateway Centres to provide information, recruitment and employment services traditionally associated with Jobcentre Plus.

Recommendation 4

The Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills should write to Ofsted to urge that the provision and assessment of careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) in schools is reviewed. Ofsted should ensure that IAG is provided to all pupils at key transition points in their secondary education, and that it becomes a compulsory element in the Agency's assessment of schools' overall performance within 5 years. Ofsted should also assess, as part of its inspection framework, whether IAG in schools is impartial, high quality, and delivered by professionally trained and accredited people.

4.3. An Apprenticeships Kitemark for Kent

- 4.3.1. As well as the lack of awareness, misguided perceptions, and non-existent or biased IAG, the apprenticeship brand is damaged by the provision of a number of poor quality apprenticeship programmes. While the number of apprenticeships in Kent has increased substantially in the last few years, there are still doubts about their quality, which can have negative consequences for both the proficiency of the future workforce and the competitiveness of Kent businesses. It is our ambition to actively encourage the highest quality of apprenticeships in our county. This can be done by recognising excellence and rewarding high-standard provision and delivery.
- 4.3.2. The promotion of apprenticeships in Kent is generally doing well. Although apprenticeships success rates in the county are slightly lower than both the regional and national averages (71%, 74.7% and 74% respectively), there has been a steep rise in apprenticeship starts in Kent in the last few years. In the period 2010/11 to 2011/12 the growth in Kent far outstripped the growth both regionally and nationally (16.8%, 6.8% and 2.0%).¹⁵⁷ The total number of apprenticeship starts in the county in 2011/12 (10,870) was more than double the previous year (5,020).¹⁵⁸
- 4.3.3. Nonetheless, apprenticeships in Kent are still not comparable to the high-quality, deeply immersive, multi-year apprenticeships that are common in continental Europe.¹⁵⁹
- 4.3.4. There are a number of factors that indicate quality in an apprenticeship. These include not just their completion but also; their duration, the amount of time spent in training and the opportunities for progression or employment that they offer.¹⁶⁰
- 4.3.5. With the recent expansion of apprenticeships, there is concern that the provision of skills is not considered a key element of some programmes. The lack of transferrable skills can limit the employability of young people.

¹⁵⁷ The Data Service (2012) Apprenticeship Quarterly MI Report for Kent

¹⁵⁸ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 10 January 2013, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

¹⁵⁹ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

¹⁶⁰ Grindrod, F and Murray, I (2011) Making Quality Count: the union view in Dolphin, T and Lanning, T (eds) Rethinking Apprenticeships, London, IPPR

- 4.3.6. There is evidence that training is more integral to some apprenticeship frameworks than others. According to the Apprentice Pay Survey (2012) around 20% of apprentices stated that they had received neither on- nor off-the-job training. Apprentices in retail, hospitality and catering, and customer service, for example, were more likely to claim they had not received any training. Off-the-job training seems to be more common in those programmes which require more specific and technical skills such as those in children's care, learning and development, construction and hairdressing.¹⁶¹
- 4.3.7. Another concern is that there are too many programmes of short duration. It is argued that a redefinition of apprenticeships, where businesses reap productive benefits by developing trainees over a long period, is a necessary element of quality apprenticeships.¹⁶²
- 4.3.8. Also, as the Policy Exchange point out, a one year or six month apprenticeship cannot be expected to give learners a deep appreciation of what it means to perform that role on a full-time employed basis, or to equip them with the employability, technical and customer service skills that come with long experience. In contrast to other European countries, most apprenticeships in Britain start at Level 2; on the continent Level 3 apprenticeship starts are the norm.¹⁶³
- 4.3.9. The emergence of very short apprenticeship programmes, and the loose definition of apprenticeships which have led to the inclusion of courses of dubious quality, have undermined and diluted the apprenticeship brand.
- 4.3.10. Apprenticeships are currently not well regarded by many employers, who argue that they need to be clearly defined and carry an assurance that they are of high quality and will offer a good return on their investment.¹⁶⁴
- 4.3.11. The Committee believes that KCC should actively promote high-quality apprenticeships in Kent. We recommend the development of an inclusive kitemark that indicates high-quality or even excellence in the provision of apprenticeships in the county. Given that the large majority of employers in Kent are SMEs and microbusinesses we believe that this award needs to be achievable by all businesses in the county.

¹⁶¹ Tu, T et al. (2011) National Learner Satisfaction Survey: Apprentices Report, BIS Research Paper Number 19, London, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

¹⁶² Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ The Federation of Small Businesses (2012) The Apprenticeship Journey, London, FSB

- 4.3.12. We propose that at least some of the following elements should be included when assessing and awarding the kitemark.
- 4.3.13. In order to ensure high quality provision, **apprenticeships should ideally last a minimum of 12 months**. As stated above, the most successful apprenticeship programmes are those with long-term educational and workplace development.
- 4.3.14. **Sustained employment should be offered** after the successful completion of an apprenticeship. Literature provides evidence of poor practice in which apprentices are only given low-level work, or are unemployed, after they finish their training.¹⁶⁵
- 4.3.15. **Apprentices should be paid more than the minimum wage** for apprenticeships. Many employers already do so because they see the value of apprentices in their workforce.¹⁶⁶ Substantial evidence given to the Committee indicates that offering only the minimum wage deters many young people from taking on an apprenticeship because it may not even be sufficient to cover their travel expenses.¹⁶⁷
- 4.3.16. **A “safety net” should be introduced** in order to guarantee that apprentices can complete their programmes, even if employers terminate their activity. A college Principal told the Committee that the reason for half the apprenticeships’ drop-outs in his college was due to businesses’ lack of work.¹⁶⁸
- 4.3.17. Apprenticeships offered to **vulnerable young people** deserve particular recognition. There are moral reasons for supporting the most vulnerable people in our community.
- 4.3.18. There are also sound economic reasons. As stated earlier, a recent study by the University of York (2010) estimated that the average life-time public finance cost of a 16-18 year old NEET is £56,300, while the average life-time resource cost is £104,300. The study also estimated the total current, medium and long-term resource costs of NEETs to be between £22 billion and £77 billion, and the public finance costs between £12 billion and £32 billion.^{169 170} In a case study of youth offenders, it was estimated that failure to prevent re-offending costs taxpayers over £2 million.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁵ Ofsted (2012) The Report of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills: Learning and Skills, Manchester, Ofsted.

¹⁶⁶ SEMTA (2013) The Apprenticeship Opportunity, website, http://semta.org.uk/store/files/SSD0259-Semta_Apprenticeships_Service_Leaflet.

¹⁶⁷ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, visit, 7 January, 2013.

¹⁶⁸ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 11 January 2013, Maidstone, Kent County Council

¹⁶⁹ Cole, B et al (2010) Estimating the Life-Time Cost of NEET: 16-18 Year Olds Not in Education, Employment or Training, York, University of York.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Kent County Council (2012) independent Evaluation of the Vulnerable Learners Project, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

- 4.3.19. Young people value the **support of mentors**. Research by Ofsted shows that the input of mentors is particularly valued during the first few months of an apprenticeship, when young people are building up their confidence. Experienced apprentices often make the best mentors, as they can relate to new apprentices and are often best placed to provide specific advice.¹⁷²
- 4.3.20. Mentors play a particularly critical role in the support of vulnerable young people, particularly those with LDD, who often have limited experience of the workplace and may struggle to integrate into a team. Mentors are also ideally placed to fulfil a pastoral role, identifying early signs of stress or a struggling vulnerable learner.¹⁷³
- 4.3.21. Finally, an important element of a high-quality apprenticeship, and of the achievement of a kitemark, is the introduction of **apprenticeship ambassadors**. There is extensive evidence that the best way to publicise apprenticeships to young people and businesses is through apprentices themselves. The Committee found widespread enthusiasm about this initiative amongst the apprentices and businesses it spoke to.^{174 175 176 177}

¹⁷² Ofsted (2012) Apprenticeships for Young People: A Good Practice Report, Manchester, Ofsted

¹⁷³ Department for Education and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012) Creating an Inclusive Apprenticeship Offer, London.

¹⁷⁴ House of Commons (2012) Apprenticeships: Fifth Report of Session 2012-13, London, TSO.

¹⁷⁵ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 23 January 2013.

¹⁷⁶ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, visit, 17 January 2013.

¹⁷⁷ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 11 January 2013,

4.3.22. We are convinced that the introduction of an apprenticeship kitemark can promote high quality apprenticeships, strengthen the apprenticeship brand, and contribute to growth in Kent's economy. We therefore recommend the following.

Recommendation 5

The Skills and Employability Service should develop, in collaboration with the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), an inclusive kitemark to recognise both learning and skills providers and employers who deliver high quality apprenticeships in the county. The kitemark should consist of two awards; one to secure a minimum achievement of Kent high standards of delivery, the other to recognise outstanding provision and excellence.



5. Apprenticeships and Business

Businesses are playing an increasingly central role in the development and delivery of apprenticeships. A number of recent, influential reviews, such as the Richard Review and the Holt reviews, emphasise the importance of employers' involvement to align apprentices' learning outcomes more closely with business needs.

We know from employers who offer apprenticeships that they recognise that apprentices are an investment which can improve their skill base and expand their business. Yet the majority of businesses in Kent do not offer apprenticeships; more can be done to ensure that they meet increasing demand from young people.

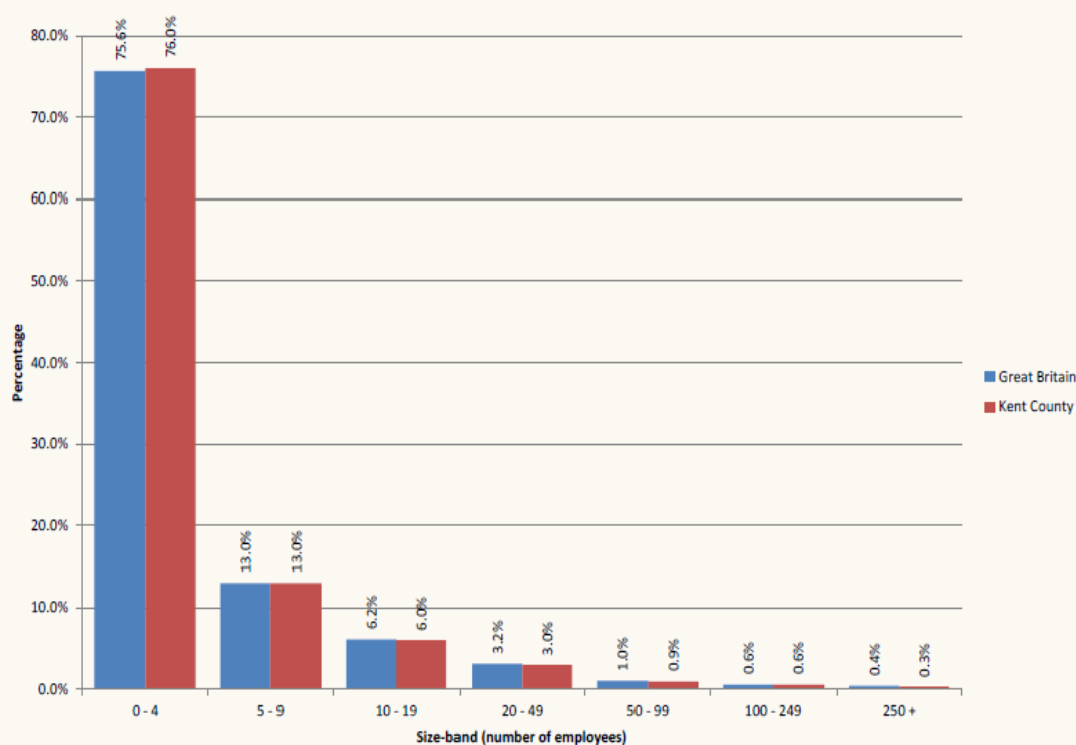
One of the key challenges to the further expansion of apprenticeships is that the overwhelming majority of businesses in Kent are SMEs; they lack the resources of larger businesses, and therefore can be less willing to make the investment that apprenticeships require.

While many of the recommendations in this report are aimed at supporting Kent employers, we believe that a number of specific initiatives should be implemented to help our smaller businesses to take on apprentices.

5.1. Business and Apprenticeships in Kent

5.1.1. As stated earlier, the employer landscape in England is primarily composed of small and medium-size firms. More than half of businesses are microbusinesses with 2 to 4 workers, including the employer, while 37% employ between 5 and 24 people. This means that about 9 in 10 firms (89%) employ fewer than 25 people.¹⁷⁸ If sole traders were also taken into account, the percentage of microbusinesses with up to 4 employees in England would account for 75.9% of the total number of businesses.¹⁷⁹ In Kent, this percentage is similar (76%), and the percentage of SMEs (that is, firms with up to 250 employees) is over 99% of all the businesses (Figure 20, see also Appendix 3).¹⁸⁰

Figure 20: Percentage of Enterprises by size-band, 2012



Source: UK Business Survey 2012

¹⁷⁸ UKCES (2012) UK Commission's Employer Perspectives Survey 2012: Evidence Report 64, UKCES, Wath-upon-Dearn.

¹⁷⁹ Kent County Council (2012) UK Business Survey 2012, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

5.1.2. The percentage of firms in England that offer apprenticeships is very low; according to the Richard review, only 10% currently employ apprentices.¹⁸¹ A recent survey conducted for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills indicates that less than half of the total number of apprentices in the UK (47%) are employed by SMEs (Figure 21).¹⁸²

Figure 21: Proportion of apprenticeships by size of employer, 2012 (employees across the whole of the UK)

	All apprentices in employment
Base: All excluding those not currently employed**	4,394
	%
Fewer than 10 employees	16
10 – 49 employees	20
50 – 249 employees	12
250 – 499 employees	7
500+ employees	41
Size not known	5
Summary:	
Small or Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) with less than 250 employees across whole organisation	47

Source: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

5.1.3. In Kent, provisional information from the NAS shows that the number of apprenticeship starts in 2011/12 is 10,870.¹⁸³ The total number of businesses in the county is 50,630, of whom only 175 are not SMEs. Even when not taking into account that some businesses employ more than one apprentice, these figures suggest there are still approximately 40,000 businesses not currently offering an apprenticeship.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Richard, D. (2012) The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, London.

¹⁸² Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012) Evaluation of Apprenticeships; Learners. BIS Research Paper Number 76, London, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

¹⁸³ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 10 January 2013.

¹⁸⁴ Kent County Council (2012) UK Business Survey 2012, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

5.2. Barriers for Local Businesses

- 5.2.1. Businesses are playing an increasingly central role in the way apprenticeships are provided and delivered in the country, and the promotion of employer involvement is an important goal of current central Government policy. The Richard Review suggests that employers should be given “purchasing power” to shape apprenticeships to suit their individual needs, and argues that the relationship between employers and apprentices must once again rise to the fore.¹⁸⁵ The Holt Review also argues for a need to empower employers, and sets out a series of measures that can support them in the provision of apprenticeships.¹⁸⁶
- 5.2.2. Apprenticeships are generally well regarded amongst those businesses that offer them. 76% of FSB members who employ apprentices believe that apprentices are an investment, as they improve the skills base of their business and their industry.¹⁸⁷ Other benefits recognised by employers include the belief that apprenticeships promote company values and a positive ethos, resulting in a more loyal workforce. As a result labour turnover rates are often reduced.¹⁸⁸
- 5.2.3. Yet, only 15% of businesses in the UK, and less than one in five businesses in Kent, offer apprenticeships. As the Holt report argues, SMEs are faced with additional barriers that make it particularly challenging for them to offer apprenticeships. Some of the most cited barriers are lack of resources, red tape and cost.¹⁸⁹
- 5.2.4. The lack of resources of SMEs is an issue that is echoed by several commentators. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2012) argues that perceived or real structural barriers, such as the size and capacity of microbusinesses and the financial and time demands of apprenticeships, discourage their take-up. Approximately 25% of employers who responded to a UKCES survey claimed that their businesses were “too small or new”, or that they “could not afford” to employ an apprentice.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁵ Richard, D. (2012) The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, London.

¹⁸⁶ Holt, J. (2012) Making Apprenticeships More Accessible to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, London.

¹⁸⁷ Federation of Small Businesses (2012) The Apprenticeship Journey, London, FSB

¹⁸⁸ Institute of Employment Research (2012) Review of Apprenticeships Research, Coventry, University of Warwick

¹⁸⁹ Holt, J. (2012) Making Apprenticeships More Accessible to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, London.

¹⁹⁰ UKCES (2012) UK Commission’s Employer Perspectives Survey 2012: Evidence Report 64, Wath-upon-Dearn, UKCES.

- 5.2.5. The time consumption of managing and organising apprenticeships has also been identified as a challenge by City and Guilds.¹⁹¹ Oral evidence to the Committee also supports this view, indicating that small businesses are likely to lack the time and capacity to support the development of an apprentice.¹⁹²
- 5.2.6. Another issue that SMEs cite as a particular barrier is the burden of bureaucracy. The CBI reports that, nationally, a third of employers call for a reduction of unnecessary red tape. This is not just in terms of paperwork, but also in terms of the complexity of the requirements of different organisations (such as the Skills Funding Agency and Ofsted) that firms have to satisfy.¹⁹³ The challenges associated with red tape are also reported by other agencies, such as the Policy Exchange and City and Guilds.^{194 195}
- 5.2.7. Cost is another key barrier. The CBI indicates that, at a national level, more than half of businesses surveyed (56%) ask for more financial incentives for the recruitment and training of apprentices.¹⁹⁶ In Kent evidence also indicates that businesses believe that cost is central challenge to the provision of apprenticeships.¹⁹⁷
- 5.2.8. The citation of cost as a key barrier is partly the result of misconceptions and lack of awareness. All training costs for an apprentice aged 16-18, and up to 50% for those aged 19-24, are met by the Government. The Government has also recently introduced a new incentive grant of £1,500 to encourage SMEs to employ apprentices.¹⁹⁸
- 5.2.9. A survey by UKCES (2012) shows that the reactions of UK employers who take on apprentices to the cost-effectiveness of apprenticeships are very positive, with 88% agreeing that apprenticeships are a good value way of training their staff.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹¹ Institute of Employment Research (2012) Review of Apprenticeships Research, Coventry, University of Warwick

¹⁹² Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, Written Evidence, 22 January 2013.

¹⁹³ CBI (2011) Building for Growth: Business Priorities for Education and Skills, London.

¹⁹⁴ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

¹⁹⁵ Institute of Employment Research (2012) Review of Apprenticeships Research, Coventry, University of Warwick.

¹⁹⁶ CBI (2011) Building for Growth: Business Priorities for Education and Skills, London.

¹⁹⁷ Kent County Council (2011) The Student Journey Select Committee, Questionnaire for Businesses, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

¹⁹⁸ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

¹⁹⁹ UKCES (2012) UK Commission's Employer Perspectives Survey 2012: Evidence Report 64, Wath-upon-Dearn, UKCES.

5.3. Initiatives

- 5.3.1. The Select Committee believes that the implementation and expansion of particular initiatives can help to overcome some of the barriers that discourage smaller businesses from offering apprenticeships.
- 5.3.2. Evidence suggests that many SMEs are discouraged from taking on an apprentice because they are not confident that they will have sufficient work for the apprentice.²⁰⁰ Half of apprenticeship drop-outs from one college in Kent are due to employers having to dismiss them because of lack of work.²⁰¹ Sometimes apprentices drop out because employers have to terminate their activities and no substitute employer can be found.²⁰²

“If a big business goes under, everyone runs around helping, but there is nothing for 'Joe Bloggs the Builder' who only has a few apprentices. A bricklaying apprenticeship lasts two years but a builder with only six months of work will not take on an apprentice if he may have to be made redundant”.

-A learning provider

- 5.3.3. It was suggested to the Committee that the introduction of a “safety net” can help businesses to retain apprentices. This can also help apprentices to complete their programmes when businesses terminate their activity and no alternative employer can be found.
- 5.3.4. **Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs)**, such as the South East Apprenticeship Company (SEAC), can offer a solution to the barriers created by red tape. ATAs are aimed at supporting small employers to engage with apprenticeships, particularly those who are unable to commit to the full length of an apprenticeship programme, those who face short-term restrictions on employee numbers and those who are uncertain about the value that an apprenticeship can bring.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Holt, J. (2012) Making Apprenticeships More Accessible to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, London.

²⁰¹ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 11 January.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ House of Commons (2012) Apprenticeships: Fifth Report of Session 2012-13, London, TSO.

5.3.5. In this model, ATAs act as the apprentices' employers, and allocate them to businesses in return for a fee. If an apprenticeship cannot be fully delivered for the whole duration by one employer, the Agency ensures that the apprentice can complete their programmes with another firm.

5.3.6. The majority of bureaucracy and administration is removed from SMEs. ATAs offer:

- Support with recruitment, by finding the right apprentice to meet the employers' needs.
- Responsibility for wages, tax and National Insurance, as well as administration and performance management.
- Supervision of the apprentice during the apprenticeship period.
- Links with an approved training provider, and support to both the apprentice and host employer throughout the apprenticeship.²⁰⁴

5.3.7. The Committee was informed of a series of initiatives which support local SMEs with limited resources with the employment of apprentices, and which could be replicated and developed in Kent. One suggests that **apprenticeships are jointly offered by a group of local businesses**. The apprentice works in each of the local businesses, with the larger business within the group offering most of the support.²⁰⁵

5.3.8. A similar initiative is offered by **Group Training Associations (GTAs)**. These provide a route for small employers to collectively train apprentices, sharing the burden and responsibility while benefitting from working together on a larger scale. Under this model firms directly employ apprentices but training occurs within the wider GTA. GTAs typically involve small groups of firms which operate in the same industry and based in the same area.²⁰⁶

5.3.9. The **Supply Chain Model** offers a programme similar to that of GTAs. In this model apprentices are also shared by different businesses, but each of the firms involved operates at different phases of the supply chain within the same sector. This model is particularly popular in the construction sector where, for example, an apprentice may gain experience as a carpenter in one firm and as a roofer in another. Young people can therefore gain a rounded experience of work with technical skills and exposure to a variety of other organisations.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ National Apprenticeship Service (2013) Apprenticeship Training Agencies, website, <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Employers/Steps-to-make-it-happen/GTA-ATA>.

²⁰⁵ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 23 January.

²⁰⁶ National Apprenticeship Service (2013) Apprenticeship Training Agencies, website, <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/Employers/Steps-to-make-it-happen/GTA-ATA>.

²⁰⁷ House of Commons (2012) Apprenticeships: Fifth Report of Session 2012-13, London, TSO.

- 5.3.10. Another aspect of the Supply Chain Model involves the training by larger employers of more apprentices than they need. This allows smaller firms that lack the capacity to train new staff to employ skilled workers who do not require significant, additional training. Firms such as Carillion operate this “over-training” programme in the construction sector, allowing smaller firms across the industry to benefit from it.²⁰⁸
- 5.3.11. The Committee also received evidence from **British Telecom (BT)** about the firm’s apprenticeship model, which could be adapted across different sectors of the Kent economy. In the BT model a large reputable employer quality assures, endorses and offers resources to enable the provision of apprenticeships to local SMEs within the same sector.
- 5.3.12. The teaching and bureaucracy are removed from both SMEs and the large business. They are instead dealt with by learning and skills providers that deal with the administration of the apprenticeship programme and are subject to Ofsted quality inspections.
- 5.3.13. While SMEs benefit from taking on apprentices without the burden of red tape, the main advantage for the large employer is that it is assured that the SMEs with which it operates are equipped with the skills and knowledge that it requires.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 7 January.

Good Practice

The BT Model

In the BT model, which can be adapted to other sectors, BT quality assures and endorses apprenticeship programmes in areas such as:

- Customer Services
- IT
- Telecommunications
- Human Resources
- Security
- Project Management
- Finance

BT also offers a training venue that providers and apprentices can use for the teaching element of the apprenticeship programmes.

The teaching and bureaucracy are removed from both BT and SMEs. They are instead dealt with by Stoke College and E-Skills. E-Skills, which is the organisation that receives apprenticeship funding from the SFA, is also subject to quality inspections by Ofsted.

SMEs benefit from taking on apprentices, and from other organisations dealing with the teaching and red tape. BT also benefits from the initiative, as the company is assured that the SMEs with which it operates are equipped with the high standard skills and knowledge that it requires.

This model is highly successful and is often cited as an example of good practice. The overall apprenticeship completion rate is 98.7%, compared with the national average of 76.4%, and the retention rate of apprentices stands at 96%.

5.3.14. Many of the recommendations in this report are aimed at helping Kent employers to offer apprenticeships; employers play a critical role and should be empowered and supported. But we believe that the implementation and expansion of some of the specific initiatives we mention above can further help smaller businesses to overcome some of the barriers that discourage them from taking on apprentices.

Recommendation 6

The Skills and Employability Service should recommend to the NAS and the SFA that they promote and finance in Kent:

- **initiatives such as Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs), whereby businesses can offer apprenticeships without employing young people directly, and without all the accompanying “red tape”. It is hoped that initiatives such as this will incentivise local SMEs - and micro businesses in particular - to take up apprentices.**
- **schemes whereby an apprenticeship can be offered jointly by a group of local businesses. The apprentice will work in each of those businesses. The larger business within the group will deal with the administration and organisation of the apprenticeship, in order to fulfil its social responsibility role towards smaller businesses and the wider community.**
- **a “safety net” system which allows apprentices to complete their courses even if the businesses employing them cease to trade.**

Recommendation 7

KCC’s Education Learning and Skills Directorate and the Economic Development and Regeneration Divisions should actively encourage the setting up of an apprenticeship model – similar to that run by BT - where a large employer quality assures, endorses and offers resources to enable the provision of apprenticeships to SMEs within the same sector.

The administration, teaching and bureaucracy are removed from both the SME and the large business, and are instead dealt with by learning and skills providers. The quality assurance of apprenticeships guarantees that SMEs offer high standard skills and knowledge that the large employer requires.



6. Apprenticeships and Education

One of the key aims of the education system is to prepare young people for the world of work. Perhaps today this is particularly important given the large number of young people out of work. We have already discussed how lack of awareness and ineffective IAG provision to young people can hinder the expansion of apprenticeships.

However, there are other systemic barriers in the sphere of education that need to be addressed. Some of them involve the preparation and work-readiness of young people, such as their development of soft skills and experience of work. Others relate more to mechanisms that hinder the take-up of apprenticeships and progression through the apprenticeship journey.

6.1. Soft Skills and Experience of Work

6.1.1. As the FSB's publication *The Apprenticeship Journey* (2012) points out, a successful apprenticeship journey should start in the classroom.²¹⁰ Young people should be enabled to enter the labour market with a set of skills which allow them to operate effectively. However, recent research by the Education and Employer's Taskforce suggests that currently, the three main barriers to young people progression into employment are; lack of employability skills, experience, and contacts.²¹¹

Soft skills

6.1.2. It appears that too many young people currently leave compulsory education lacking the "soft skills" which are deemed essential by employers. This is a concern for employers, but it is also a key issue for wider society if youth unemployment is to be dealt with.²¹²

6.1.3. "Soft skills" or "Employability skills" can be defined as: "*a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy*".²¹³

6.1.4. Within this wider definition, there is general agreement that soft skills should comprise of: reliability, self-management, business and customer awareness, team-working, problem solving, effective communication and commitment. Underpinning all these attributes must be a positive attitude and a readiness to contribute.^{214 215} In other words, the soft skills that young people should display in the workplace include: being on time, being well dressed, being willing to learn, being polite, and being ready to help colleagues and to work as a team.²¹⁶

²¹⁰ The Federation of Small Businesses (2012) *The Apprenticeship Journey*, London, FSB

²¹¹ Kent County Council (2012) *Progression in Kent: Schools Taking Charge*, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

²¹² CBI (2011) *Building for Growth: Business Priorities for Education and Skills*, London.

²¹³ CBI (2009) *Future Fit: Preparing Graduates for the World of Work*, London.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Newton, B. (2011) *The Student Journey Select Committee, Written Evidence*, Institute of Employment Studies, Brighton.

²¹⁶ Kent County Council (2012) *The Student Journey Select Committee Report*, Maidstone, Kent County Council

- 6.1.5. Literature suggests that employers use qualifications as *signals* of general skills, rather than an indication of highly specific skills.²¹⁷ Research from Becker and Goldthorpe (2008) has shown that, despite the growing importance of formal qualifications, employment history and the skills gained with experience are central to explaining career progression and higher earnings.²¹⁸
- 6.1.6. Evidence shows that some local schools value employability attributes and emphasise the teaching of soft skills to their pupils. Yet, substantial evidence also indicates that locally there is disparity between the skills and attributes that young people can offer to employers, and those that employers look for.^{219 220 221 222}
- 6.1.7. Even when schools do teach soft skills – such as team-based studying, collaborative working and communication in numerous formats - in formal academic learning, it appears that they do not always raise awareness of the transferability such skills to the workplace.²²³
- 6.1.8. Although in September 2010 the Government introduced the teaching of “functional skills”, a recent survey by the CBI, “Building for Growth” (2011), showed that young people’s employability skills are still inadequate, and that there is still widespread dissatisfaction amongst employers. Employers argue that while they do not expect young people to be job-ready, they do expect them to display a range of skills which can be used in the workplace as soon as they are employed.²²⁴
- 6.1.9. According to the survey, 55% of employers are not satisfied with young people’s self-management skills, and expect them to be more willing to accept responsibility and to manage their time more effectively. Also, two thirds (69%) are not satisfied with young people’s levels of customer awareness, feeling that young people need a better understanding of the importance of customer satisfaction.²²⁵
- 6.1.10. While a positive attitude to work is vital for young people’s professional development, it is concerning that over a third of employers who responded to the survey (35%) are dissatisfied with young people’s enthusiasm to learn.²²⁶

²¹⁷ Wolf, A. (2011) Review of Vocational Education: The Wolf Report, London.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Saunders, P. (2011) Student Journey: Learner Voice, Kent County Council, Maidstone.

²²⁰ Recruitment and Employment Confederation (2010) Avoiding a Lost Generation: Preparing Young People for Work Now and in the Future, Recruitment and Employment Confederation, London.

²²¹ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 7 January..

²²² Kent County Council (2011) The Student Journey Select Committee, 1 June 2011.

²²³ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, written evidence, 22 January.

²²⁴ CBI (2011) Building for Growth: Business Priorities for Education and Skills, London.

²²⁵ Ibid.

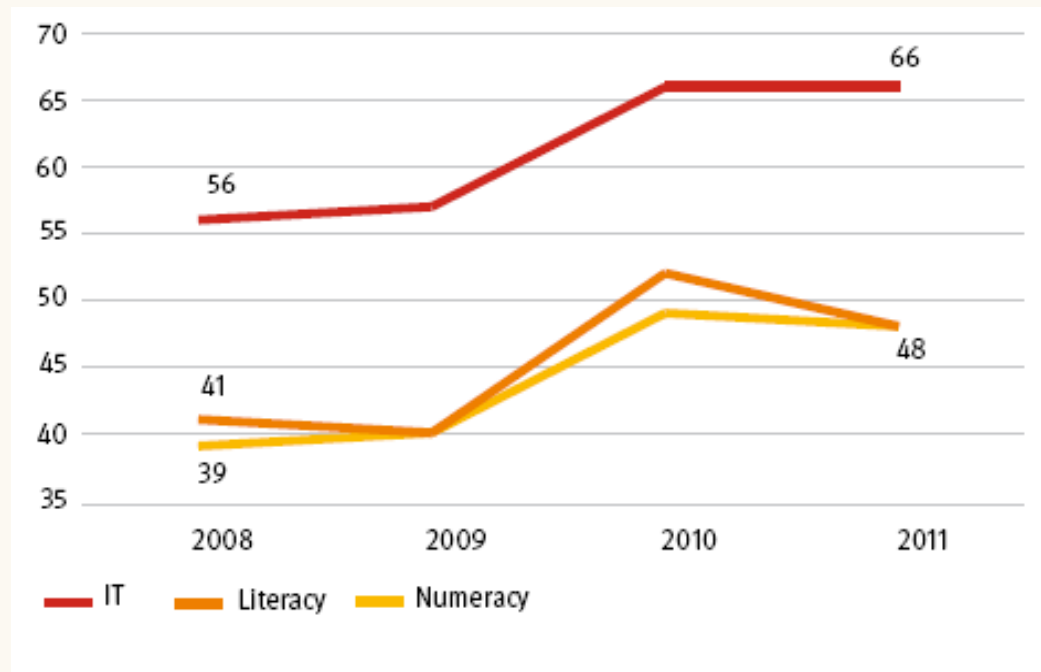
²²⁶ Ibid.

6.1.11. The improvement of literacy and numeracy core skills has also been a matter of concern for employers for a long time. The issue has become particularly urgent since the growth of youth unemployment.²²⁷

6.1.12. “Building for Growth” (2011) shows that 42% of businesses surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with the basic literacy standards of school leavers, and 35% over their numeracy standards. Evidence of local trends supports these findings, suggesting that in Kent the quality of some young people’s spelling and basic grammar is poor.²²⁸

6.1.13. But basic skills appear to be an issue across the whole workforce, suggesting that their inadequacy has been a problem for some time. About half of the employers surveyed expressed their concern about the levels of both literacy and numeracy (48% each) amongst all their staff. In fact, since 2008 employers’ concerns about inadequate literacy and numeracy standards, as well as IT proficiency, have deepened.²²⁹

Figure 22: Employers reporting problems with core skills of current workforce over time (%), England.



Source: Building for Growth, CBI (2011)

²²⁷ CBI (2011) Building for Growth: Business Priorities for Education and Skills, London.

²²⁸ Kent County Council (2011) The Student Journey Select Committee, 22 July 2011.

²²⁹ CBI (2011) Building for Growth: Business Priorities for Education and Skills, London.

- 6.1.14. In order to address the inadequacy of soft skills, literacy and numeracy, some employers have to arrange remedial training. In 2010, 44% of businesses had to arrange remedial training for young people who had recently joined them.²³⁰ The Holt review (2012) reports that remedial training is often a cost to SMEs, and that this can potentially discourage them from taking on other young apprentices.²³¹
- 6.1.15. The Government is aware of the shortcomings in soft skills and in literacy and numeracy standards amongst young people, and has introduced a series of reforms to support students in their transition from education into employment. Reforms include:
- Raising the age of compulsory participation in education or training to 17 in 2013 and to 18 in 2015 to enable young people to gain the skills and qualifications they need for employment.
 - Expanding Apprenticeships.²³²
- 6.1.16. A recent proposal also entails the introduction of “pre-apprenticeship” training and “traineeships” (please refer to Section 2.1.10 for definitions) to equip young people aged 16-24 with the skills and experience they need to secure an apprenticeship.²³³
- 6.1.17. It is suggested that traineeships should last about six months, and that they should be delivered by both education and training providers, and employers and employer organisations.²³⁴
- 6.1.18. Schools and colleges have generally tried to embed employability skills in their teaching, and at present “personal learning and thinking skills” modules are used. However, many employers feel that these are not sufficient to teach the employability skills that business needs. The large majority of employers (70%) believe that employability skills are essential. They also believe that what is needed is not a new qualification, but the embedding of employability skills in the curriculum, as the best schools and colleges already do.²³⁵
- 6.1.19. Moreover, evidence indicates that soft skills and work ethics should be taught to young people as part of the curriculum from Primary school. This can give the best chance to ingrain soft skills in young people’s attitudes and behaviour from an early age, and improve their employability later in life.^{236 237 238}

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Holt, J. (2012) Making Apprenticeships More Accessible to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, London.

²³² Prime Minister’s Office (2011) Supporting Youth Unemployment, London.

²³³ Department for Education (2013) Traineeships: A Discussion Paper, London.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ CBI (2011) Building for Growth: Business Priorities for Education and Skills, London.

²³⁶ Kent County Council (2011) The Student Journey Select Committee, 6 July 2011.

Experience of work

6.1.20. Business recognises that it has a central role to play in supporting schools to raise the achievement of students, and evidence shows that there is an appetite for greater engagement.²³⁹

6.1.21. The CBI (2011) suggests that links between business and schools in England are widespread. The key findings of the survey show that:

- Engagement with secondary schools is a clear priority for employers, with 67% of companies surveyed claiming that they have built such links (see Figure 23 below, also Appendix 3).
- Over a third of employers (36%) have increased their initial engagement with schools.
- Several businesses provide more than work experience; nearly half (48%) support careers advice and more than one in four (28%) provide school governors.
- More than half (54%) are willing to play a greater role in delivering careers advice.²⁴⁰

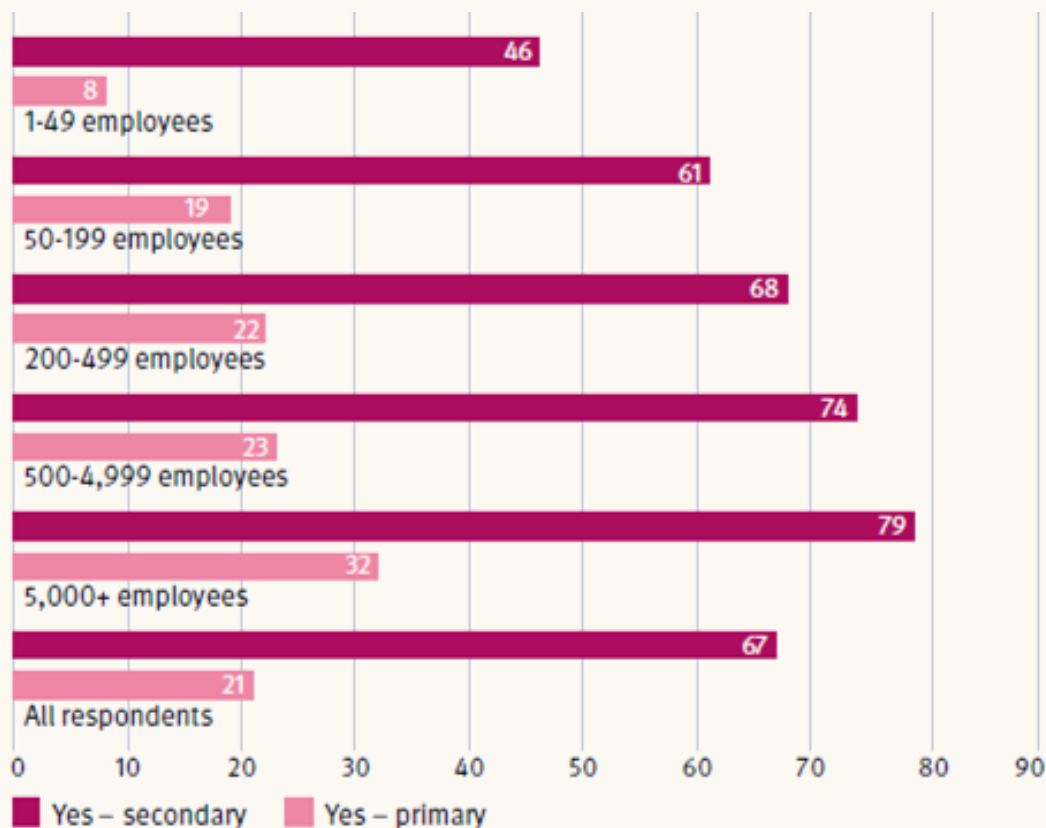
²³⁷ Kent County Council (2013) The Apprenticeships Select Committee, written evidence, 22 January 2013.

²³⁸ Kent County Council (2012) The Student Journey Select Committee Report, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

²³⁹ CBI (2011) Building for Growth: Business Priorities for Education and Skills, London.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

Figure 23: Percentage of employers claiming to have developed links with schools.



Source: CBI, “Building for Growth” (2011)

6.1.22. Evidence from the business community and from education suggests that many collaborative efforts are taking place at a local level. The Federation of Small Businesses, for example, produced a detailed guide explaining to small businesses how to engage more effectively with local schools and how to arrange joint activities such as; offering work experience, acting as mentors, visiting schools and volunteering as advisors.²⁴¹

6.1.23. Several local private, voluntary and charitable organisations, such as the Kent Association of Training Organisations (KATO) and EBP Kent, also facilitate links between employers and training providers, and promote employment opportunities to young people.^{242 243}

²⁴¹ The Federation of Small Businesses (2008) Working with Schools and Colleges: A Members’ Guide.

²⁴² Kent County Council (2011) The Student Journey Select Committee, 23 June 2011.

²⁴³ Kent County Council (2011) The Student Journey Select Committee, 22 July 2011.

- 6.1.24. However, a substantial body of national and local evidence suggests that current arrangements are not adequate and that more needs to be done to promote dialogue and collaboration between key organisations.^{244 245} Indeed, with regard to vocational education, Professor Wolf maintains that “there were far more direct links between employers and local colleges in the past”.²⁴⁶
- 6.1.25. Inadequate dialogue and collaboration between employers and schools can result in a low take-up of work experience placements. The Department for Education recently reported that the most concerning and frequently reported gap in local provision for NEETs was the lack of experience of the workplace.²⁴⁷
- 6.1.26. Experience of work can offer young people job-related skills and knowledge that can enhance their employability. Normally work experience placements are arranged through collaboration between local schools and colleges, and employers. Schools are expected to offer work-related learning to their students, and to arrange placements either directly with local businesses or through organisations which manage the process on their behalf.^{248 249}
- 6.1.27. Work experience offers several benefits, both to young people and employers. While the short duration (usually one or two weeks) of work experience placements makes them perhaps less effective than apprenticeships in providing young people with work-related skills, it can encourage greater participation by employers; placements for 16 and 17 year old students involve fewer expenses and health and safety requirements.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Kent County Council (2012) The Student Journey Select Committee Report, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

²⁴⁶ Wolf, A. (2011) Review of Vocational Education: The Wolf Report, London.

²⁴⁷ Department for Education (2011) “What Works Re-engaging Young People Who Are Not in Education, Employment or Training? Summary of Evidence from the Activity Agreement Pilots and the Entry to Learning Pilots”, London.

²⁴⁸ Kent County Council (2011) Briefing Paper: National Careers Service/Schools’ Responsibilities for Impartial Guidance, Kent County Council, Maidstone.

²⁴⁹ Careers Profession Task Force (2010) Towards a Strong Careers Profession, Department for Education, London.

²⁵⁰ Kent County Council (2012) The Student Journey Select Committee Report, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

- 6.1.28. Importantly, by demonstrating that they have experience of the workplace, young people are more likely to secure employment. According to the National Employer Skills Survey for England (2009), employers who believe that their young recruits are poorly prepared for work often put this down to a lack of experience of the working world or to immaturity. The survey also points out that the smaller the size of the business, the more likely employers are to believe that the young people they had recruited were poorly prepared for work. This issue is perhaps particularly relevant to Kent, given that the county is overwhelmingly represented by SMEs.²⁵¹
- 6.1.29. Work placements can also help to challenge young people's negative perceptions about particular careers – such as those in engineering - which may in fact offer good employment prospects.²⁵²
- 6.1.30. The benefits of work experience are significant, and as with apprenticeships, its provision needs to be increased. As Professor Wolf points out “it is becoming even harder for young people to obtain ordinary employment and too little is being done to assist them in obtaining genuine workplace experience and employment-based skills”.²⁵³

“It is becoming even harder for young people to obtain ordinary employment and too little is being done to assist them in obtaining genuine workplace experience and employment-based skills”.

-Professor Wolf

²⁵¹ UKCES (2010) National Employer Skills Survey for England 2009: Main Report, Wath-upon-Dearn, UKCES.

²⁵² CBI (2010) Ready to Grow: Business Priorities for Education and Skills, website, www.cbi.org.uk/content.nsf.

²⁵³ Wolf, A. (2011) Review of Vocational Education: The Wolf Report, London.

- 6.1.31. Nonetheless, evidence shows that many secondary schools do not organise work experience for their pupils, and that many students do not undertake any experience of work.^{254 255} Another key barrier to the expansion of work experience is the concentration of placements at the end of the academic year. It is suggested that more flexible approaches, which promote availability throughout the year, can increase the opportunities that employers are able to offer.²⁵⁶
- 6.1.32. Another suggestion, which was put forward by the local FSB, is the development of a work experience pilot scheme where post-16 students use their expertise, such as IT skills, to help local employers lacking those skills with particular business projects.²⁵⁷
- 6.1.33. This scheme can bring about mutual benefits for young people and employers. For many students, as Ofsted indicates, work experience sometimes does not offer a meaningful first-hand experience of the world of work; through direct engagement with business through the delivery of a specific project with visible outcomes, young people can gain a real insight into the workplace. In addition, the engagement of young people in activities where they feel their input is appreciated and needed enhances their sense of worth. Employers, in return, benefit from students' skills and knowledge in particular areas to overcome technical shortfalls that require particular expertise.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁴ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, Visit, 17 January 2013.

²⁵⁵ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, Visit, 24 January 2013.

²⁵⁶ Kent County Council (2011) The Student Journey Select Committee, Questionnaire for Businesses, Kent County Council, Maidstone.

²⁵⁷ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 24 January 2013.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

6.1.34. We propose that this pilot scheme is run in collaboration with organisations representing local business, such as the Federation of Small Businesses and Chambers of Commerce.²⁵⁹

Recommendation 8

The Cabinet Member for Education, Learning and Skills should ask the Secretary of State for Education to further encourage the teaching of soft skills and functional skills in primary schools. He should also further encourage secondary schools to organise work experience placements for all their students in order to prepare them for the world of work.

Recommendation 9

KCC's Regeneration and Economic Development Division and Education, Learning and Skills Directorate should jointly pilot a scheme whereby post-16 students can gain valuable experience of work by using their skills to help local businesses with particular projects.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

6.2. The Apprenticeships Offer

6.2.1. Another systemic barrier, together with those preventing the development of soft skills and experience of work at school, is the inadequacy of the education system in the recruitment of apprentices through the “**September Guarantee**” mechanism.

6.2.2. The September Guarantee is an offer, by the end of September, for the provision by Local Authorities of a "suitable" place in learning to young people completing compulsory education. The Guarantee was implemented nationally in 2007 for 16 year olds and was extended to 17 year olds in 2008. The offer must be one of the following:

- full or part-time education in school, sixth form college, independent learning provider, or FE college;
- an apprenticeship or programme-led apprenticeship. This must include both the training element and a job or work placement, where this is a requirement of starting the apprenticeship;
- entry to employment or Foundation Learning; or
- employment with training to NVQ Level 2.²⁶⁰

6.2.3. While the September Guarantee mechanism seems to be effective in offering suitable places for students in academic pathways, such as sixth form or FE colleges, it appears that it is inadequate in the allocation of apprenticeship places.²⁶¹

6.2.4. Students in Year 11 apply in July for a place in sixth form or at an FE college; this guarantees that the students can continue their education the following academic year without interruptions.²⁶²

6.2.5. However, the mechanism cannot be effectively applied to the allocation of apprenticeship places, as the limited numbers of apprenticeship vacancies prevents the guarantee of a secure place.²⁶³

²⁶⁰ House of Commons (2010) Children, Schools and Families Committee, Eighth Report: Young People not in Education, Employment or Training, website, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmchilsch/316/31602>.

²⁶¹ Kent County Council (2013) The Apprentices Select Committee, 10 January 2013.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

6.2.6. It can therefore be difficult to persuade young people to consider applying for apprenticeships ahead of academic learning when there is no guarantee of progression in education. This is perhaps more concerning in light of the recent introduction of the RPA (which makes it compulsory for young people to remain in education or training until the age of 17 by 2013 and 18 by 2015) as many students continue their compulsory education in the schools where they have been studying.²⁶⁴
²⁶⁵

“Not being sure I would have a place would put me off. I like to plan ahead and wouldn't want to risk losing a year.”

-A student

6.2.7. There is some evidence that local learning and skills provider organisations, such as the Kent Association of Training Organisations (KATO), are attempting to resolve this issue. They are developing a vacancy matching process in which young people register for an apprenticeship early in the year. This ensures that young people can confidently include an apprenticeship as an option when they make their educational choices in July. Although the initiative is promising, it has been reported that the current matching process could be more user-friendly.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Department for Education (2013) Raising the Participation Age (RPA), website, <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/youngpeople/participation/rpa>.

²⁶⁶ Kent County Council (2013) The Apprentices Select Committee, 10 January 2013.

6.2.8. Although efforts are being made to resolve the issue, the Committee believes that the Local Authority has the responsibility to put in place a more robust county-wide mechanism that can allocate apprenticeship places when students decide their educational future.

Recommendation 10

KCC's Regeneration and Economic Development Division and Education, Learning and Skills Directorate should develop a mechanism to ensure that students in Kent are offered apprenticeships as part of the September Guarantee.

6.3. Apprenticeships in Schools

- 6.3.1. As well as playing a central role in the development of soft skills and work experience, schools are ideally placed to offer apprenticeships as part of their own workforce.
- 6.3.2. The idea of developing apprenticeships in schools began in 2007, when the Training and Development Agency consulted on how the Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship frameworks might be made more appropriate to support staff in remodelled schools.²⁶⁷
- 6.3.3. There are several existing apprenticeship frameworks that could be offered in schools including; Supporting Teaching and Learning, Children's Care, Learning and Development, Business Administration, Hospitality and Catering, Cleaning and Support Service Industry, Information and Library Services and IT and Telecommunications Professionals.²⁶⁸ We believe that other areas which could be developed within schools include sports and physical education.
- 6.3.4. Apprenticeships have brought major improvements to skills levels and organisation effectiveness in the private sector, and with the expansion of apprenticeship places in the public sector schools can also take advantage of their benefits.²⁶⁹
- 6.3.5. Apprenticeship vacancies in the schools' workforce are particularly targeted at young people aged 16–18. Bringing younger people into the workforce can offer many advantages to schools. The experience of schools that have employed apprentices has highlighted:
- the commitment, enthusiasm and ambition of those on a formal apprenticeship programme;
 - flexibility in the workforce, and value for money for schools in employing apprentices;
 - that apprenticeships are particularly useful in developing formal structures and career paths for support staff;
 - that apprenticeships are an easy way of meeting specific skills needs within a school; and
 - the ability of young apprentices in a variety of roles to engage with pupils.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ National Apprenticeship Service (2009) Employing Apprentices in Schools, London, National Apprenticeship Service.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

- 6.3.6. In addition, as previously mentioned, extensive evidence shows that the best way to publicise apprenticeships to young people is through apprentices themselves. The introduction of apprentices into schools can contribute to raising awareness and promoting a positive perception of apprenticeships.^{271 272 273 274}
- 6.3.7. The potential for schools to expand apprenticeships take-up is recognised by KCC. As the 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013–2016 reports, the range of apprenticeship opportunities in the county has been expanded to include teaching assistants, sports coaches, catering and ground maintenance, and science and ICT technicians.²⁷⁵
- 6.3.8. Oral evidence indicates that there are currently 33 Secondary schools employing apprentices in Kent, and that it is the ambition of the Local Authority to have 50% of all schools in the county – including primary schools – with apprentices in their workforce.²⁷⁶

²⁷¹ House of Commons (2012) Apprenticeships: Fifth Report of Session 2012-13, London, TSO.

²⁷² Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 23 January 2013.

²⁷³ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, visit, 17 January 2013.

²⁷⁴ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 11 January 2013.

²⁷⁵ Kent County Council (2012) 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

²⁷⁶ Kent County Council (2013) The Apprenticeships Select Committee, 10 January 2013.

6.3.9. Schools and other public bodies are ideally placed to provide apprenticeship opportunities to young people. We commend the current efforts to support the development of apprenticeships within these establishments and we urge the expansion of this endeavour in Kent.

Recommendation 11

The Skills and Employability Service should encourage additional schools and public bodies in Kent to employ apprentices as part of their workforce.

6.4. Apprenticeships and Specialisations

- 6.4.1. A strong and well-developed apprenticeship system is key to growing the Kent economy and to offering young people employability skills and good career prospects. An important way to achieve this is through the development of specialist skills, as these are necessary to meet the needs of particular sectors in the Kent economy.
- 6.4.2. Advanced and Higher Level apprenticeships can bring about several benefits. As discussed earlier, a number of commentators have expressed reservations about the quality of apprenticeship schemes in the UK when compared with those in Europe. The multi-year, more technical nature of advanced apprenticeships more closely mirrors that of the most successful apprenticeship programmes offered in Europe, where the equivalent of Level 3 apprenticeships are the norm.²⁷⁷
- 6.4.3. For apprentices the benefits are numerous and well documented. Research suggests that Advanced and Higher Level apprenticeships can bring even greater benefits than those obtained by pursuing an Intermediate Level qualification. Research by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills shows that a greater proportion of young people undertaking Level 3 qualifications feel their abilities and skills had improved in comparison to those undertaking Level 2.²⁷⁸
- 6.4.4. As shown in Figure 24 below, 82% of Level 3 apprentices believed that their ability to do their job had improved compared to 77% of those at Level 2. 88% of Level 3 apprentices felt that their sector-specific skills and knowledge had improved, and 86% felt that their career prospects had improved, compared to 82% and 78% respectively.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

²⁷⁸ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012) Evaluation of Apprenticeships; Learners.

BIS Research Paper Number 76, London, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

Figure 24: Impact of apprenticeship on skills and abilities: by Level (England)

Level	Impact on Skills and Abilities: % reporting an improvement									
	Base		Ability to do job	Skills/knowledge of benefit within sector	Career Prospects	Skills / Knowledge of benefit across sectors	Teamwork, Communication, Social Skills	Numeracy	Literacy	IT Skills
All	(5,000)	%	79	84	81	82	74	53	51	47
Level 2	(3,079)	%	77*	82*	78*	80*	72*	53	51	46
Level 3	(1,921)	%	82*	88*	86*	84*	75*	54	51	48

Source: BIS (2012)

6.4.5. Higher level apprenticeships also compare favourably when apprentices are asked about the relative value they put on their qualifications compared to a GCSE or A Level. While 62% of Level 2 apprentices felt that their apprenticeship was more useful than a GCSE for their current job, this figure rises to 67% for those undertaking Level 3.²⁸⁰

6.4.6. Higher level apprenticeships are more likely to attract higher earnings. According to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the proportion of apprentices receiving a pay rise is linked to the apprenticeship level. While 37% of Level 2 apprentices receive a pay rise on completion, this rate increases to 55% for those on Level 3.²⁸¹

6.4.7. In addition to the likelihood of receiving a pay rise, higher level apprentices also seem to attract higher wages. According to the Richard Review, after completing a Level 2 Intermediate apprenticeship, a young person can expect an estimated wage premium of 12% compared to students with lower qualifications. Making a similar comparison, completion of a Level 3 Advanced apprenticeship entails a wage premium of 22%.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

- 6.4.8. Despite all of these benefits, it appears that the provision of higher level apprenticeships both in the UK and in Kent requires further growth. People in Kent generally have lower levels of qualifications than the rest of South East England. This has been identified by KCC as an important reason to explain why Kent has lagged behind the rest of the South East in the development of knowledge-based industries. It is argued that the county's economic development is linked with the ability of its learning providers to facilitate young people's progress through education and employment systems.²⁸³
- 6.4.9. KCC is currently developing Sector Based Skills Strategies in particular industries, which aim to identify skill gaps and propose actions to address them. Findings show that there is demand for further specialisation in sectors including Health and Social Care, the Land Based Sector and Construction.²⁸⁴
- 6.4.10. In the Health and Social Care Sector it is reported that staff turnover in the NHS, particularly in jobs at NVQ Levels 2 and 3, is very significant, and that demand remains large. With regard to the Land Based Sector, it is shown that there are opportunities for greater progression between Level 2 and Level 3 courses.²⁸⁵
- 6.4.11. Within the Construction Sector, it is shown that, while participation in vocational courses is high at Levels 1 and 2, it drops away significantly at Level 3. Specialist gaps have been identified in areas such as; painting and decorating, heating systems and scaffolding.²⁸⁶
- 6.4.12. However, some barriers hinder the further development of Level 3 qualifications. As previously discussed, poor IAG and a lack of awareness of available options can stand in the way of learners making informed choices and progressing to Level 3 apprenticeships.²⁸⁷
- 6.4.13. Although Level 3 apprenticeships offer clear benefits, most apprenticeship starts both in England and in Kent are still at a relatively low educational level. Nationally, while the number of Intermediate apprenticeships in 2011-12 was about 246,000, those at Advanced Level were about 135,000 and those at Higher Level were only about 2,800.²⁸⁸

²⁸³ Kent County Council (2012) Progression in Kent: Schools Taking Charge, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

²⁸⁴ Kent County Council (2012) 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

²⁸⁸ The Data Service (2012) Apprenticeship Quarterly MI Report for Kent.

- 6.4.14. In Kent, in the same period, the number of Intermediate apprenticeship starts was more than double that of Advanced Level (about 5,500 and 2,600 respectively). Those at Higher Level were only 23.²⁸⁹
- 6.4.15. Visits to colleges have shown that those specialising in particular sectors are often renowned for their reputable and outstanding provision. For example, East Kent College has a good reputation in Hospitality and Catering and Hadlow College is a recognised centre for provision in the Land Based Sector.^{290 291}
- 6.4.16. While colleges providing specialist apprenticeships may be dispersed throughout the county, young apprentices have told the Committee that they were prepared to travel farther afield in order to be educated in them; they pointed out that the qualifications offered in reputable establishments would significantly improve their skills and employability.²⁹² Evidence from colleges suggests that further apprenticeship specialisation across the county would be welcome.²⁹³
²⁹⁴
- 6.4.17. The visits also revealed that, in some cases, undertaking apprenticeships beyond Level 2 – such as the Level 3 Vehicle Maintenance and Repair - were a necessary condition of progression into meaningful employment.²⁹⁵

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 11 January 2013.

²⁹¹ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, visit, 30 January 2013.

²⁹² Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, visit, 17 January 2013.

²⁹³ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, visit, 30 January 2013.

²⁹⁴ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, visit, 29 January 2013.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

6.4.18. Higher level apprenticeships are crucial to meet the needs of our local economy. We believe that for a more competitive Kent economy we need to promote the growth of apprenticeships beyond Level 2. In order to achieve this aim, we suggest that KCC liaises with Further Education representatives across the county to promote our vision that each college develops an area of apprenticeship specialisation.

Recommendation 12

KCC's Education, Learning and Skills Directorate and Regeneration and Economic Development Division should liaise with Further Education representatives across Kent (through groups such as KAFEC) to promote the vision that each college develops an area of apprenticeship specialisation (beyond Level 2).



7. Apprenticeships and KCC

We are convinced that KCC can perform a central role in the growth of apprenticeships in the county. KCC should lead by example, by promoting and expanding the apprenticeship programme within our workforce and by encouraging our partner organisations to do so.

Importantly, we believe that in order to further stimulate the growth of apprenticeships in the marketplace, KCC should move towards a more strategic and enabling role.

It is our vision that a few years from now, an established and reputable apprenticeship brand will offer a high quality alternative to academic education, meeting the needs of a growing Kent economy and leading to prosperous careers for our young people.

7.1. KCC and Apprenticeships – Setting Good Practice

7.1.1. In order to promote apprenticeships in Kent we believe that KCC should lead by example. One way of achieving this aim is to enhance the quantity and quality of the apprenticeships offered within the Local Authority.

7.1.2. The internal KCC apprenticeship programme started in 2006, and to date 580 young people have participated in it.²⁹⁶ It is the aim of the new Kent Jobs for Kent Young People initiative to continue to employ at least 88 apprentices every year, in order to deliver an additional 350 apprenticeships by 2015.²⁹⁷

7.1.3. Most of the apprenticeships within KCC are provided by Key Training Services, which is the brand name under which the Community Learning and Skills (CLS) team delivers apprenticeships and work-based learning, both within KCC and across Kent.²⁹⁸ The CLS team sits within the Customer and Communities Directorate and delivers apprenticeships contracts on behalf of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Educational Funding Agency (EFA).²⁹⁹

7.1.4. The service delivers a variety of apprenticeships, such as:

- Business Administration
- Childcare
- Health and Social Care
- Customer Service
- Hospitality and Catering
- Retail
- Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools
- Warehousing.³⁰⁰

7.1.5. Most of these are provided at Level 2 (Intermediate) and 3 (Advanced), although Hospitality, Retail and Warehousing are only offered to Level 2.³⁰¹

7.1.6. Community, Learning and Skills was subject to Ofsted inspection in 2010 and achieved a “Good” rating. Performance and quality metrics since inspection show that the service has continued to improve.³⁰²

²⁹⁶ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 22 January 2013, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

²⁹⁷ Kent County Council (2013) Kent Jobs for Kent Young People: Update, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

²⁹⁸ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, written evidence, 21 February 2013.

²⁹⁹ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, written evidence, 1 March 2013.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

- 7.1.7. The Committee commends this good work and urges that the Authority, in order to set a good example and promote the apprenticeship brand in the county, enhances the quantity and quality of its provision.
- 7.1.8. A number of initiatives could be implemented to achieve this objective. For instance, in order to increase apprentice take-up, it was suggested to the Committee that every KCC directorate includes a set number of apprenticeships in its internal performance indicator.³⁰³
- 7.1.9. In order to promote and enhance apprenticeship quality, the Committee recommends that a greater number of higher level apprenticeships are also offered within each directorate.
- 7.1.10. As well as expanding the quantity and quality of its own apprenticeship programme, KCC can also play a role in encouraging partner organisations to take on apprentices. One of KCC's current initiatives requires that contractors deliver one apprenticeship for every £1 million spent on labour.^{304 305}
- 7.1.11. Although this practice is well-established within KCC's Highways Service, it seems that it is not fully implemented across the Local Authority.³⁰⁶
- 7.1.12. KCC currently procures £850m of services on an annual basis; if the scheme were to be fully implemented, it would significantly raise the number of apprenticeships offered across Kent.³⁰⁷

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 10 January 2013.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 22 January 2013.

³⁰⁶ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 10 January 2013.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

7.1.13. Having investigated the issues above, the Committee recommends the following.

Recommendation 13

All KCC directorates should implement an internal performance indicator to ensure that they employ a set number of apprenticeships, including higher level apprenticeships. KCC's ambition should be to deliver high quality, reputable apprenticeships that offer good progression opportunities.

Recommendation 14

All KCC directorates should make certain that the requirement for contractors to deliver one apprenticeship opportunity for each £1 million spend on labour is fully implemented.

7.2. The Strategic Role for KCC – Looking to the Future

- 7.2.1. As well as setting a good example by improving its own apprenticeship programme, KCC is uniquely placed to provide strategic direction for the effective expansion of apprenticeships in the county.
- 7.2.2. An appropriately skilled workforce is central to improving businesses performance and competitiveness, and to driving economic growth. We believe that it is the role of KCC to promote collaboration between the Local Government, educators and businesses, and to share information, in order to secure confidence in the provision and growth of apprenticeships in Kent.
- 7.2.3. A key element of the reputable apprenticeship systems found in continental Europe is the heavy degree of business involvement in their educational delivery, assessment and regulations components. Apprenticeships are jobs; it is important that the training that young people receive should reflect the expectations and requirements of employers. As the Policy Exchange points out; “significant employer engagement is a prerequisite for effective systems of technical-vocational education”.³⁰⁸
- 7.2.4. Much current national policy is directed towards increased empowerment of employers. Both the Richard and Holt Reviews maintain that employers should be given power to purchase apprenticeship programmes to suit their needs, and that they should be provided with effective information and guidance to act as “informed and discerning consumers of the training they procure”.^{309 310}
- 7.2.5. The role of educators and providers of apprenticeships is also vital. Providers offer expertise in training and manage all components of an apprenticeship both on and off the job. The quality of providers is crucial because ineffective provision can lead to placement breakdown and can potentially discourage businesses from employing apprentices in future.³¹¹
- 7.2.6. The Holt report argues that the apprenticeships that best fit SMEs’ needs are delivered by providers that have formed close relationships with local employers.³¹²

³⁰⁸ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

³⁰⁹ Holt, J. (2012) Making Apprenticeships More Accessible to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, London.

³¹⁰ Richard, D. (2012) The Richard Review of Apprenticeships, London.

³¹¹ Holt, J. (2012) Making Apprenticeships More Accessible to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, London.

³¹² Ibid.

- 7.2.7. One reason for this is that SMEs often work in specialised areas; the development of apprenticeship programmes to meet their specific needs is frequently required, as the existing ones are often too wide and broad, because they were developed to suit large businesses.³¹³
- 7.2.8. There are a wide range of training providers operating in Kent, ranging from local colleges, freelance trainers and large employers through training associations. KCC also provides apprenticeships across the county.
- 7.2.9. As mentioned above, the Local Authority offers good quality provision of a wide range of apprenticeships, at both Intermediate and Advanced levels.
- 7.2.10. Nonetheless, evidence from a variety of sources suggests that KCC should not be a training provider of apprenticeships. They argue that for a more balanced apprenticeship market the Local Authority should move towards a more strategic and enabling role, as its provision can give rise to “conflicts of interest” and can create an “uneven playing field” in apprenticeship delivery. They urge that the provision of apprenticeships in the county is employer-led and market-driven.^{314 315 316 317}
- 7.2.11. It is pointed out that in-house training provision conflicts with the overarching enabling role of the Local Authority, and can be perceived as hindering the delivery of apprenticeships in a competitive, free market environment.³¹⁸
- 7.2.12. A college Principal claimed that despite the outstanding reputation of his college in specific areas, the college had not received any apprenticeship referrals in the last 30 months from KCC. His perception was that referrals tended to be passed directly to KCC’s own provider.³¹⁹
- 7.2.13. Literature suggests that a level playing field and genuine competition are crucial for the effective delivery of high quality apprenticeships; in a genuine free market the most successful providers can raise the quality of apprenticeships by forcing others to innovate and raise standards.³²⁰

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 11 January 2013.

³¹⁵ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 11 January 2013.

³¹⁶ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 10 January 2013.

³¹⁷ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 23 January 2013.

³¹⁸ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 10 January 2013.

³¹⁹ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 11 January 2013.

³²⁰ Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

“A level playing field and genuine competition are crucial for the effective delivery of high quality apprenticeships”

7.2.14. It is proposed that a central element of KCC’s strategic and enabling role is the promotion of collaboration between Local Government, businesses and learning and skills providers. It is key that the education and training offered to young people is able to respond to local labour market and economic needs; this can be achieved most effectively through collaborative working between these parties.^{321 322}

7.2.15. The effective sharing of local labour market information can bring about significant benefits to businesses, providers and young people, and is central to growing the local economy. Recent national research about skills mismatch has highlighted how lack of clear labour market information can produce inefficient and undesirable employment outcomes. For example, in 2010-11, there were 94,000 hairdressing qualifications awarded in an industry where total employment was 208,000 with only 18,000 vacancies.³²³

7.2.16. Apprenticeship providers can be risk averse. Without the reassurance supplied by appropriate labour market information, they may feel anxious about investing in new, expensive equipment for apprenticeships programmes.³²⁴

7.2.17. If providers are prepared to make additional investments in effective programmes that meet the needs of the local economy, it is argued that this will boost the confidence of employers to offer apprenticeships.³²⁵

³²¹ Kent County Council (2012) 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

³²² Policy Exchange (2013) Technical Matters: Building a High Quality Technical and Vocational Route Through the Education System, London, Policy Exchange.

³²³ Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (2012) Hidden Talents: Skills Mismatch Analysis, London, LGA.

³²⁴ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 10 January 2013.

³²⁵ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 11 January 2013.

- 7.2.18. Genuine labour market intelligence can also improve the provision of effective IAG, as awareness of future labour market trends enables young people to make informed career decisions which are more likely to lead to employment outcomes.³²⁶
- 7.2.19. A number of collaborative working and information sharing practices are already in present in Kent. Swale and Shepway District Councils are active in their localities in promoting apprenticeships, and are known to have established good links to local employers.³²⁷
- 7.2.20. Within KCC, there are strong links between the Skills and Employability Team and the Regeneration and Economic Development Division.³²⁸ The Division is currently developing sector-based strategies which aim to identify gaps in Kent's skills provision and propose actions to address them.³²⁹
- 7.2.21. In light of the evidence we believe that KCC should review its status as a training provider of apprenticeship courses, and should move towards a more strategic and enabling role. We believe that this is an important step to stimulate the growth of apprenticeships in a competitive, free market environment.
- 7.2.22. We also believe that the effective sharing of labour market information is instrumental for securing confidence in the provision and growth of apprenticeships in Kent, and for ensuring that young people are empowered to make informed decisions about their future careers.

³²⁶ Kent County Council (2012) Progression in Kent: Schools Taking Charge, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

³²⁷ Kent County Council (2013) Apprenticeships Select Committee, 10 January 2013.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Kent County Council (2012) 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

7.2.23. Effective partnerships between employers, providers and local authorities provide the foundation for the successful delivery of apprenticeships. We therefore recommend that a summit, which includes all these key stakeholders, should be organised to develop strategies aimed at promoting the future growth of high quality apprenticeships in the county.

Recommendation 15

KCC should review its status as a training provider of apprenticeship courses, and move towards a more strategic and enabling role. It should offer more support to providers of apprenticeships, in order to stimulate their growth in a competitive, free market environment.

Recommendation 16

In order to identify new growth sectors in Kent's economy, as well as to support existing ones, it is essential that KCC fulfils a strong strategic and coordinating role. KCC can achieve this by increasing synergy through the sharing of labour market information between each of its directorates. This information should be cascaded effectively to providers and employers in order to secure confidence in the provision of apprenticeships.

Recommendation 17

The Skills and Employability Service should launch, in collaboration with the NAS, a summit to develop strategies aimed at promoting the growth of apprenticeships in the County.



Appendix 1

Evidence

Oral Evidence

Thursday, 10 January 2013

- **Sue Dunn**, Head of Skills and Employability Service, Skills and Employability Service, Kent County Council and **Richard Little**, Skills and Employability Manager, Skills and Employability Service, Kent County Council
- **Jon Thorn**, Head of Business Development, National Apprenticeships Service (NAS)
- **Peter Hobbs**, Chief Executive, Kent Channel Chamber of Commerce
- **Lindsay Jardine**, Director of Operations, Kent Association of Training Organisations (KATO)

Friday, 11 January 2013

- **Graham Razey**, Principal and Chief Executive, East Kent College
- **Tony Allen**, Area Relationship Team South East, Skills Funding Agency (SFA)
- **Paul Winter**, Managing Director, Wire Belt Company Ltd, Sittingbourne

Tuesday, 22 January 2013

- **Penny Denne**, Skills and Employability Programme Officer, Skills and Employability Service, Kent County Council
- **Jonathan Smith**, Participation and Progression Officer, Skills and Employability Service, Kent County Council.

Wednesday, 23 January 2013

- **Danielle Sparkes**, Senior Technical Clerk, Building Control, Dover District Council and **Mary Leadsham**, Apprentice Technical Clerk, Building Control, Dover District Council
- **Anne McNulty**, Executive Director, Education Business Partnership (EBP) Kent

Written Evidence

Martin Blincow, Research and Development Manager, Skills and Employability Service, Kent County Council

Richard Little, Skills and Employability Manager, Skills and Employability Service, Kent County Council

Becci Newton, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Employment Studies, Brighton

Caroline Murray, Partnership Team Manager, Customer and Communities, Kent County Council

Visits

Monday, 7 January 2013

- Canterbury College, Canterbury

Thursday, 17 January 2013

- K College, Tunbridge Wells Campus, Tunbridge Wells

Thursday 24 January 2013

- K College, Tonbridge Campus, Tonbridge

Tuesday, 29 January 2013

- East Kent College, Broadstairs

Wednesday, 30 January 2013

- Hadlow College, Hadlow

Rapporteur Meetings (December 2012-February 2013)

- Airbus Bristol
- Apex Engineering Northants
- Ashford BC
- Association Accountant Technicians
- Bigfoot Theatre Deal CIC SME
- Bristol College
- British Telecom
- Canterbury College
- Doug Richards Enterprises
- Dover (schools) Extended Services
- Dover District Council
- Dover District Locality Board
- Duke of York's Academy
- East Kent College
- EPB Kent
- Federation Small Businesses
- Future Creative
- Hadlow College
- Institute for Employment Studies
- Institute of Education, London University
- K College
- KAFEC Canterbury
- Kent Fire Authority
- Kent Youth County Council (KYCC)
- LANTRA
- Micro Business Advisor
- National Apprenticeship Scheme
- Ofsted National London
- Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
- SE LEP
- Seven Hills
- Skills Funding Agency
- South East Tourist Board
- Thanet Council
- UK Commission Employment & Skills
- University of Derby
- Vista Leisure

Appendix 2

Glossary of Abbreviations

CBI: Confederation of British Industry

CEIAG: careers education, information, advice and guidance

EMA: Education Maintenance Allowance

EU: European Union

GOSE: Government Office for the South East

IAG: information, advice and guidance

KCC: Kent County Council

KYCC: Kent Youth County Council

LA: local authority

LAC: looked-after children

LDD: Learning Difficulty and/or and Disability

LEP: Local Enterprise Partnership

NAS: National Apprenticeships Service

NEET: not in education, employment or training

NVQ: National Vocational Qualification

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OFSTED: Office for Standards in Education

ONS: Office of National Statistics

RPA: raising the participation age

SFA: Skills Funding Agency

SME: small and medium-sized enterprise

STEM: science, technology, engineering and mathematics

VLP: Vulnerable Learner Apprenticeship Project

Appendix 3

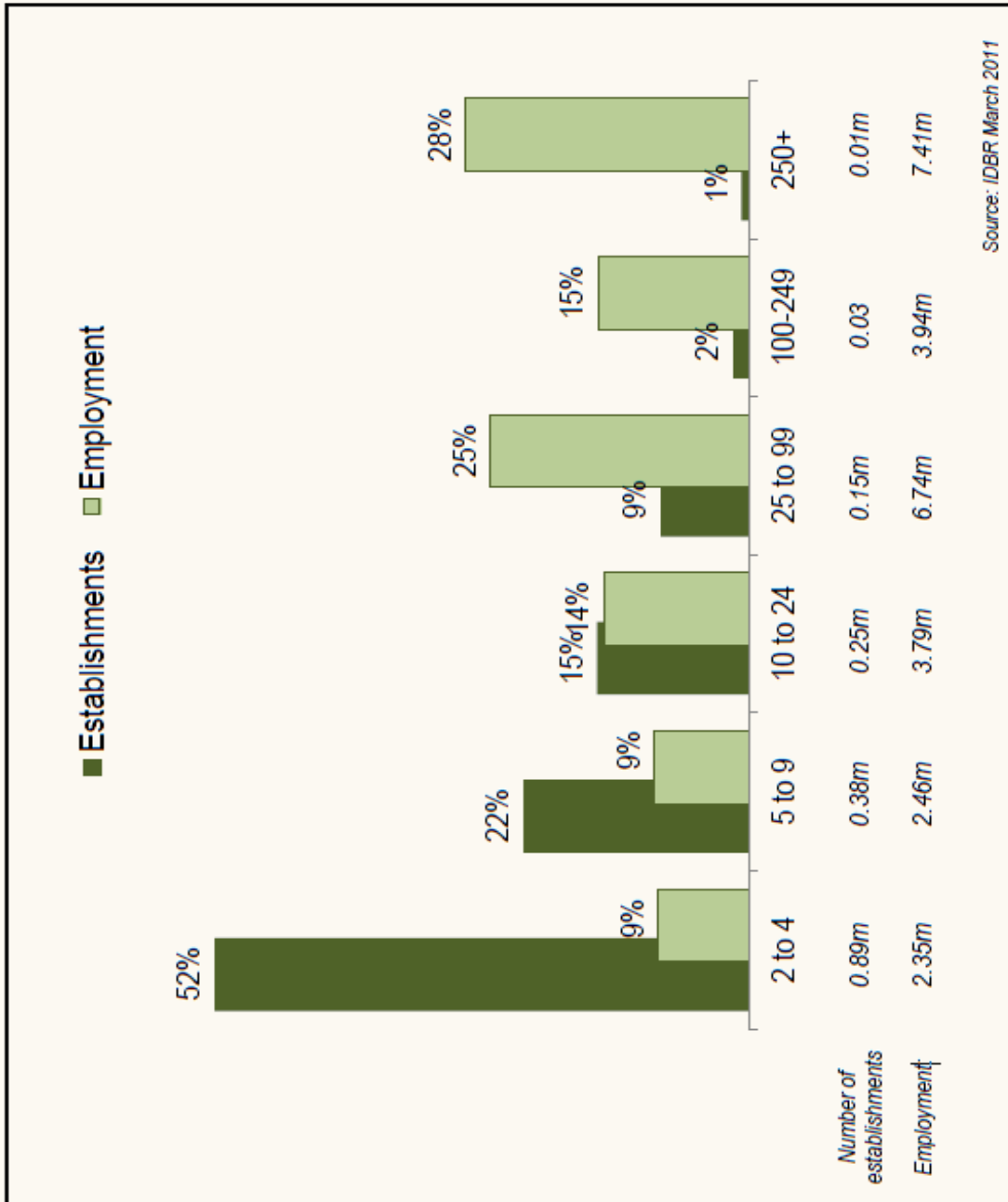
Pictures, Tables and Charts

Figure 1: Choices in education and training from age 14 to 19.



Source: www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Figure 2: Size distribution of establishments and employment (2011).



Source: IDBR March 2011

Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (2011)

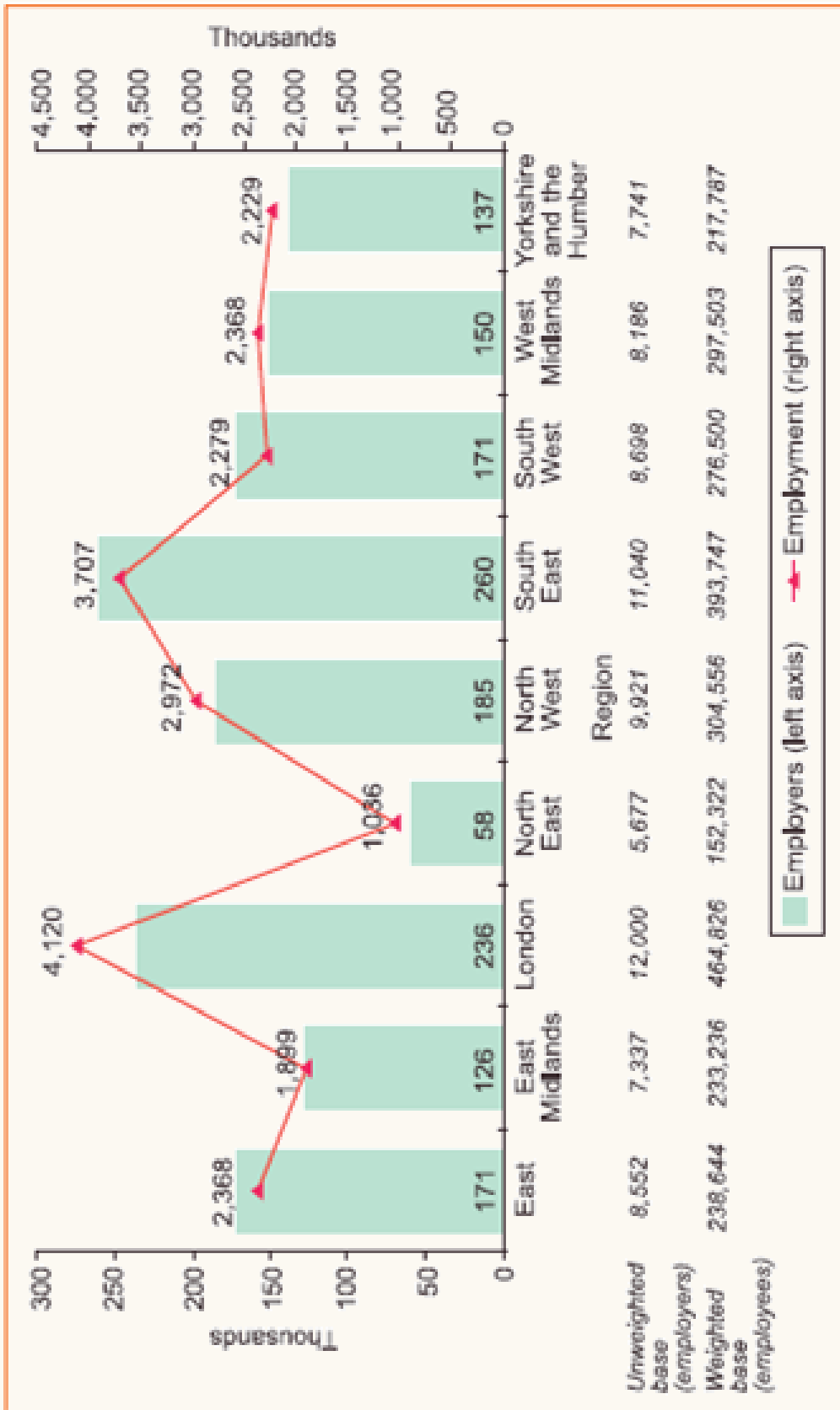
Figure 3: Size distribution of establishments in each sector (2011)



Source: IDBR March 2011

Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (2011)

Figure 4: Employers and employment across regions, England (2009).



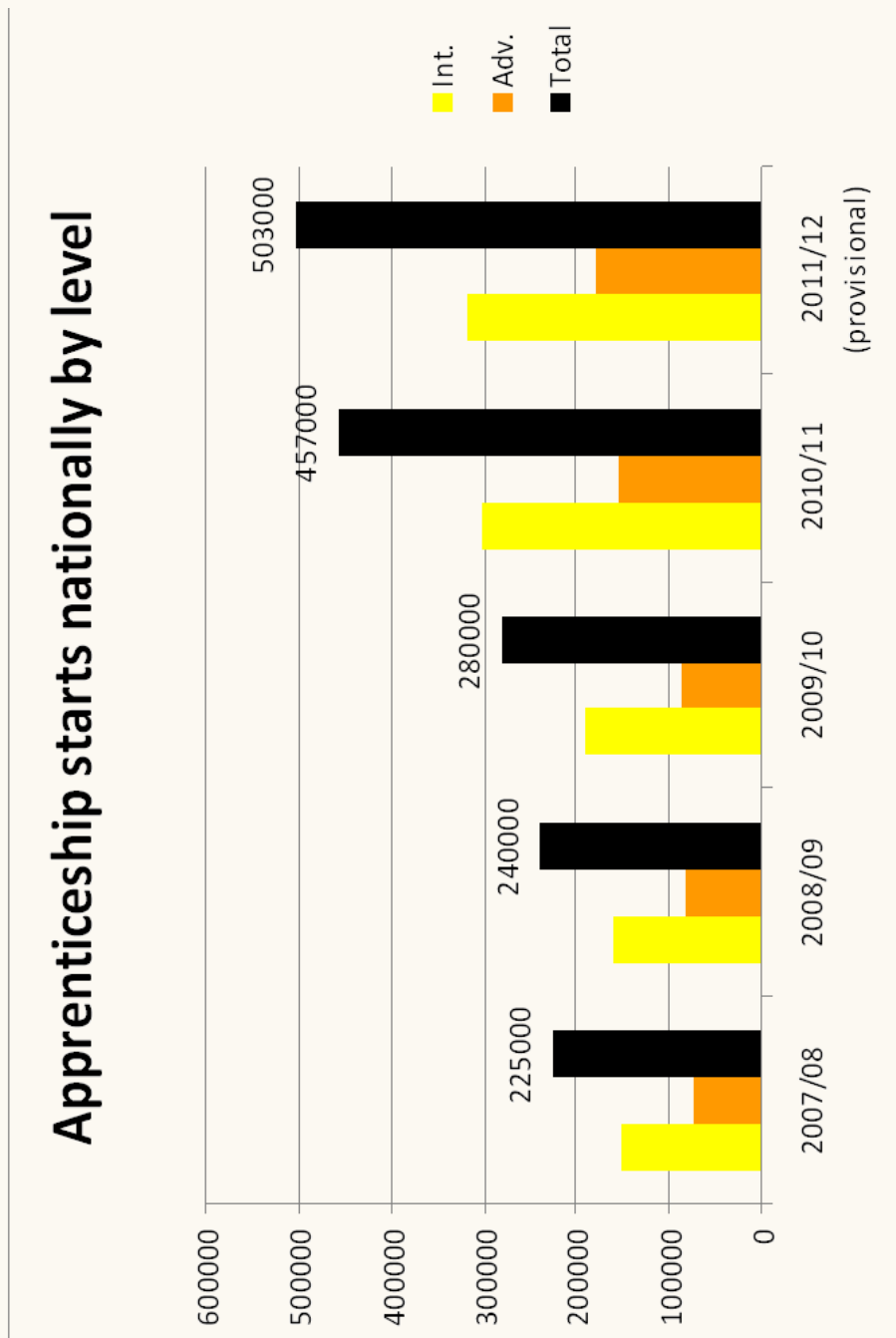
Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (2009)

Figure 5: Business Sector Profile, Kent (2011).

Industry Sector	2011 Employment¹¹	%	Output £mill¹²	%
Agriculture, Fishing, Mining, Electricity/Gas/Water	21,400	4.0	1,380	7.1
Manufacturing	38,400	7.1	1,739	9.0
Construction	31,900	5.9	1,663	8.6
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods	98,500	18.2	2,879	14.9
Transport and storage	28,100	5.2	1,161	6.0
Hotels and restaurants	34,000	6.3	470	2.4
Information and communication	11,900	2.2	626	3.2
Financial intermediation	15,150	2.8	1,067	5.5
Real estate, renting and business activities	7,000	1.3	2,570	13.3
Professional, scientific and technical activities	30,300	5.6	527	2.7
Administrative and support service activities	39,500	7.3	526	2.7
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	29,200	5.4	1,168	6.0
Education	60,600	11.2	1,048	5.4
Health and social work	73,000	13.5	1,541	8.0
Arts, entertainment and recreation	11,300	2.1	Incl below	0.0
Other community, social and personal service activities	9,700	1.8	943	4.9
All Industries	541,000*	100	19,300	100

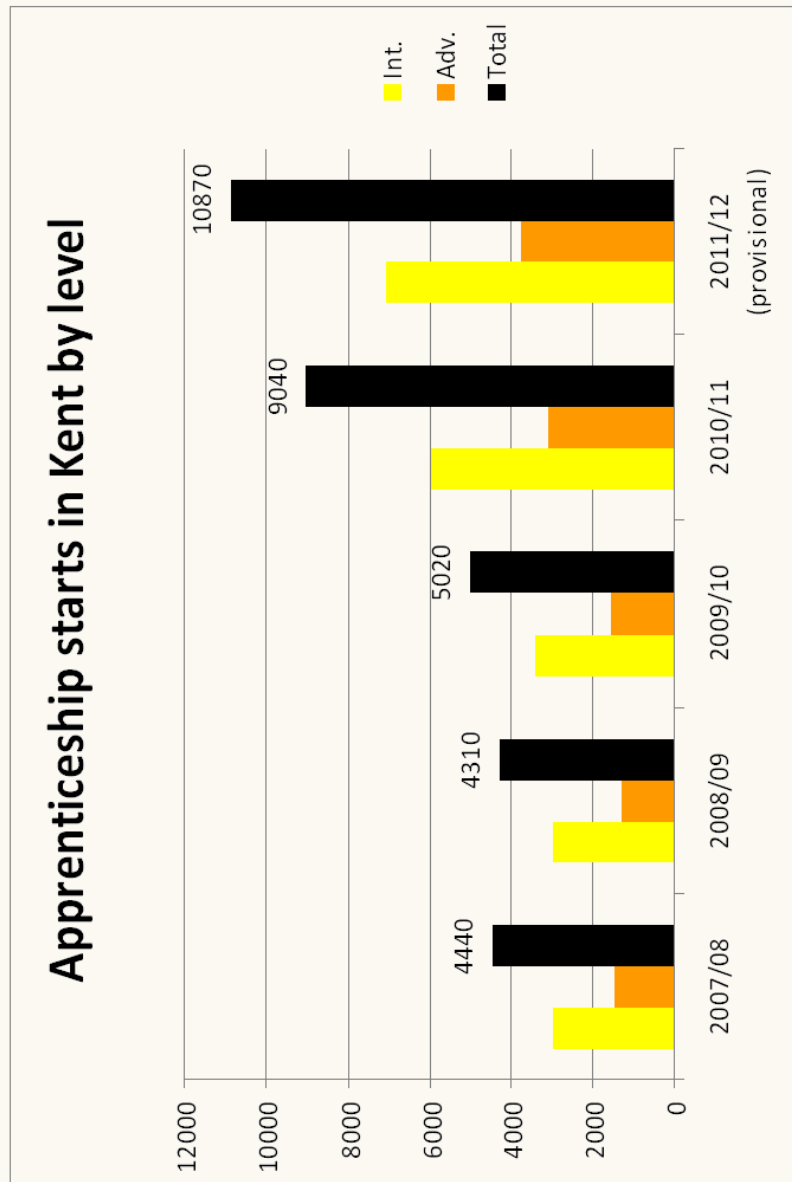
Source: Kent County Council (2012) 14-24 Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2016, Draft, Maidstone, Kent County Council.

Figure 6: Apprenticeship Starts Nationally by Level, 2007/08 – 2011/12



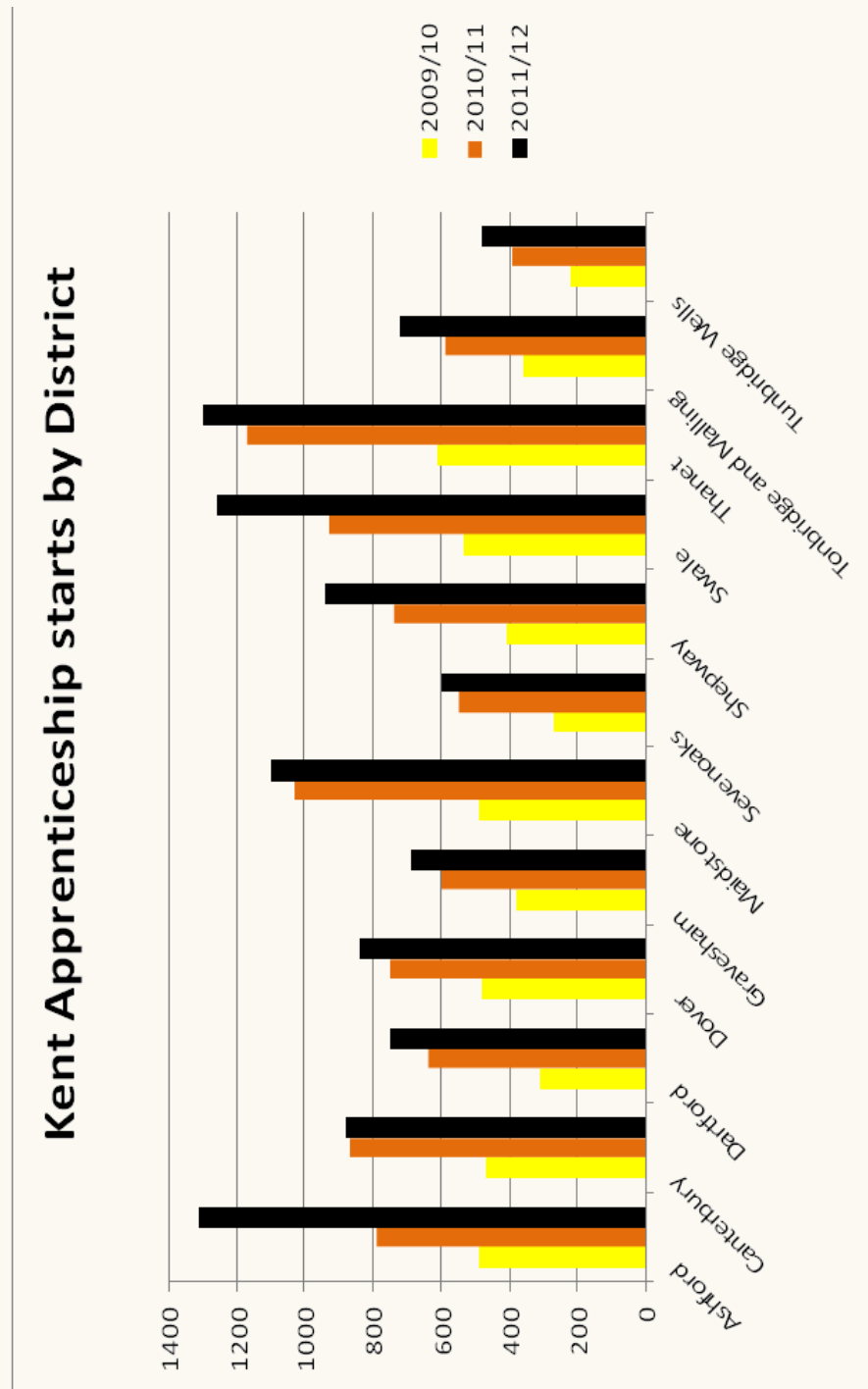
Source: National Apprenticeship Service, 2012

Figure 7: Apprenticeship Starts in Kent by Level 2007/08 – 2011/12



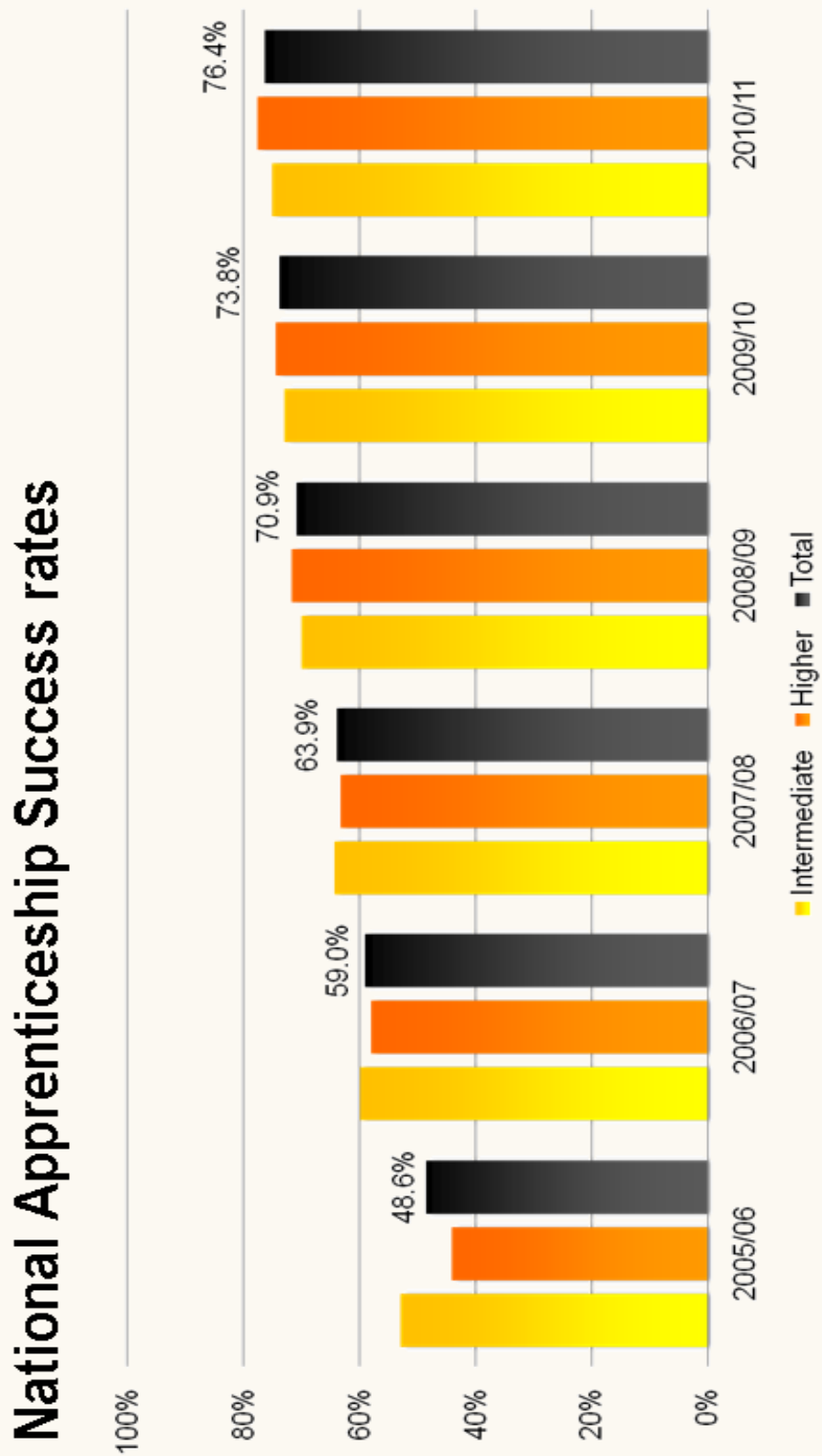
Source: National Apprenticeship Service, 2012

Figure 8: Apprenticeship starts in Kent by District 2009/10 – 2011/12



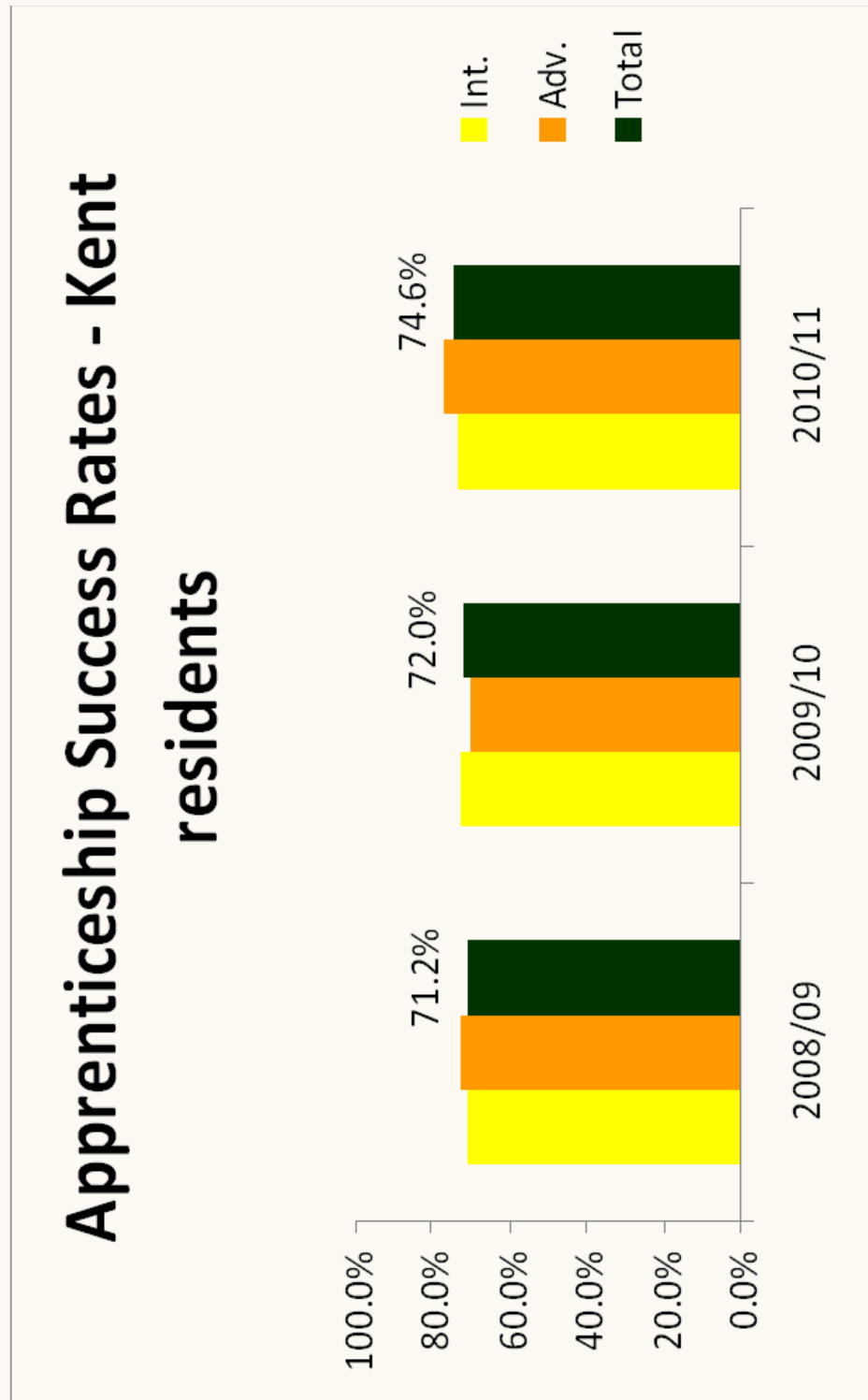
Source: National Apprenticeship Service, 2012

Figure 9: National Apprenticeship Success Rates 2005/06-2010/11



Source: National Apprenticeship Service, 2012

Figure 10: Kent Apprenticeship Success Rates 2008/09-2010/11



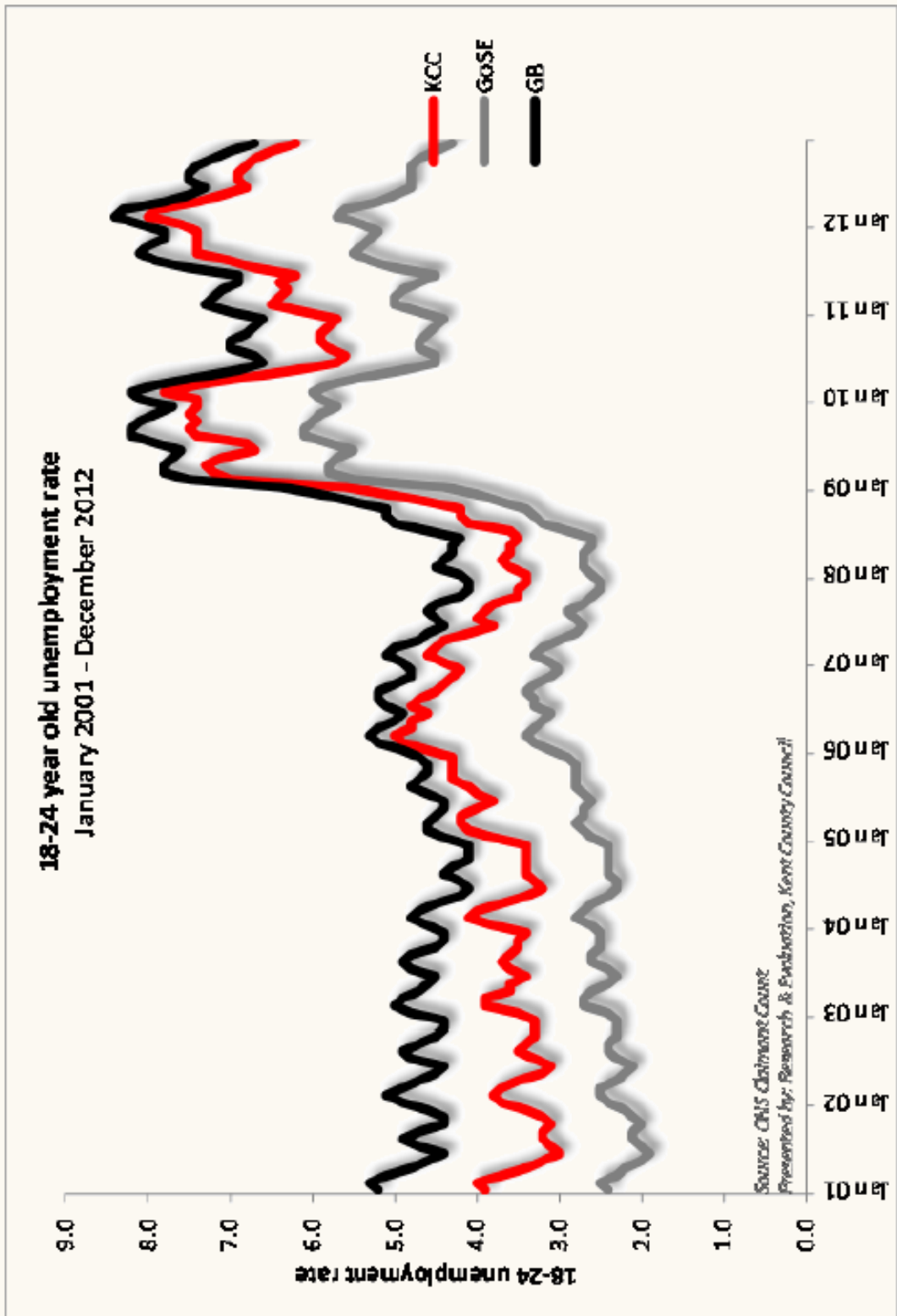
Source: National Apprenticeship Service, 2012.

Figure 11: Numbers and proportion of Apprentices declaring a learning difficulty and/or disability

Start	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
LDD - Yes	19,200	20,400	25,900	23,700	26,400	35,600
LDD - No	153,600	162,400	196,900	214,600	250,600	403,700
LDD - Unknown	2,100	1,700	2,000	1,700	2,700	3,400
Proportion of LDD	11.1%	11.1%	11.5%	9.9%	9.4%	8.0%
Grand Total	175,000	184,400	224,800	239,900	279,700	442,700

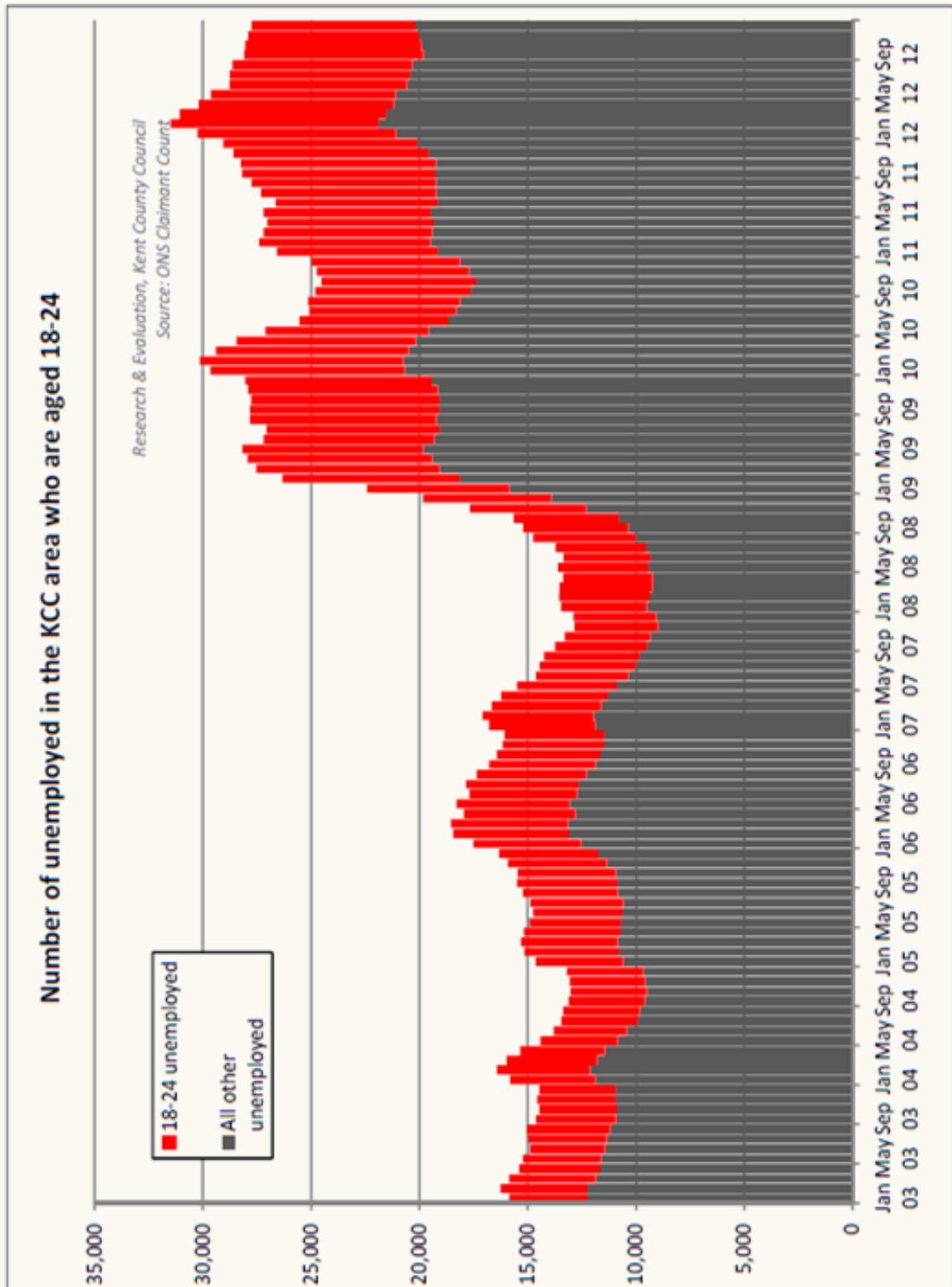
Source: Department for Education, 2012

Figure 12: 18-24 year old unemployment rate, January 2001 – December 2012



Source: ONS Claimant Count, 2012

Figure 13: Number of unemployed in the KCC area who are aged 18-24.



Source: ONS Claimant Count, 2012

Figure 14: The economic costs attributable to the NEETs Population, Britain, 2010.

CURRENT COSTS	Resource cost	Public finance
Educational Underachievement		
Unemployed	£79,366,751	£1,199,238,148
Underemployed	£32,016,602	
Unemployment	£429,680,191	
Inactivity	£766,541,549	
Teenage mothers	£432,843,048	£453,866,079
Crime	£61,382,528	£7,819,683
Poor health	£413,022	£413,022
Substance misuse	£1,335,458	£1,335,458
Sub-total	£1,803,579,148	£1,662,672,388
MEDIUM TERM COSTS		
Educational Underachievement (low estimate)	£2,221,895,298	£7,216,038,780
Unemployment (low estimate)	£16,928,726,082	
Educational Underachievement (high est)	£8,606,225,493	£27,950,397,552
Unemployment (high estimate)	£65,571,241,853	
Early Motherhood	£282,863,048	£2,185,747,288
Crime	£461,052,180	£67,309,377
Poor Health	£7,759,321	£7,759,321
Substance abuse	£11,495,200	£11,495,200
Sub-totals (low estimate)	£19,913,791,129	£9,488,349,966
Sub-totals (high estimate)	£74,940,637,095	£30,222,708,738
LONG TERM COSTS		
Tax loss		£383,339,717
Additional benefits		£187,225,963
Sub-total		£570,565,680
FINAL TOTAL (low estimate)	£21,717,370,278	£11,721,588,036
(high estimate)	£76,744,216,244	£32,455,946,808

Source: University of York, 2010

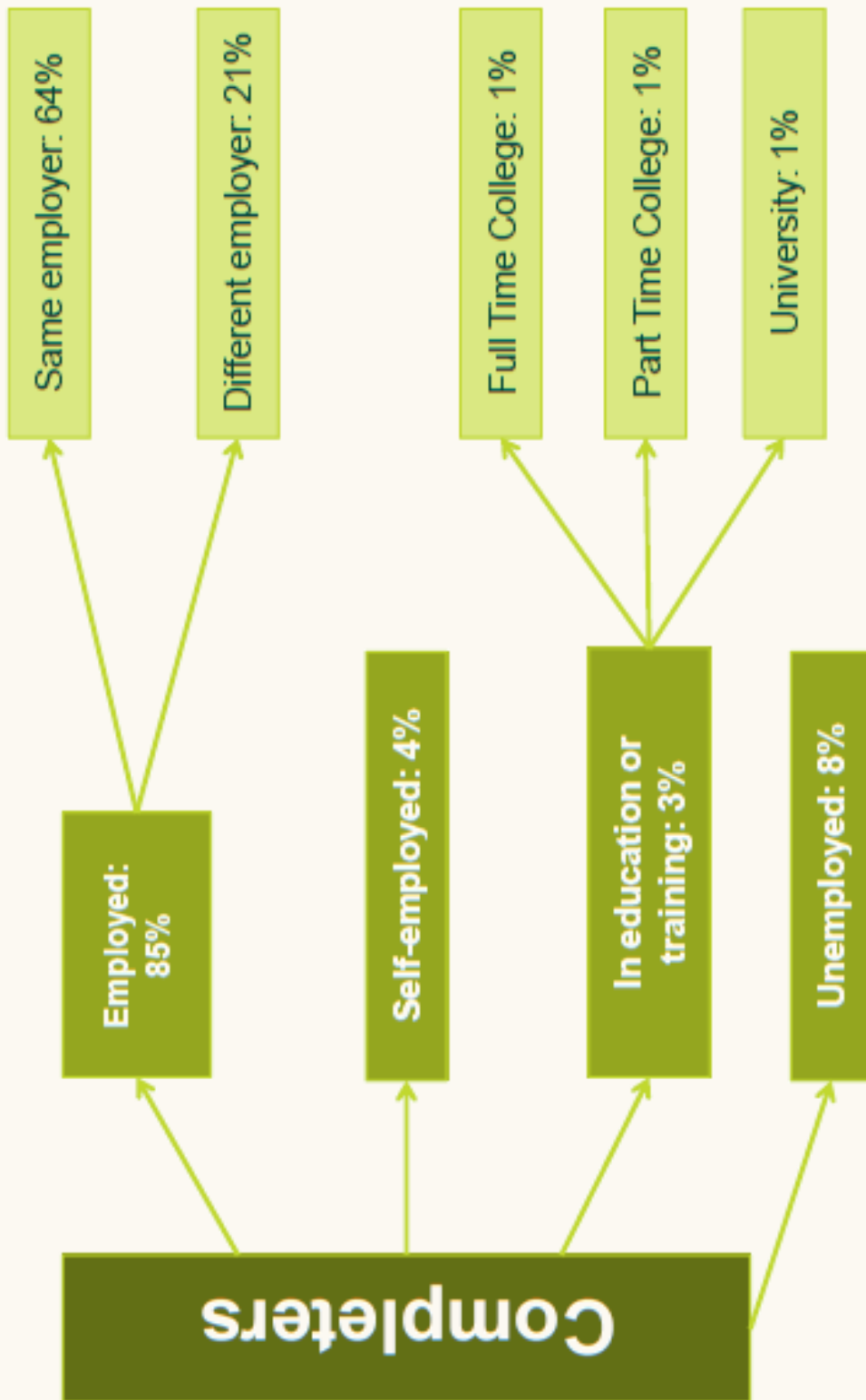
Figure 15: Impact of Apprenticeships on skills and abilities



Base: All Apprentices - 5,000

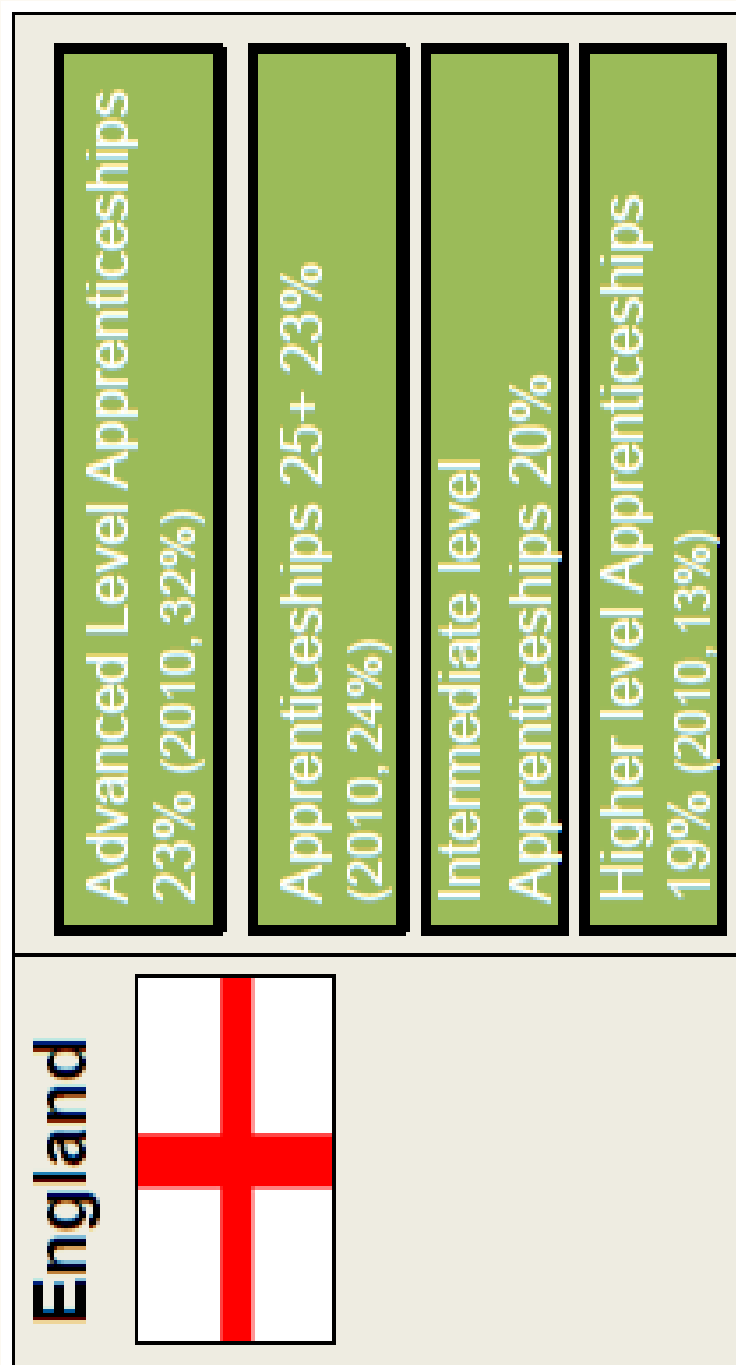
Source: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012)

Figure 16: Employment outcomes of completed apprenticeships



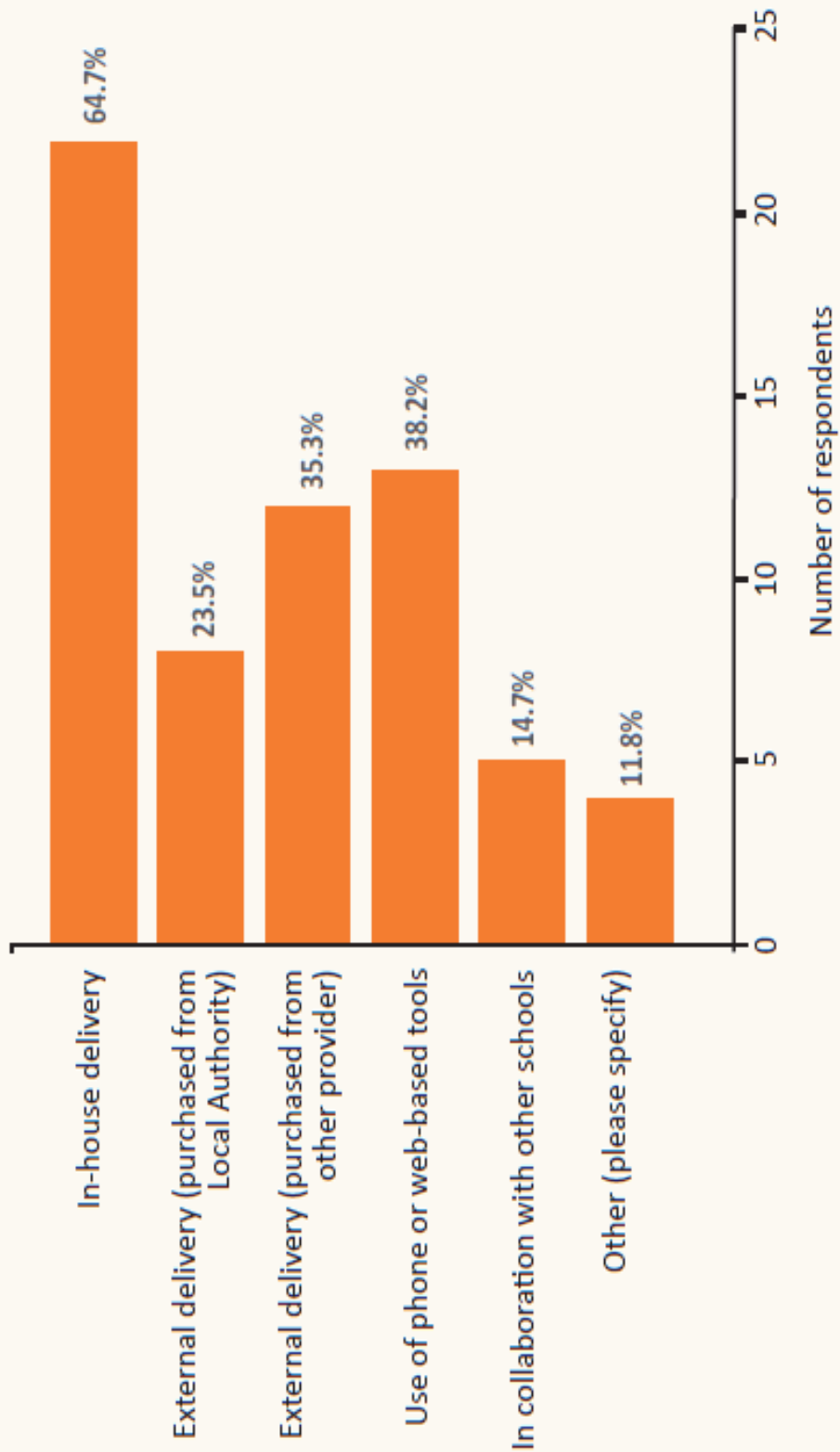
Source: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012)

Figure 17: Employers' awareness of Government recognised apprenticeship schemes



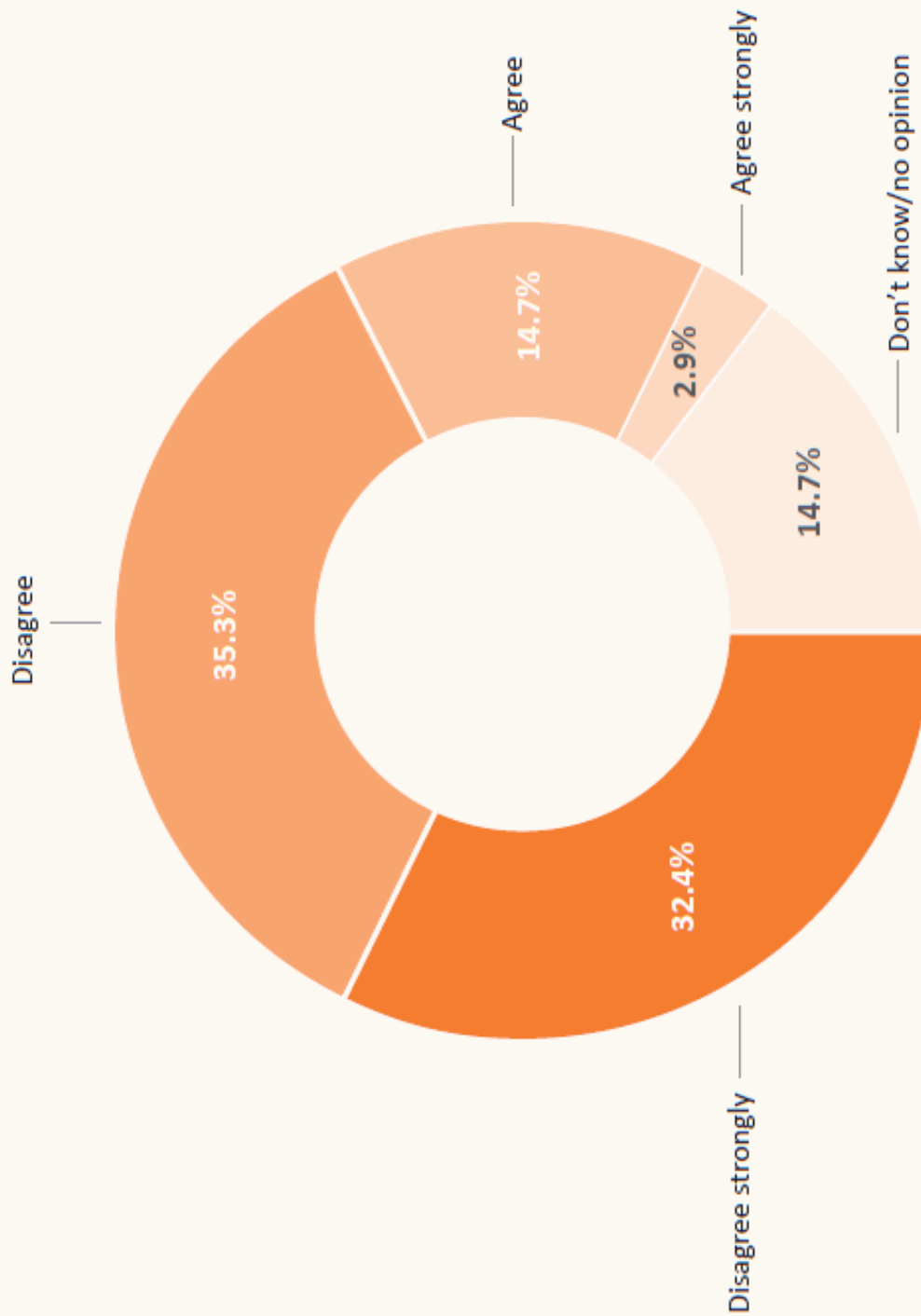
Source: UKCES 2012

Figure 18: How does your school intend to deliver independent advice and guidance with the devolution of responsibility for IAG to school level?



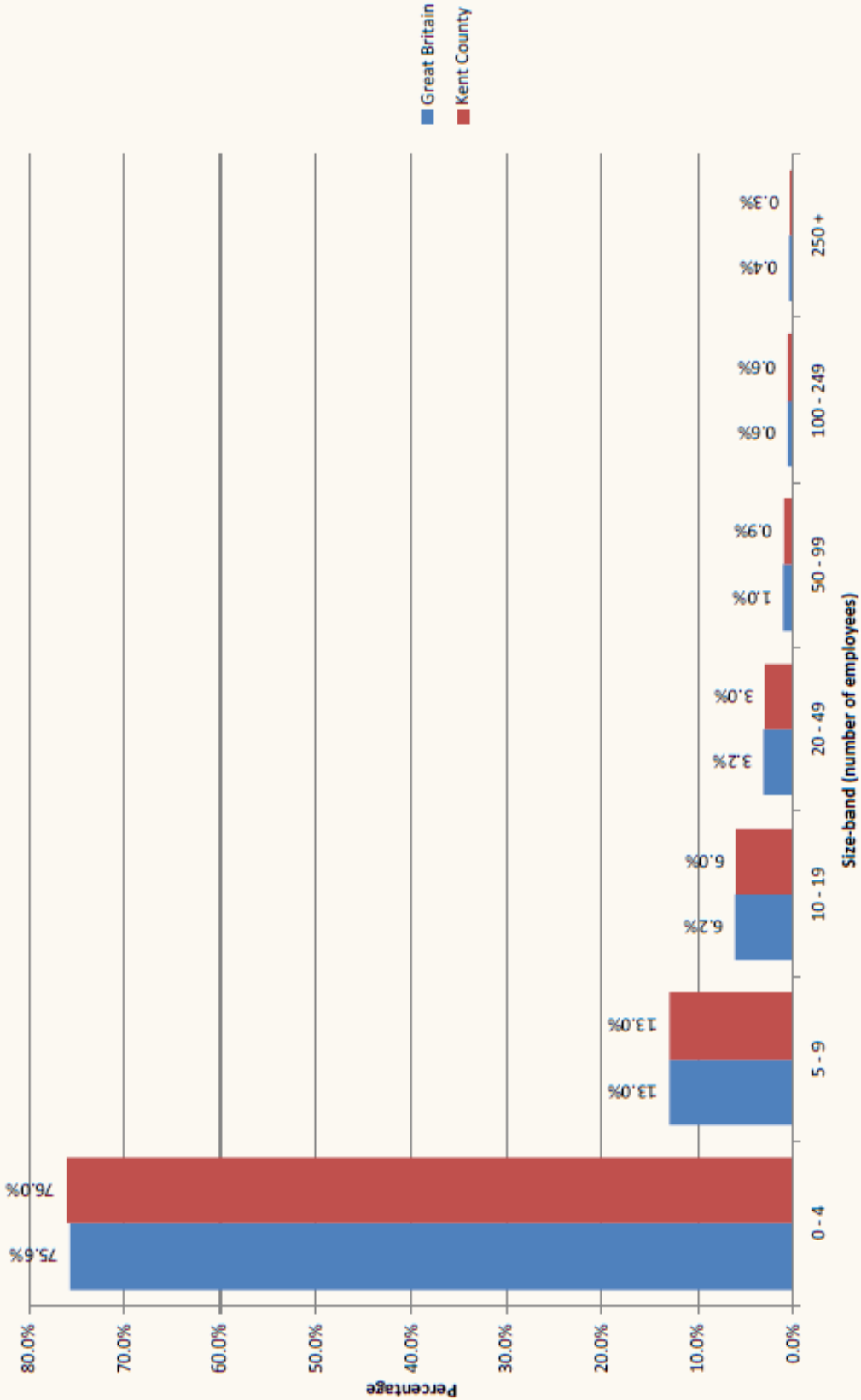
Source: Policy Exchange (2013)

Figure 19: The devolution of statutory responsibility for IAG to schools will be beneficial for the quality and impartiality of IAG



Source: Policy Exchange (2013)

Figure 20: Percentage of Enterprises by size-band, 2012



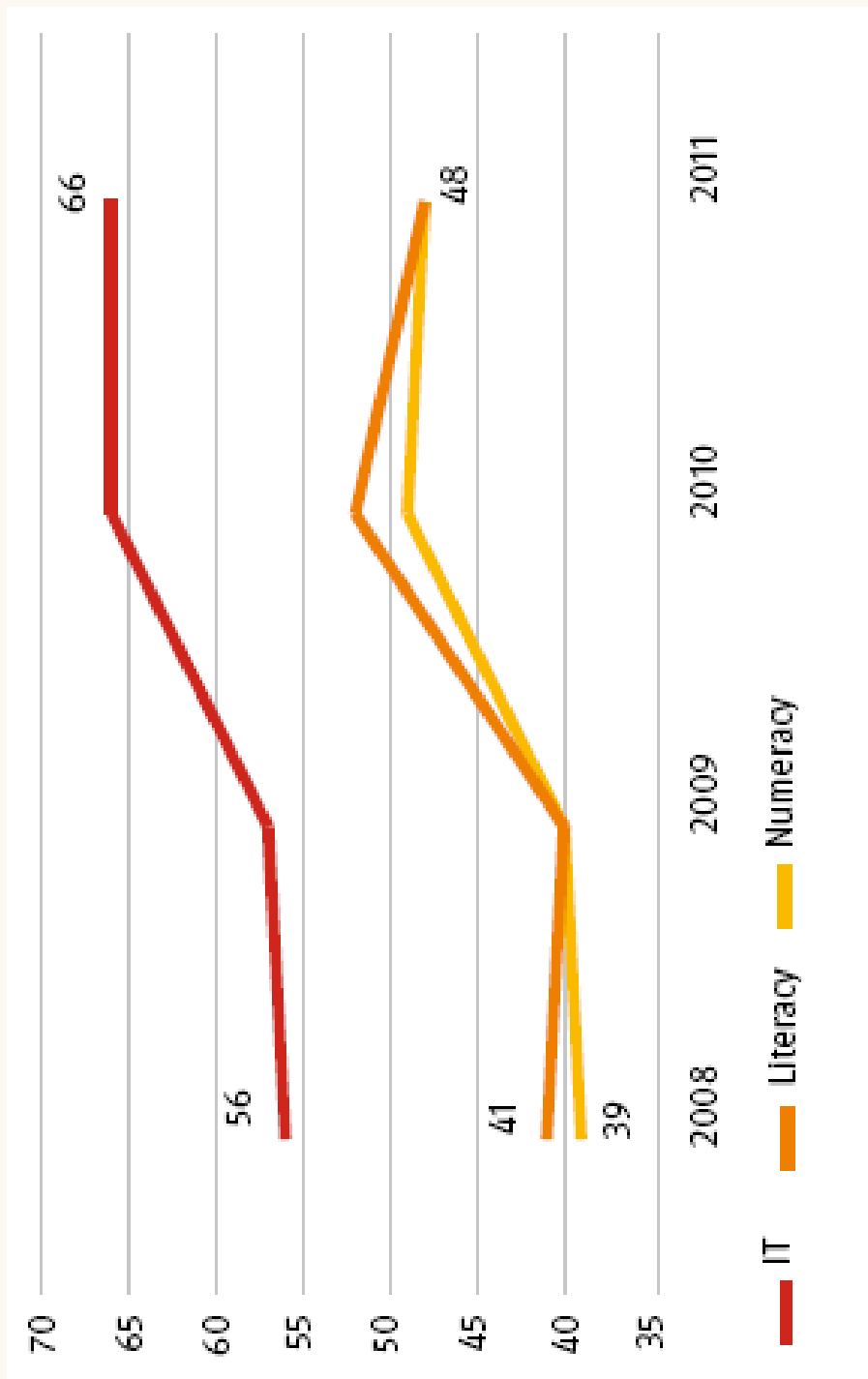
Source: Kent Business Survey 2012

Figure 21: Proportion of apprenticeships by size of employer, 2012 (employees across the whole of the UK)

All apprentices in employment	
Base: All excluding those not currently employed^{**}	4,394
	%
Fewer than 10 employees	16
10 – 49 employees	20
50 – 249 employees	12
250 – 499 employees	7
500+ employees	41
Size not known	5
Summary:	
Small or Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) with less than 250 employees across whole organisation	47

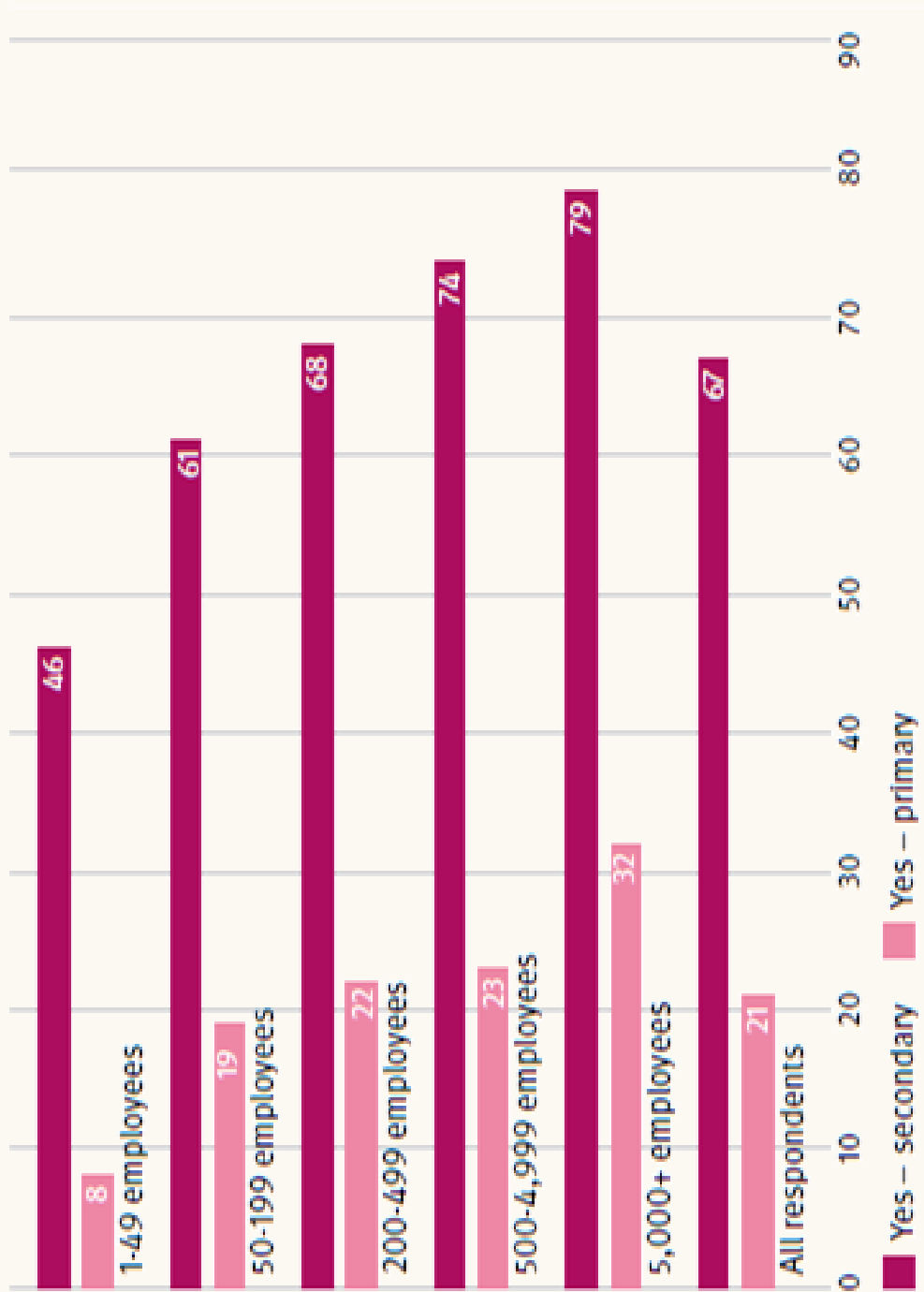
Source: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Figure 22: Employers reporting problems with core skills of current workforce over time (%), England.



Source: Building for Growth, CBI (2011)

Figure 23: Percentage of employers claiming to have developed links with schools.



Source: CBI, “Building for Growth” (2011)

Appendix 4

Further Information

www.schoolforstartups.co.uk

The Richard Review of Apprenticeships (2012)

www.education.gov.uk/publications

Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report (2011).

www.kentchoices4u.com

The website is a comprehensive source of information on careers education and guidance for Kent young people aged 14 to 19. It contains an online prospectus and a function to apply online for education courses.

www.apprenticeships.org.uk

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) supports, funds and co-ordinates the delivery of Apprenticeships throughout England.

www.employment-studies.co.uk

The Institute of Employment Studies is the UK's leading independent, non-profit centre for research and evidence-based consultancy in employment, labour market and human resource policy and practice.

www.ons.gov.uk

Office for National Statistics (ONS).

www.cbi.org.uk

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) is the UK's premier business lobbying organisation, providing a voice for employers at a national and international level.

www.ebpkent.co.uk

The Kent Education Business Partnership (EBP Kent) provides individually designed services for schools, colleges and employers. The aims are to enrich the curriculum, actively engage employers in the development of their future workforce, and equip young people with a better understanding of personal skills and their future choices.

www.kato-training.com

The Kent Association of Training Organisations (KATO) represents the major training providers in Kent and Medway. It supports the interests of over 60 member organisations that deliver a variety of training programmes, including apprenticeships, bespoke training and business training.

www.lsis.org.uk

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service is the body that aims to accelerate the drive for excellence in the learning and skills sector, building the sector's own capacity to design, commission and deliver improvement and strategic change.

www.channelchamber.co.uk

The Kent Channel Chamber of Commerce is a business network – which covers an area of Kent including Dover, Folkestone, Hythe, New Romney, Deal, Sandwich and Thanet - that promotes enterprise in Kent.

www.fsb.org.uk

The Federation of Small Businesses is the voice of small business, promoting and protecting the interests of the self-employed and people who own or run a small business, and lobbying government and key decision makers on their behalf.

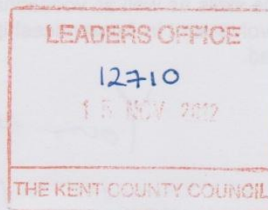
Appendix 5

Letter from the Under-Secretary of State on Apprenticeship Entry Requirements

BIS | Department for Business
Innovation & Skills

Matthew Hancock
Minister for Skills

Paul Carter
Leader
Kent County Council
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 1XD



12 November 2012

Dear Paul

When we met on Thursday I promised to make clear entry requirements for an Apprenticeship. I can confirm that there are no centrally set entry requirements, although the individual should be capable of achieving the required standard within a reasonable timeframe, and an employer or training provider may have requirements.

There is certainly no requirement for 5 A* to C GCSEs as part of the apprenticeship. The Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England was introduced in 2011 to insist on English and Maths as part of an Apprenticeship programme for those who do not have adequate English and Maths already and government announced an entitlement for all apprentices to study English and Maths to level 2 in December 2011.

A minority of apprenticeships in a small number of occupations do have minimum entry requirements which will be clearly stated in the relevant Apprenticeship framework. This is usually in higher level technical frameworks to ensure that the apprentice will have a reasonable chance of success. Often evidence of industry experience can be used as an alternative, for example the Higher Level (L4) Apprenticeship in IT, Software, Web & Telecoms Professionals states:

...candidates wishing to enter a Higher Apprenticeship will need to have achieved one of the following:

- *A Levels, or equivalent educational attainment, including the Level 3 IT Diploma, International Baccalaureate or a relevant Level 3 Technical Certificate*
- *An Advanced Apprenticeship (Level 3)*

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www.bis.gov.uk

Enquiries +44 (0)20 7215 5000 | Minicom +44 (0)20 7215 6740 | Contact us www.bis.gov.uk/contact-us

- *Employment within the technology/telecommunications industry for a number of years and demonstrated to their employer that they have a reasonable expectation of achieving the required outcomes of the Higher Apprenticeship. This can be supported by the demonstration or evidence of prior achievement or performance in the role prior to starting the Higher Apprenticeship.*

I hope this makes the position very clear. Apprenticeships are part of our armoury for improving English and Maths skills as well as vocational and technical skills. I am very supportive of Kent's involvement in Apprenticeships and look forward to working with you in the months ahead.

*You are
Matthew*

MATTHEW HANCOCK

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Acknowledgements

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The Apprenticeships Select Committee

March 2013

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